
ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Advocacy, Inc.

"How Good Are Advocacy Ads?" by Lynn Adkins, in *Dun's Review* (June 1978), 666 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with other U.S. institutions, Big Business was subjected to severe press criticism, public skepticism, and increased federal regulation. A few corporation managers turned to advocacy advertising in response—either to upgrade their "image" or to speak out on major business-related issues.

Mobil Corp., with \$4 million budgeted for such advertising in 1978, took the most hard-hitting ideological stance, urging both energy deregulation and curbs on Big Government. The American Forest Institute adopted a softer line in its ads ("Trees, the Renewable Resource") against too-strict curbs on timber-harvesting.

How effective were the Mobil and A.F.I. ads? Adkins, a *Dun's Review* editor, cites a recent Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, Inc. poll of both the public and "leaders" in government, labor, Wall Street, etc. Mobil obtained higher readership (e.g., 90 percent of government leaders polled) but lower agreement (33 percent) than did A.F.I. (56 percent). Mobil's ads, said Yankelovich, were too "antagonistic" and "abrasive" for many of those polled; A.F.I.'s ads were better received.

A Mobil spokesman, Adkins reports, doubted that one could ever measure the effectiveness of the company's ads in quantitative terms.

On public-issue ads generally, the pollsters said, only 6 percent of the public found them "very credible," and as many as 53 percent said they were "not credible." Most companies, says Adkins, have chosen to run less obtrusive "soft-sell" ads to enhance their corporate images (Shell, Weyerhaeuser), and have opted for less expensive ways to influence policy, such as old-fashioned lobbying.

Help Wanted

"Second Thoughts About Illegal Immigrants" by Michael L. Wachter, in *Fortune* (May 22, 1978), 541 N. Fairbanks Ct., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

The influx of illegal immigrants from Mexico, Latin America, and Asia has continued despite the crowding of the unskilled labor market by both the 1950s "baby boom" generation and unprecedented numbers of young women.

This is partly explained, says Wachter, a University of Pennsylvania economist, by the fact that while unemployment averaged 6.25 percent between 1970 and 1977, generous welfare payments were reducing the total pool of job-seekers by lowering the cost of not working.

Despite Congress's extensions of minimum-wage coverage, there are