Book Report: Life After the 30-Second Spot

About: Joseph Jaffe

Joseph Jaffe is a consultant, speaker and one of the foremost thought leaders on new marketing. He is the founder of jaffe, L.L.C. (www.getthejuice.com) - a "New Marketing" consulting practice. His first book, "Life after the 30-second spot: Energize your brand with a bold mix of alternatives to traditional advertising" is a revolutionary view on change in the marketing and advertising industry. Jaffe is a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Digital Future at the USC Annenberg School. He has worked part-time at NYU's Stern School of Business, Cornell's Johnson School of Business and Syracuse University. He is also the host of Across the Sound - a New Marketing Podcast (www.acrossthesound.net). Jaffe is from South Africa and he lives with his wife and two children in Westport, Connecticut.

Abstract: Life After the 30-Second Spot

Jaffe’s book “Life After the 30-Second Spot” is a diagnosis and recommendation for the advertising and marketing industry for now and years to come. He discusses the failing broadcast model of the Industrial Age and offers new methods of reaching consumers through new media such as the internet, gaming consoles, music, cell phones, DVR, and short films. He serves up the information that most advertising agencies might not wish you had. His analysis of the state of advertising today is accurate and intriguing. The
book “Life After the 30-Second Spot” the author offers thought-provoking insight and advice on how to effectively and adequately serve the changing customer. Although not all readers will agree with Jaffé’s points of view, they should not turn a deaf ear.

**Summary: Brains No Longer Peppered By Electrons**

Joseph Jaffe believes that media advertising as we know it is in trouble of dying out. He knows the network model is failing and is certain that there is a better way to advertise than the traditional broadcast methods that have been used by ad agencies for decades past. His book is divided into three sections. The first section describes why the 30-second ad spot is no longer the answer to Media Advertising. The second section delves into rethinking what he calls the Four Fundamentals of Marketing: the consumer, branding, advertising, and the advertising agency. This section of the book is where he builds his argument and addresses remedies to the current advertising models. In the third section Jaffe illustrates 10 approaches to advertising that he believes are revolutionary in their execution.

As you slip into section one of Jaffé's prose you find that he is in love with new marketing strategies. He is quite happy that the broadcast model is going to be history and goes on to say, "I dance on the 30-second's grave and sing hallelujah." That is a pretty strong statement to make as an advertiser knowing that almost 25% of the industry's revenue comes from creating TV ads. He makes sure to mention the insane amount of advertising (3,225 ads) that the average citizen is subjected to every day. He serves up a four part dissection of this foray of ads by resolving that there is too much clutter, the creativity sucks, the consumers aren't stupid and that half of the millions of
dollars poured into television is wasted; he just doesn't know which half. Viewing this downfall of broadcast advertising as a downward spiral Jaffe predicts that there will be a loss of viewers and a decline in the quality of programming that feed on each other until little to nothing remains. He writes that, "Sitcoms are anything but funny...[the] canned laugh tracks create the impression of being laughed at rather than with." This comparison of advertising with entertainment accentuates the point that broadcast advertising is dying and if the industry does not embrace change will be consumed by it. He concludes his description of the problem facing advertisers by describing something he calls the perfect storm. The perfect storm is the next big thing in advertising. It is where the four ingredients of broadband, wireless, search and networks come together to create a dynamic that has not been witnessed before. This dynamic is what Jaffe believes will empower consumers to bring the 30-second spot to its knees. He finishes part one by saying, "There is no way back. There is only a way forward. Continue with me. Discard and re:think everything you thought made sense. Embrace the bold mix of alternatives to traditional advertising that may be the shot in the arm that ultimately saves it."

As Jaffe marches into section two of his book he outlines the four fundamentals that marketers need to "re:think": the consumer, branding, advertising, and the advertising agency.

He starts into step one, the consumer, by acknowledging the change that has come over most consumers: "they control what they want, when they want it, and how they view it." He then describes 10 tenets of marketing to the new consumer. The first of these tenets is the super intelligent customer. He notes that most consumers have the Internet and Google to turn to when they need more information. Underestimating the consumer
is one of the biggest mistakes that marketers can make. Intelligence leads to empowerment. Parallel to the chain of intelligence and empowerment tenet one leads to tenet two: Today's Customer is empowered. Jaffe knows that the marketers do not hold the power anymore, the consumers do. Jaffe continues to tenet three by saying that Today's consumer is skeptical. He writes "Corporate scandals, shortcomings and consistent under delivery have resulted in an extremely brittle and precarious relationship between consumer and corporation." Tenet four is that consumers are always connected. Whether it be the broadband at home, the wireless at Starbucks, or the cell phone consumers allow consumers to connect with information and with each other. The connected consumer can find what they are looking for quickly and painlessly without listening to the marketer. If you can sell your attention you may have a feasible business idea; tenet five is that the consumer is time-pressed. Jaffe emphasizes that "Time is the new currency" and at an incremental level we are still dealing with one consumer who only has one attention span. Jaffe observes that consumption of media is no longer viewed as a privilege, which leads into tenet six: today's consumer is demanding. Instant gratification and heightened expectations have turned today's consumers into difficult armies of one. In describing tenet seven Jaffe finds a need to make up a word: Loyalless. Tenet seven is that today's consumer is loyalless. He hangs up the old adage of retaining "lifetime value of a customer" in turn for contributing to the "time of their lives". One of the ways to identify the effective selection of a target market is that they are accessible. In tenet eight Jaffe proclaims that today's consumer is always accessible. He points out that consumers have endless avenues to "access, connect, research, purchase, and communicate." Jaffe calls on corporations to offer a high level of service at all consumer
touch points. Jaffe illustrates tenet nine: the consumer is ahead of the curve by writing, "Today's consumers are running rings around marketers before they even realize they've been surrounded." His final tenet is a product of the previous ones: today's consumer is vengeful. He writes, "one consumer can bring down an empire." He goes on to point out a dialogue between Apple and a couple film producers where the Apple took direct action on the needs of the disgruntled consumers. They were mad about the iPod's battery shortcomings. In response Apple released a battery replacement program and an extended warranty for the iPod.

Jaffe leads into the "re:thinking" of second fundamental, branding, by writing, "Brands have never been as important as they are today, but branding as we knew it, has forever changed." Following in the outline like nature of his book he lists seven points where branding has changed. First up is brand experience. Jaffe offers, "We use products, we buy brands, but we live experience." His second point is short and sweet. He writes,"A brand is only as strong as a consumer's last experience with it." For his third stepping stone along the path of the changing brand experience Jaffe recognizes the birth of antibrands. He describes the new birth of a brand epitomized by players such as Google and Priceline. Jaffe describes these new brands as infomediaries, brands ruled by information, consumer control, and democratization. Rolling on to his fourth branding message Jaffe considers communal branding, brands formed around communities. Jaffe stresses that the creation and interaction with a community created around your brand is another step on the road to success. In his fifth point Jaffe makes short mention of "broadbrand", or using the power of the internet to move your brand. He then moves on to his second to last deluge into branding by unfolding the collision between direct
response marketing and branding. He goes as far to say that one cannot exist without the other. That "branding without response is negligent, and response without branding is naive." Introducing his final point about new branding he writes, "Data is the DNA of business, ROI is the currency, and creativity is the mojo." Jaffe continues into point seven entitled: "Branding by Numbers: Data", by reasoning that data is useless unless it is acted upon. He concludes his message about branding by that, "you owe it to your stakeholders to invest disproportionately in your most valuable customers rather than your most elusive ones.

Jaffe begins to address the third fundamental, advertising, by saluting those who were critical in the creation of the field such as David Ogilvy, Jay Chiat, and Bull Bernbach. He ponders what the creators of advertising would think about advertising today and what they might think about the decline of the industry. He cries out for advertisers to change up the industry. He asks advertisers to make advertising real, adopt a new business model, and discover a new purpose for advertising. He concludes his message on how to reform advertising by offering three new roles for advertising: to empower, to demonstrate, and to involve.

In section three of Jaffe's book he lays out 10 Approaches that are changing the marketing and advertising game. These approaches are the meat of Jaffe's book. They are his suggestions for change in the advertising industry and his overall motive for the book. Jaffe's first approach is a common sense approach to advertising on the internet. He makes sure to first dispel all myths about the underemphasized strength of the internet as a feasible medium. He then goes on to show how marketers can use the internet to their advantage; common sense approaches to using the fastest growing medium in
advertising. The second approach that Jaffe discusses is gaming. He believes that the advertising industry "has yet to recognize the quality and quantity of gaming impressions." He gives five reasons why gaming is effective: consumers are there, they spend more time, they are engaged, they are a quality audience, and it's working. His third approach includes on-demand viewing. He narrates the rise of the DVR and how it will affect the marketing sector for years to come. He explains the implication for marketers: shorter time to catch attention, harder to reach customers, and the increase in product placement over commercial ad spots. He also describes what he calls the Grand Poo-bah of the future of advertising: Advertising on Demand (AOD). AOD will give views a choice to view the ads and therefore empowering the consumer. AOD will make sure that once the broadcast model is dead that the 30-second ad spot will live on in the hands of the consumer. Jaffe suggests that if the commercials were customized for the individual it would be more accepted and effective. He theorizes that there will be a time where consumers are able to select which sponsor they would like to host their favorite TV shows. The fourth approach that Jaffe vividly constructs is what he calls experiential marketing. Experiential marketing includes things such as events and shows where the brand is part of the experience. Jaffe cautions agencies not to try experiential marketing unless they are ready to get their hands dirty. He writes, “if you aren't geared to conceptualize, develop, and implement experiential solutions, you're buying a one way ticket into oblivion." His next approach to new marketing is long form content, the successor of the 30-second ad spot. Long form content can be found online and on TV. Long form content at its best is a tailored non-interruptive, creative short film that is intriguing to consumers. Jaffe makes the distinction between the 30-second ad spot and
long form content when he writes, "Ultimately, it comes down to a fundamental new marketing question about qualitative reach: Are you reaching the most people or the right people?" If you are reaching the right people you are on the right track to creating good long form content. Long form content allows ad agencies to tell stories again. After long form content, Jaffe dives into communal marketing. Communal marketing is the creation of a community of brand enthusiasts who spread your message virally. Communal marketing has to be driven by the community and not the advertiser, marketer, or corporation. Communities thrive where they have control and die where talking heads try to control them. Communal marketing includes blogs, social networks, and the next approach: consumer generated content. As Jaffe puts it "consumer generated content is the Mount Everest of the world of advertising accomplishments." It is where consumers want to engage the brand enough where they create their own pictures, movies, and essential advertising for your brand. Seventh on the list of new approaches to advertising is Search. Search has transformed the internet. It has even created its own industry: Search Engine Optimization, where specialists in the ad industry can make your brand easier to find. Easier to find is easier to sell in the world of online search, so this new approach carries some merit. Jaffe concludes his section on search by offering an analysis of Search in relation to the 30-second ad spot. Jaffe imagines a world where searchers type in a query and are presented with several TV ads from which they can choose. After search Jaffe expands his medium to the more mobile environment: music and mobile phones. He realizes the power of music and urges that marketers capitalize on the relation of their brand to popular music. He then goes on to explain the mobile ad industry and how marketers have the wrong view of the mobile market. He explains that phones
transmit information and where there is information advertising can flourish. He hopes that mobile phone advertising will catch up to other mediums and offer a relevant way to reach consumers. Lastly Jaffe tries to breathe life into product placement by calling it branded entertainment and offering solutions to what ails this misunderstood and misapplied section of advertising. He delves into product placement in movies, tv, and celebrity endorsements while stressing that the placement must also be relevant.

Jaffe wraps up his book by offering up the epilogue: Why Should You Care? He believes that the advertising industry may be on a route to insanity (continuing to repeat the same action over and over again while intending to get different results. He hopes that we may enter into a "golden age in marketing that may look nothing like traditional advertising."

**Review:** A slightly edgier look from a different perspective

Over the past year I have read the likes of Malcolm Gladwell, Seth Godin, and Mark Hughes. The consensus has been the same: the broadcast model of the industrial age is failing. Jaffe presents the view of the failing broadcast model from a new perspective. He presents the problem and solution to the consumer, advertiser, marketer and ad agency. His insight into why the 30-second ad spot is no longer the answer to Media Advertising is well thought out and superbly written. Unlike some, Jaffe is quite happy that the broadcast model is failing and goes on to say, "I dance on the 30-second's grave and sing halleluja." In the very first few words of his book. Jaffe’s book is written to grab your attention. It is written mostly in list format with long discussions and case studies to back up his main points. Jaffe’s ten new approaches to marketing that he offers for the
entire third section of the book include the Internet, the new world of engaging video
games, word-of-mouth advertising in which communities hold the power to build brands,
and the fight of SEO with search engines, those hard to tame gatekeepers to online
activity.

I would gladly recommend this book to anyone in the advertising industry. Maybe
it would help them get a fresh perspective into their consumers. Hopefully, people in the
industry have already been exposed to similar opinions on the current state and rate of
change in the advertising industry. Maybe, if there are some laggards out there in the
advertising industry who do not quite “get it” they can have a quick read through Jaffe’s
book for concrete evidence and proof. Jaffe always does a good job of providing
adequate support for his arguments.

Would I recommend this book to a student ready to go into the advertising
industry? Absolutely! This is one book that they need to read. It is a must have. If a
student into the advertising industry only knows what they have learned from advertising
and marketing coursework they could be at a huge disadvantage. This outline of the state
of the industry and several long term solutions are what the advertising industry needs in
order to jump start a new generation of better advertising. Better advertising meaning
more relevant and useful advertising, not just better creative work or more distribution.

I thoroughly enjoyed Jaffe’s book and I look forward to anything else that he
might have to say on the subject matter. Booklist, the magazine the New York Times calls
"an acquisitions bible for public and school librarians nationwide," is the review journal
of the American Library Association. In their review of Jaffe’s book they say thay Jaffe,
“issues a clarion call to abandon the old rules of marketing and wake up to new
opportunities. He cites as a root problem the lack of imagination in big agencies (which may not endear him to former agency colleagues!). He offers several lists that help us understand his road map for change, such as major trends that should inspire smart marketers, including the need for 24/7/365 service to customers on their terms--and, through wireless, consumers are always connected and accessible, no matter where they are.”

References: **Quotes from the book**

"I dance on the 30-second's grave and sing halleluja" (2)

almost 25% of the industry's revenue comes from creating TV ads (Fact Pack)

"Sitcoms are anything but funny...[the] canned laugh tracks create the impression of being laughed at rather than with." (25)

"There is no way back. There is only a way forward. Continue with me. Discard and re:think everything you thought made sense. Embrace the bold mix of alternatives to traditional advertising that may be the shot in the arm that ultimately saves it."(42)

"they control what they want, when they want it, and how they view it."(48)

"Corporate scandals, shortcomings and consistent underdelivery have resulted in an extremely brittle and precarious relationship between consumer and corporation."(54)

"Time is the new currency"(56)

"access, connect, research, purchase, and communicate."(61)

"Today's consumers are running rings around marketers before they even realize they've been surrounded."(63)

"one consumer can bring down an empire."(64)
"Brands have never been as important as they are today, but branding as we knew it, has forever changed."(67)

"We use products, we buy brands, but we live experience."(70)

"A brand is only as strong as a consumer's last experience with it."(70)

"branding without response is negligent, and response without branding is naive."(74)

"Data is the DNA of business, ROI is the currency, and creativity is the mojo."(75)

"you owe it to your stakeholders to invest disproportionately in your most valuable customers rather than your most elusive ones."(76)

"has yet to recognize the quality and quantity of gaming impressions."(138)

"if you aren't geared to conceptualize, develop, and implement experiential solutions, you're buying a one way ticket into oblivion."(181)

"consumer generated content is the Mount Everest of the world of advertising accomplishments."(221)

"golden age in marketing that may look nothing like traditional advertising."(275)

More references


Booklist, American Library Association.