

ADVERTISING A RAW PRODUCT

Certain Philadelphia industries cannot be profitably advertised to the consumer. That is agreed.

Certain other Philadelphia industries which could be advertised still face many difficulties.

Every year, however, some product heretofore considered impossible to advertise is added to the list of successfully advertised articles.

In the story of one of these perhaps lies inspiration for some Philadelphia manufacturer who believes that advertising, while it may be efficacious for other kinds of business, would not do for his business.

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On August 8, 1914—note particularly that this was just one week after the outbreak of the war which is supposed to have had so disastrous an effect on business—there appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* a two-page advertisement for a certain make of *iron*.

Not a novelty or spectacular commodity.

Not an article that is put up in packages.

Not an article that is sold over the counter in retail stores.

Not even an article that can be bought direct by the consumer.

But a raw product, a staple in use for hundreds of years, never advertised before, made by many mills and sold to many manufacturers who make it into sheet metal products, which are in turn sold to hardware dealers, metal workers, and others, and then finally sold to the public.

If ever a thing must have looked hard to advertise when the idea was first suggested, it must have been iron.

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But ever since August, 1914, the American Rolling Mill Company, of Middletown, Ohio—an \$8,000,000 concern—has been advertising Armco Iron in a number of leading national periodicals, as well as in farm papers, trade papers and a few newspapers.

In a considerably shorter period than is usually required, the campaign has proved a success. At the end of six months *Printers' Ink*, in giving an account of the campaign, says: "Whether the field was ready for advertising such a product, whether the advertising was unusually good, or whatever the reason, the fact is that sales have been decidedly larger since the advertising began to run than in the corresponding period of the previous year, and that the sentiment of the whole field is changing from indifference or mild interest to active curiosity and orders.

"Distributors who were buying Armco sheet metal and Armco products before the inauguration

of the advertising campaign have been moved to a lively co-operation. And this attitude has naturally reacted on the salesmen. 'You have no idea how the advertising has helped me,' one of them wrote back to the office after his first trip out with the new literature. 'One stove manufacturer I wanted to see had always turned me down before. I took one of my cards and wrote on it: "It's important this time." I had something else than iron to talk about, and I sold him.'

How the advertising was done, how it was made interesting to the general public, how the uses of Armco iron were explained, how it was made clear just how the consumer could be sure of getting Armco iron, how the distributors were made enthusiastic for the campaign, how tags were worked out to be attached to products made of Armco iron—these are interesting but relatively unimportant details.

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"In 1756," says the United States Census. "Pennsylvania was spoken of as the most advanced of all the American colonies in regard to its iron works, and since that statement it has been prominent among the States in the iron and steel industry." Philadelphia, by the census of 1909, was producing more than \$11,000,000 worth of goods under the heading of iron and steel, steel works and rolling mills, and employing 5248 men in the industry. If any of Philadelphia's iron and steel manufacturers are interested in further details of the Armco advertising, they can readily obtain them.

A greater lesson of the campaign, however, is for many other Philadelphia manufacturers in various lines who are making raw products that are remanufactured—or "unadvertisable staples"—or goods that must pass through many hands to reach the consumer in a different form from that in which they leave Philadelphia.

Another great lesson is that the American Rolling Mill Company is only one of several manufacturers licensed to make iron by the special process which they have made the talking point of their campaign, a process which is said to make iron 99.84% pure. Any one of the licensees could have done it. Armco is drawing away from its competition by adding one selling feature that the others do not possess—national advertising—and thus insuring the future hold on the market.

Take it all in all, if you have sufficient energy, persistence and courage you can apply the force of advertising successfully to most of the so-called "unadvertisable" products.

The first step in finding out how, is to get into touch with a skilled advertising organization.

The Ladies' Home Journal *The Saturday Evening Post* *The Country Gentleman*

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY, INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA