



## ADVERTISING—WITH NOTHING TO SELL

One of the recent remarkable developments of advertising is its use to tell the consumer about products which he never buys directly.

Raw products that have to be remanufactured, like iron for roofs, stoves, etc.—

Materials that disappear as ingredients in other products, like zinc in paint—

And particularly parts that enter into the interior mechanism of an automobile—

All of these have been advertised with marked success.

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There are not more than 150 automobile manufacturers. The market for automobile axles and bearings is confined entirely to these 150 customers.

Why, then, should makers of axles and bearings spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in a national periodical, with a circulation of 2,000,000, to sell their goods?

Obviously, a few salesmen, or direct mail matter, or publicity in trade papers would call for far less money—and would reach most if not all of the 150 customers.

And beyond that.

Inevitable economic laws are operating in the automobile industry, as in other industries, to reduce the number of manufacturers. Instead of 150 car makers, there will ultimately, in all probability, be 40 or less.

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As a matter of fact, it is this small and decreasing number of customers that makes widespread advertising necessary.

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The fewer automobile manufacturers there are, the larger the volume of each one that remains.

The larger the volume, the greater the aggregate sum of money represented by each separate part of the car—and the greater the saving possible by close buying. Automobile manufacturers are becoming closer buyers every day.

Furthermore, as the number of customers decreases each one becomes more and more important to the parts maker—and competition for the large orders becomes keener.

A few years ago it became evident that as a result of these conditions the prices of parts were being hammered down to a point which created a condition that was far from healthy.

For the car buyer it meant a lessening of quality, perhaps weakening the car. For the car manufacturer it meant the danger which always comes from lessened quality. And for the parts maker, it meant turning out a poorer product that would not give satisfaction, or else losing money.

One of the leading makers of axles and bearings then and there decided that he was going to continue to put into his product the quality that he believed was right, in spite of price competition.

The way to do this was to teach the consumer to appreciate and expect good axles and good bearings on his car.

This meant national advertising—the same method which was being used to sell the cars themselves.

In 1912, therefore, a strong campaign was begun in *The Saturday Evening Post* and other periodicals of wide range.

This advertising had not been long in progress before the automobile manufacturer and his salesmen found that the presence of these advertised parts had become an additional talking point, and their absence a handicap.

If there, they suggested quality throughout the whole car.

If not there, the salesman had to explain why not.

Other manufacturers of good quality parts saw the logic and the advantage of this advertising, and adopted the same method. Today we see national advertising for many products which the consumer does not buy directly, but which are essential parts of a car—such as springs, brake linings, etc.

The best proof of the success of such advertising is the fact that most well-known cars today use the well-advertised parts—and that there are constantly more parts makers beginning to employ advertising to the consumer.

Recently one of the parts manufacturers wrote to all his customers, saying: "We spend in advertising 1½ per cent. of our gross volume. Would you as a customer prefer that we continue this advertising or that we reduce the price that much?"

And practically unanimously the car manufacturers said, in effect: "Keep up the advertising. It helps us sell our cars."

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Incidentally, from 55 to 60 per cent. of this advertising has been in *The Saturday Evening Post*.

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The chief significance of this story is for manufacturers in other lines than automobiles.

There is an economic law, as sure as the law of gravity itself, which is bringing about in every industry the same change that has marked the automobile industry.

The consumer is king.

No matter to whom you bill your goods, the person who buys them is the ultimate consumer—and that person must be sold.

The manufacturer who has the alternative of losing his hold or meeting cheap, shoddy competition by making poorer goods—the manufacturer who has each year fewer and bigger customers—who is becoming more and more dependent upon large orders—that man is already under the pressure of this economic law.

And in dozens of industries during the next decade there will be leaders who will do as automobile parts makers have done—step out of the ruck into the clear road of demand from the ultimate consumer.

### THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA

*The Ladies' Home Journal*

*The Saturday Evening Post*

*The Country Gentleman*