

Building the Foundations of a Business Wider

Philadelphia manufacturers whose whole output goes to selling agents in New York or elsewhere—who do not control their market or know who their real customers are—who are forced into unprofitable competition because they have not firmly established their own trademarks—will do well to observe the experience of a Philadelphia manufacturer whose business was threatened by these very conditions and who met and overcame them through advertising.

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The Blaisdell Paper Pencil Company of Philadelphia was organized many years ago. Its product—pencils which are sharpened simply by nicking and pulling off a coil of paper—was an exclusive novelty and developed gradually as a competitor of the wooden pencil.

Just five years ago this company discerned that there were two conditions which demanded a change in the method of selling.

First, the entire output of the factory was handled on commission by a sales agent in New York. The goods were being sold, but not aggressively. The market belonged, not to the manufacturer, but to the sales agent. The whole business was built upon a single pier.

Second, the patents on the machines for making the paper pencil would eventually expire. Then it would be possible for other manufacturers to step in, make similar goods and cash in on the reputation made after long effort by the Blaisdell company, unless the Blaisdell name should by that time be so well established that competition would be unable to overtake it.

The solution of both problems was national advertising. Advertising to create a market which would be supported on a foundation of thousands of trade relations instead of one. Advertising to insure that market by creating an asset of good will among consumers.

In 1909 the Blaisdell company began to advertise nationally with an appropriation of \$3500. It has advertised ever since, always consistently and persistently, with a steady increase in the amount of advertising and a correspondingly steady increase in the volume of business.

In addition to the general purposes already outlined it was highly important to standardize Blaisdell pencils for the use of large business houses, a tremendous and stable market, and to develop the sale of graphite pencils. The Blaisdell crayons were well known, but few customers knew that the company made graphite pencils of all grades which had the same good features as the crayons.

The advertising has gone far toward accomplishing these results. The Saturday Evening Post, which for the past four years has been almost the only publication used, has been effective in reaching big business houses. One advertisement alone directed at firms employing 12 or more clerks brought 9000 inquiries—including 250 from dealers.

Blaisdell pencils today are carried not only by stationery stores all over the country, but by most big department stores. They are specified by school boards, telephone companies, railroad companies, banks and manufacturing corporations.

A circular letter which when sent out five years ago brought replies only from 1% of those addressed, after the advertising brought in nearly 100%.

The whole progress of the company, in the face of competition from many long-established, well-organized firms, has been remarkable.

The 1914 record of Blaisdell pencils stands out in sharp contrast to the records of unadvertised competitors.

And today the Blaisdell company controls its own market, knows who and where its customers are, and need not fear competition.

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How many Philadelphia manufacturers can say as much?

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