Luke Sullivan is a famous copywriter among the advertising business and has recently come out with a new book, *Hey Whipple, Squeeze This*, full of advice insight into the world of advertising. Sullivan has won several awards and medals for his work as a copywriter, including medals at the One Show. *Adweek* has even named him one of the best copywriters two times. He has twenty years of experience, including work at Fallon McElligott and The Martin Agency, both renowned ad agencies in the United States. Luke Sullivan puts his expertise into his new book which is full of humor and wit (backcover).

*Hey Whipple, Squeeze This* by Luke Sullivan is an advertising book full of advice about creating great ads. It starts off explaining the history of good creative advertising and goes into the world of advertising today. Luke Sullivan offers his advise on creating advertisements based on his experience in the field. He covers print ads, broadcast productions, and radio. At the end of the book he goes into presentation techniques and tips for a good presentation. He also offers advice on putting together a good portfolio and how to get started in the advertising business. He uses his sense of humor and broad imagination throughout the whole book to help turn you into a great advertiser who eventually will be able to create great ads on your own.

In the first chapter of *Hey Whipple, Squeeze This*, he introduces a problem that has had him questioning what makes an ad great. He describes Mr. Whipple, the spokesman for Charmin toilet paper in their television ads of the 1970s, and how annoying and disliked he was. However, a survey showed the even though he was one
of the most disliked and least believable ads, Charmin was number one in sales for toilet paper (2). Even though the Mr. Whipple ads had Charmin leading in sales, Luke Sullivan believes that “as an idea, Whipple isn’t good” and thinks that good advertising does not have to be like the Whipple ads (3). Sullivan says this is precisely why he decided to write this book, hence the title, *Hey Whipple, Squeeze This: A Guide to Creating Great Ads*. He goes on to discuss the Creative Revolution of the 1970s and one of his most admired pioneers of good advertising, Bill Bernbach. He believes in the creative advertising of the 1970s and the new witty advertising campaigns introduced by Bernbach, such as his famous Volkswagen campaign (6-7). Sullivan believes this kind of advertising to be the best. He then moves into his experience in the advertising field and advice on how to make great ads. He starts by first telling his readers that their ads will be terrible in the beginning but not to worry because eventually “you’ll just start to get it” and you’ll be able to create great ads. At the end of the first chapter he invites you to follow him down the creative path of Mr. Bernbach and not Mr. Whipple (14-15).

In chapter two Sullivan offers advice on getting starting and the beginning of creating a great ad. He explains that the process and the industry may not always be as glamorous as you might expect and that there is a lot of time spent “with your feet up on the desk” thinking about an ad (17). When creating an ad for a product he acknowledges the fact that a product cannot be sold to someone who does not require it or cannot afford it, and more importantly “advertising can’t save a bad product” (19). Another important fact to remember is that the viewers of these advertisements are a lot more mature so the ad must be great in order to convince them to buy it (19). Sullivan says
that arrogance is important in creating an ad; you must believe that you will come up with a great ad. In his experience with creating ads, Sullivan says that you and your partner with probably brainstorm for days and not to worry because suddenly and randomly a great idea will come to you (22). Sullivan also notes that even though the effects of advertising may not be seen at right away, they may be slow but they are definitely there (26).

Now Sullivan offers his advice that he has learned from some great accounting people about the first step; the process before actually creating the ad. First it is very important to know the client’s product and business, as well as everything there is to know about the client’s customers (28-29). Secondly, Sullivan also says that it is helpful to be there for the original meeting because that is when the strategy is formed and make sure to determine the positioning of the product. Other advice he offers about the strategy is to keep it tight, simple, and to “make sure what you have to say really matters” (29-31). Sullivan also emphasizes the effectiveness of using focus groups before creating the ad. This way you can introduce several different strategies to focus groups and will be better able to determine which one works best. Another good idea before creating the ad to look at where your ad will be and what the consumers will be looking at when they see your ad. Then last but not least, your competitors. Know everything there is to know about your competitors because they are who you have to beat. Once all of this is done and the strategy is formed, the next step is actually creating the ad (32-33).

In chapter three Luke Sullivan offers several tips for coming up with a great ad during the brainstorming process. First, he says you must identify the problem. He
suggests turning the problem into a question and “[asking] yourself what would make you want to buy the product”. In order to come with a great ad that sells you must figure out what about the product makes it unique and better than the competitor’s (38). One way to help figure this out is to actually try the competitors’ products. Once you determine the unique benefit the product has to offer, Sullivan says to dramatize that benefit. He explains by using the example that “people don’t buy quarter-inch drill bits. They buy quarter-inch holes” (39). You must find the very essence of your product that will make people want to buy it.

Then Sullivan goes into some helpful tips on how to actually think of a great ad. He suggests first to just “say it straight” and then add onto it from there (40-41). Sullivan also gives advice about working with a partner. He says to allow yourself and your partner to come up with terrible ideas and not to judge any ideas. He suggests sharing any idea you have, even half-formed ideas so that you both can build on them. However, Sullivan says to also brainstorm alone without your partner to allow your own perspective to form into some ideas. Some helpful tactics to do during brainstorming include listing all the words and pictures you associate with your product or staring at an ad that generates the same emotion you want your ad to portray (43-45). Sullivan also emphasizes the importance of a good visual because a lot of times people do not stop to read advertisements. Sullivan says the best advertisements avoid the clichés, so you must come up with something interesting and original. However, Sullivan warns against visuals that are, for example, provocative just to be provocative; it must come from your product (50). Sullivan also stresses the involvement of the viewer with the advertisement. He says it is much more powerful to show, and just tell, your viewer
why they should buy your product (55). He also says it is more convincing if you do not sound or look like an ad. Sullivan reminds his readers that people do not watch television or buy magazines for the ads, so if your ad comes across as an ad, they are probably going to ignore it (65-66). He strongly stresses simplicity. He claims that “simple is hard to miss” because the message is clear and quick, before the viewer has time to look away. Also the viewer is more likely to remember something a simple message over a complex advertisement (70-71).

Chapter four is all about turning your idea into a finished ad on paper. First you put all your best ideas as sketches on the wall and write all you can about creative ideas for each ad. Sullivan says that “if it makes you laugh out loud, make it work. Somehow” because those ideas usually turn out to be the best (83). Then Sullivan goes on to talk about headlines and how to come up with a great headline. First of all, he says to get rid of any puns that came up in the creative process because they “have no persuasive value” (84). Sullivan also says that only the headline or the visual should be the brilliant idea that catches the viewer’s attention; it should be one or the other or they will take away from each other’s persuasiveness (90). Sullivan also adds some tips for any writing body copy. He says to have one theme and to convey it with a strong beginning. He suggests writing as if the brand itself were talking to the reader; talk with the personality of the product (99-101). Another helpful hint is to write like it is a personal letter to the reader to make it more intimate. Also always remember to be use strong but simple and understandable language that will not confuse the reader or make them turn the page (103). Sullivan concludes this chapter with some advice on what to do when you are stuck. His suggestions include working in a different environment, go
to the store of the product or get more product information, visualize yourself getting the idea, and remember to stay patient and relaxed because a great idea will eventually come to you (107-110).

Chapter five is all about making a great television ad. Again Sullivan covers the process before actually creating the ad first. First you must know how much money you have to spend before you create your ad. Then Sullivan says to write the ad before producing it. A few important suggestions that Sullivan offers are to be entertaining throughout the entire commercial and to try to demonstrate the benefit of your product. He also suggests writing sparingly because you do not have a lot of time to build up to your climax; it must be quick and to the point since most commercials are around 15 seconds long (119-125). When it comes to actually producing the ad, it is important to spend time finding the best producer and director for your project and someone who has experience producing commercials that have the same emotion as yours. Also try to get them involved from the very beginning so that you are able to “describe your vision” of the commercial from start to end (131-133). On the actual set of the production allow the producer and director to run everything. Sullivan speaks from experience that if you need to talk to an actor do it through the director or they tend to get very angry. This will also help keep things running smoothly. However, do not be afraid to say something if you disagree with the director because it is your commercial (137). Once the shoot is over be sure to find a really good editor who has a lot of experience because Sullivan says he has “had commercials literally saved by good editing” so it makes a big difference (139).
In chapter six Sullivan offers his advice on radio advertising. First you must keep in mind that radio is different from every other medium because it is entirely visual thus why it has been called “theatre of the mind” (144). First Sullivan says to “make sure your radio sport is important or scary or funny or interesting within the first five seconds” because if not your listener will quickly change the channel to find more music. For the same reason it is important to keep your commercial short and to the point. Sullivan suggests reading your script very slowly and timing it to make sure it is not too long (146-49). Reading out loud also helps to “make sure your writing sounds like everyday speech” (151). Sullivan says to keep your commercial entertaining to the end but to avoid jingles because they are “boring, corny, horrible, and sad” so he suggests something like a good sound effect that pertains to your product (154). Then Sullivan goes on to discuss production and says that the production period is where most radio spots fail. He offers several quick tips that include booking enough time in the studio so that you are not rushed to throw together your radio spot and eliminating all the extra stuff, such as cues for sound effects, from the script that the actors have to read so that it is easy to read. He also suggests making sure to not overproduce; again simplicity is key (160).

The chapters towards the end of the book have to do with interviewing and presenting your advertisements. When it comes to presenting your work to the client, Sullivan suggests developing a relationship with your client so that they are more willing to trust you. Your relationship with the client is very important because “they see you as their brand ambassador. They’re trusting you to accurately translate their corporate culture to the customer” so you have to make them believe in you to do so
(201). Another important factor to presenting an ad is to make sure you present your own work because you know it best. However, Sullivan offers an exception to this rule and that is if you are a terrible presenter. In this case however, it is very important for you to learn the skill of presenting, which Sullivan also offers advice for. His tips include practicing before you present but not memorizing a speech, instead list the main points you need to address in your presentation (201-202). He also suggests preparing yourself for every possible question that may come up after your presentation (204). Sullivan says not to hand out material before you present or otherwise your clients will be preoccupied with the script in front of them. Also try to maintain eye contact and speak with a tone of certainty because clients hate “risk-taking work” (203). Sullivan also suggests presenting a blueprint of the advertisement first so that the client can get a feel for things such as the typeface, the color, the format, etc. This way they are more prepared for when you unveil the ad, because that can be overwhelming for them and you want to make sure they take in every aspect of the ad (204). Once the client has seen the ad, Sullivan stresses the importance of keeping an open mind to problems or suggestions that arise. It is important to at least listen to and consider the clients’ ideas. If you disagree then “base your defense on strategy” and let them now step by step how you came up with your ad using all the information on the product you gathered (206). However, remember that you may have created a great ad that you love but in the end it is the client who is buying your ad (207-208).

Luke Sullivan also offers advice to people starting in the advertising business about putting together a portfolio. First of all you must find a good art director (or a writer) who you get along with. However, it is still possible to come up with great ads
and put together a portfolio working solo. When putting together a portfolio, Sullivan says to remember that brilliant ideas will make your portfolio great, not just a bunch of cool ads. So when you start your portfolio try to think of great ideas and not actual advertisements (236-237). Sullivan also says to focus on print because “most creative directors [he’s] talked with agree that if you can think conceptually in print, one day you can learn to do the same in broadcast” and print ads are easier and faster to present (239). A few other quick tips Sullivan offers are to study award annuals and analyze everything about them and also to find existing bad ads and find the idea within them and turn it into your own great ad. He also suggests having a variety of campaigns in your portfolio for several different kinds of goods and services, especially ones that are hard to advertise. Also use different style, voice, and emotion for each campaign to show your diversity and span of imagination. Sullivan also says not to play it safe because creative directors look for people who are willing to push the boundaries (239-241). Another tip for putting together your portfolio is to put your best ads as your first and last ones so that you start and end strong with a variety of ads in between. Sullivan says a good way to get your work out there for people to see is the internet because it’s there in a pinch if you need it and it shows a fair but of e-savvy…I know of many creative directors who actually prefer to see work online” especially now that internet is a new popular advertisement medium (245-246). If you decide to drop your portfolio off at an agency make sure you follow up and get an interview. When you do go in for an interview Sullivan says to be familiar with the agency and to be very personable. Sullivan also says to “resist the temptation to explain anything” but if asked about an ad be prepared to explain exactly how you came up with that ad (250-251). Sullivan also
says to be ready to take a different job other than the one you are trying to get because a lot of people start off with low-level jobs or a different department than the one they want but then move up or to a different job position, but remember to always work hard and do not underestimate your ability (252-254).

Overall I thought Hey Whipple, Squeeze This was a very informative book and that Luke Sullivan was a very entertaining author. A lot of the information in the book we have covered in class already but he offered a lot of new advice too. This book is good for people who want to become copywriters or art directors who are just starting in the business because he goes through the basic process of creating ads and offers his advice that he has learned from being in the business. Sullivan also offers good advice at the end of the book on how to get started in the advertising business. One thing I did not like about the book was that he seemed to favor one type of advertising, the kind of advertising that Bill Bernbach did and others during the Creative Revolution. However, I happen to like that kind of advertising and agree with everything he said about it, but I would not recommend this book to someone who wants a more broad outlook on creating advertisements. I would recommend Luke Sullivan as a great author though since he writes using his experience in the field and is very original and entertaining writer, so you can see that his advertisements must have the same creative quality.

Overall I thought Hey Whipple, Squeeze This was a great introduction into the world of advertising with a lot of advice to offer for beginners in the creation of advertisements.