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Tiny by emailing them at high at tiny.com. Tiny will respond within 48 hours. If you have a business that you want to sell now or in the future, make sure you get in touch with Tiny first and you can do that by emailing them at high at tiny.com. This episode is also brought to you by Meter. Meter makes fast, secure, and reliable internet and Wi-Fi that's as easy to switch on as water or electricity. That is actually why the founders called the company Meter. There's power meters and there's water meters for every building. There should be one for internet, networking, and Wi-Fi. Meter gives you faster, simpler, more secure internet and Wi-Fi for your business and Meter works in any commercial space. It could be an office, a warehouse, a laboratory, Meter works everywhere. Meter gives your business streamlined design and installation, powerful hardware and smart software that they manage for you and expert support.

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one monthly rate. Check out their website. It's absolutely beautiful and explains all the value that Meter can provide for your business. And you can do that by going to meter.com forward slash founders. That's meter.com forward slash founders. And one more thing before we jump into this episode on one of my favorite founders of all time, David Ogilvy has become a personal hero of mine. I want to tell you about one of my favorite podcast episodes that I listened to in the last six months. It comes from one of my favorite podcasts ever, Invest Like the Best. I'll leave a link down below, but if you can just search in whatever podcast player you're listening to, search for Invest Like the Best and listen to episode 318, Doug Leone, Lessons from a Titan. Doug's approach to his work is very similar to a lot of the founders that you and I study on this podcast. That's Invest Like the Best, episode 318, Lessons from a Titan.

14 years before writing these confessions, I had gone to New York and started in an advertising agency. Americans thought it was crazy. What could a Scotsman know about advertising?

My agency was an immediate and meteoric success. I wrote this book during my summer vacation in 1962. I thought it would sell 4,000 copies. To my surprise, it was a runaway bestseller and so far has sold over a million copies. Why did I write it? First, to attract new clients to my advertising agency. Second, to condition the market for a public offering of our shares. Third, to make myself better known in the business world. It achieved all

three of these purposes. My colleagues at Ogilvy and Mather have largely followed my ideas and they have sold a lot of products for a lot of manufacturers. With the result that our agency is now 60 times as big as it was when I wrote this book. The book was first published in 1963. He is writing the introduction to the updated version 25 years later. I get letters from strangers who thank me for the dramatic improvement in their sales when they follow the advice contained in this book. And I meet big shots in the world of marketing who say that they owe their careers to reading my book. If you detect a slight stench of conceit in this book, I would have you know that my conceit is selective. I am a miserable duffer in everything except advertising. I cannot read a balance sheet, work a computer, ski, sail, play golf, or paint. But when it comes to advertising, advertising age magazine says that I am the creative king of advertising. When Fortune magazine published an article about me entitled it, is David Ogilvy a genius? I asked my lawyer to sue the editor for the question mark. Funny enough, that's how I originally discovered Ogilvy. I was reading Warren Buffett shareholder letters and he kept referring to David Ogilvy as a genius. Confessions of an advertising man says nothing about corporate culture, notably the corporate culture of advertising agencies. In 1962, I had never heard of corporate culture, nor had anybody else. But thanks to two students of business, Terrence Deal and Alan Kennedy, we now know that people who built the companies for which America is famous all worked obsessively to create strong cultures within their organizations. Companies that have cultivated their individual identities by shaping values, making heroes, spelling out rights and rituals, and acknowledging the cultural network have an edge. The head of one of the biggest agencies recently told me that Ogilvy and Mather is the only agency in the world with a real corporate culture. It may be this more than anything else which differentiates us from our competitors. Through maddening repetition, some of my maxims have been woven into our culture. Here are some of them. Number one, we sell or else. Number two, you cannot bore people into buying your product. You can only interest them in buying it. Number three, we prefer the discipline of knowledge to the anarchy of ignorance. We pursue knowledge the way a pig pursues truffles. A blind pig can sometimes find truffles, but it helps to know that they grow in oak forests. Number four, we hire gentlemen with brains. That's one of my favorite ones. Number five, the consumer is not a moron. She is your wife. Don't insult her intelligence. Number six, unless your campaign contains a big idea, it will pass like a ship in the night. I doubt if more than one campaign in a hundred contains a big idea. I'm supposed to be one of the most fertile inventors of big ideas, but in my long career, I have not had more than 20. Number seven, only first class business and that in a first class way. Number eight, never run an advertisement you would not want your own family to see. And number nine is Ogilvy's reaffirmation of his belief in the individual capacity for greatness. Search all the parks in your cities. You'll find no statues of committees. That was an excerpt from the book I'm going to talk to you about today, which is Confessions of an Advertising Man, and it was written by David Ogilvy. Ogilvy has become one of my personal heroes, somebody I did not know even existed before I started a Founders podcast. It's been over almost two over two years now, almost two years since I've last done an episode on him. This will be the fifth podcast that I've made about him. And I just think it's been way too long since I spent some time in the mind of David Ogilvy. So that's why I'm rereading this book right now. I want to finish out the introduction before I go into a

little bit about his early life, because he's just got a bunch of great ideas. That's really what I think this podcast will be. It's just a bunch of fantastic ideas that Ogilvy learned over his multiple decade career. This is something that he's famous for saying it's one of his most repeated aphorisms, and that's pay peanuts and you get monkeys. Clients who haggle over their agency's compensation are looking through the wrong end of the telescope. Instead of trying to shave a few measly cents off the agency's 15%, they should concentrate on getting more sales results from their 85% that they spend on time and space. That is where the leverage is. No manufacturer ever got rich by underpaying his agency. Pay peanuts and you get monkeys. And that right there is an example of why spending time reading Ogilvy. I think he's the best writer that I've ever read for anybody out of any of the books that I've read for the podcast, because he's a master at language and just condensing these ideas down so that you actually stick in your brain. You can read that entire paragraph or you could just read the last sentence, pay peanuts and you get monkeys

and you understand what he's saying. And he'll do this. He repeats these aphorisms and maxims over

and over and over again. And it's just a way to express these ideas that he deeply, deeply believes in. One idea that he deeply, deeply believes in is that you should study the experience and the great work that came before you. And if you don't, you're an ignorant amateur, which I love. He says advertising agencies still waste their clients money repeating the same mistakes. During a 10-hour train ride, I read the ads in three magazines. Most of them violated elementary principles, which were discovered in years gone by. The copywriters and art directors who created them are ignorant amateurs. What is the reason for their failure to study experience? Are they afraid that knowledge would impose some discipline on them or expose their incompetence? So he ends the introduction of this updated copy of Confessions of an Advertising Man with his last will and testament. He's like, okay, these are the most valuable lessons that I've learned.

And this is updated in 1988. He's going to die about 10 years later, 11 years later in 1999.

And he says, so I'm just going to give you a couple of these ideas that I think are good.

Creating successful advertising is a craft. It's part inspiration, but mostly know how and hard work. If you have a modicum of talent and know which techniques work at the cash register, you will go a long way. Here's another one. The temptation to entertain instead of selling is contagious as something he does not like. That's why when he's building his corporate culture, the second thing that he would repeat over and over again is that we sell or else. We're not here to win awards. We're here to sell products for our customers.

Another one of his lessons. The difference between one advertisement and another when measured in terms of sales can be as much as 19 to one. So that sentence right there is why, if you're listening to this right now, I would immediately search for Ogilvy and Advertising and buy that book before you finish this podcast because that is the most, that book I think was also published in 1988, or sometimes I think it was written 20 years after this book. And so he had accumulated another like two decades of experience in advertising between writing the Confessions of an Advertising Man and Ogilvy on Advertising. There is a bunch of examples in Ogilvy on Advertising and what he just said and why it's so important to learn this craft because you're thinking you're running ads and yet one ad, the difference between one ad or another

can generate as much as 19 times the amount of sales. Another idea from Ogilvy. The key to success

is to promise the consumer a benefit like better flavor, wider wash, more miles per gallon, and a better, or a better complexion. Another one. What works in one country almost always works in other countries. Something I realized in rereading this book right after I read James Dyson's autobiography for the third or fourth time is a lot of their ideas are the same. James says that one editorial, one great editorial is worth a thousand advertisements. Ogilvy says editors of magazines are better communicators than advertising people. Copy their techniques. This is also another idea that Dyson repeats in his book that Ogilvy repeats in this one. Most campaigns are too complicated. They reflect a long list of objectives and try to reconcile the diversion, diversion views of too many executives by attempting to cover too many things. They achieve nothing, nothing. Their advertisements look like the minutes of a committee. In Dyson's autobiography, which I just covered again on episode 300, he says you simply cannot mix your messages when selling something new. A consumer can barely handle one great new idea, let alone two or even several. And then the last ideas from this section is good campaigns can run for many years without losing their selling power. My eye patch campaign for Hathaway Shirts ran for 21 years. My campaign for Dove soap has been running for 31 years and it is now a best seller.

So the first time I read this book was over four years ago. And in my mind, the reason I picked it up, I was like, okay, I want more, I want like an autobiography of Ogilvy. And that's, that's, that's how I remembered the book in my mind and realized that the autobiographical section of the book is like three pages. And most of it is just straight idea after idea after idea that help you sell more products. So I do want to go over his background because again, I just I love his writing and you'll see his personality jumps off the page. My mother was a beautiful and eccentric

Irish woman. She disinherited me on the grounds that I was likely to acquire more money than was good for me without any help from her. I could not disagree. At the age of nine, I was sent to board at an aristocratic school for boys. The headmaster wrote of me, he has a distinctly original mind. He's inclined to argue with his teachers and to try and convince them that he is right, and the books are wrong. But this is perhaps further proof of his originality. At the age of 13, I was sent to a Scottish school whose Spartan disciplines had been established by my great uncle. After I went to Oxford and made a botch of it, I was too preoccupied to do any work and was duly expelled. And in this paragraph is what makes I think his his personal story just so amazing. He went through multiple decades of trying to find his life's work. That was in 1931, the bottom of the depression. For the next 17 years, while my friends were establishing themselves as doctors, lawyers, civil servants and politicians, I had ventured about the world uncertain of my purpose. I was a chef in Paris, a door-to-door salesman, a social worker in the slums of Edinburgh, an associate of Dr. Gallup in research for the motion picture industry, and an assistant to Sir William Stevenson. I think this was the guy that was one of the inspirations for the character James Bond. An assistant to Sir William Stevenson in the British Security Coordination Department and a farmer with the Amish in Pennsylvania. And then he goes into the fact that that's not what he expected when he was growing up. I had expected to become Prime Minister when I grew up. Instead, I finally became an advertising agent on Madison Avenue. The revenues of my 19 clients are now greater than the revenue of Her Majesty's government. My father used to say of a product that it was very well spoken of in the advertisements. I spend my life speaking well of products in advertisements. By writing this book in the

old-fashioned first-person singular, I have committed an offense against a convention of contemporary American manners. But I think it's artificial to write we when I'm confessing my sins and describing my adventures. And then for the rest of the book, it's just David giving us ideas that he learned through the experience of his multiple decade career. This is one of my favorite parts of the entire book. It's the fact these are lessons that David learned working under a master chef. And he realizes like, oh, these lessons can be applied to any field. So he says, managing an advertising agency is like managing any other creative organization. A research laboratory, a magazine, an architect's office, or a great kitchen. 30 years ago, I was chef at the Hotel Met Majestic in Paris. There were 37 chefs in our brigade. From morning to night, we sweated and shouted and cursed and cooked. Every man was inspired by one ambition to cook better

than any other chef had ever cooked before. So he's going to work under the head chef, this guy named Petar. And so it says I have always believed that if I can understand how Petar, the head chef, inspired such white hot morale, I could apply the same kind of leadership to the management of my advertising agency. To begin with, he was the best cook in the whole brigade. And we knew it. It was inspiring to work for a supreme master. He ruled with a rod of iron, and we were terrified of him. He praised very seldom. But when he did, we were exalted to the skies. Today, I praise my staff as rarely as he praised his chefs in the hopes that they too will appreciate him more than a steady gush of appreciation. Here's another trait that Ogilvy copied from the head chef. And this is why he mentioned it earlier. He can't stand people that are bad at their jobs. He calls them ignorant amateurs. Ogilvy was rather ruthless. And so was the head chef. He did not tolerate incompetence. He knew that it is demoralizing for professionals to work alongside incompetent amateurs. He uses that term incompetent amateurs a lot. This part, when I got to this part, reminded me of what Steve Jobs, Steve Jobs is a player theory. So it says, Jobs had latched on to what he believed was a key management lesson from his Macintosh experience. You have to be ruthless if you want to build a team of a players. Let me pause there. What did the head chef do? He did not tolerate incompetence. He knew

that it was demoralizing for professionals to work alongside incompetent amateurs. Let's go back to a quote from Steve Jobs. It's too easy as your team grows to put up with a few B players. And then they attract a few more B players. And soon you will even have some C players, Steve said. The Macintosh experience taught me that A players like to work only, only with other A players, which means you cannot indulge B players. Back to more lessons from the head chef. He taught me the exorbitant standards of service. For example, he once heard me tell a waiter that we were fresh out of the plate du jour and almost fired me for it. In a great kitchen, he said, one must always honor what one has promised on the menu. And then Ogilvy tells us how he used this idea, building Ogilvy and Mather. Today, I see red when anybody at Ogilvy and Mather tells a client that we cannot produce an advertisement on the day we have promised it. In the best establishments, which is the only, the only thing that Ogilvy was interested in. He wanted to build a first class business in a first class way. He says over and over again in all of his writings, is that he's not trying to be the biggest, he's trying to be the best. And you have to understand that if you're going to read Ogilvy, that's all he cares about. Supreme excellence being better than every single other person in his craft. That is what's so fascinating about this guy. And again, why the hell would Warren Buffett call him a genius? How many people, how many managers, founders of

businesses has, has Warren seen in his lifetime, there should be like sirens going off in your mind, take, Hey, maybe you should pay attention to this guy, maybe you should read his book. I just love stuff like this. Today, I see red when anybody at Ogilvy and Mather tells a client that we cannot produce an advertisement on the day we have promised it in the best establishments, which is all that he's trying to build, right? In the best establishments promises are always kept whatever it may cost in agony and overtime. Damn, that is good writing, whatever it may cost in agony and overtime. And then I love how he combines the, the lessons he learned and the experience he learned at Hotel Majestic, with now running his world class agency for the last 14 years

at the time he's writing this, I've come to the conclusion that the top man, so he is talking about the role of the founder here. Okay. And he'd be very clear about this. He is discussing the role of the founder. I've come to the conclusion that the top man has one principal responsibility to provide an atmosphere in which creative mavericks can do useful work. So then he goes into something that he had to do as his company grew. It's like, when it's a small team, you can talk to them every day. But at this point, he's writing, he's like 500 employees. So once a year, what he would do is he would gather everybody together. And he's just going to teach, teach, teach. This is where he talked about the importance. They didn't call it company culture, but that's what we would call it today. And so he says like every year he'd gather them, and he talks about what kind of behavior that he admires and that he expects from every single person in the organization. So I'm going to go over the 10 things that he tells him. But what I thought was so interesting too is after, after he tells his team what he expects of them, he tells his team what he expects of himself. So it says, I admire, this is another great thing about his writing. You remember it, it's very easy to read. And because he loves these numbered lists. Number one, I admire people who work hard, who bite the bullet. I dislike passengers who don't pull their weight in the boat. It is more fun to be overworked than to be underworked. There is an economic factor built into hard work. The harder you work, the fewer employees we need, and the more profit we make. The more profit we make, the more money becomes available for all of us. Number two, I admire people with first class brains, because you cannot run a great great advertising agency or a great company without brainy people. But brains are not enough unless they are combined with intellectual honesty.

Number three, I have an inviolable rule against employing Nepots and spouses because they breed politics. Whenever two of our people get married, one of them must depart. I wonder if that's even legal anymore. Number four, I admire people who work with gusto. If you don't enjoy what you're doing, this is this is my favorite one of this entire section. I admire people who work with gusto. gusto is a word he uses a lot to. I admire people who work with gusto. If you don't enjoy what you're doing, I beg you to find another job. Remember the Scottish proverb, be happy while you're living for a long time dead. Number five, I despise totes who suck up to their buses. They are generally the same people who bully their subordinates. Number six, I admire self confident professionals, the craftsmen who do their jobs with superlative excellence. See what I mean? He just it's excellence above everything else with ugly. They always seem to respect the expertise of their colleagues. Number seven, I admire people who hire

subordinates who are good enough to succeed them. I pity people who are so insecure that they feel compelled to hire inferiors as their subordinates. Number eight, I admire people who build up their

subordinates because that is the only way we can promote from within the ranks. I detest having to go outside to fill important jobs and I look forward to the day when that will never be necessary. Number nine, I admire people with gentle manners who treat other people as human beings. I abhor quarrelsome people. I abhor people who engage in paper warfare. The best way to keep the peace is to be candid. And the last one, number 10, I admire well organized people who deliver their work on time. The Duke of Wellington never went home until he had finished all of the work on his desk. And then he transitions into what he expects from himself. Number one, I try to be fair and to be firm to make unpopular decisions without cowardice, to create an atmosphere of stability and to listen more than I talk. Number two, I try to sustain the momentum of the agency, its ferment, its vitality, its forward thrust. And that's just another example of why I consider Okavi one of my heroes. I look at him like, man, I want to be like this, just his mastery of language to get you to remember the ideas. He's just so good at this. Number three, I try to build the agency by landing new accounts. Number four, I try to win the confidence of our clients at the highest level. Number five, I try to make sufficient profits to keep you all from perjury in old age. Number six, I plan our policies far into the future. Number seven, I try to recruit people of the highest quality at all levels to build the hottest staff in the agency business. And number eight, I try to get the best out of every man and women in the agency. And then he goes into the fact that his goal is to pursue excellence over a bigness. I have no ambition to preside over a vast bureaucracy. That is why we only have 19 clients. The pursuit of excellence is less profitable than the pursuit of bigness, but it can be more satisfying. My success or failure, and this is something that he just, I mean, he shares again, I'm going to use the example of Steve Jobs. This is from episode 299 from that new book on Steve Jobs that was just released for free by Steve Jobs Archive, where Steve said, that's been the most important lesson I've learned in business, that the dynamic range of people dramatically exceeds things you encounter in the rest of our normal lives. And to try to find those really great people who love what they do, Olga will be saying the same thing right here to all of his people. My success or failure at the head of this agency depends more than anything else on my ability to find people who can create great campaigns, people with fire in their bellies. And then he gives advice to other people trying to recruit really talented people. He's got a maxim that he's going to repeat 5000 times. And it's two words, tolerate genius. Everybody's like, Oh, I want the most talented people, not realizing the most talented people are usually highly disagreeable. They're Mavericks, they're non conformist, they're very, very difficult to deal with. And he says, like, don't strangle the goose that lays the golden egg, you have to understand that there's a reason like the most talented people are going to, you know, have the, the, in many cases, these hard to deal with personalities. And he says, the business community wants remarkable advertising, but turns a cold shoulder to the kind of people who can produce it. So then he's going to reference one of his advertising heroes, this guy named Albert Lasker. I read, just like I always do, if I find somebody I admire, and then they talk about who they admire, I have to go and read the biography, make an episode on it. If you haven't listened to it, it's episode 206, 206. Albert Lasker made more money in advertising than anybody else. And because he was able to, like he understood what, what Ogilvy is trying to tell us is like, you want remarkable advertising, you want remarkable talent, and then you want them to be like conformists. And like, that's not going to work. And so he says, that is why most advertisements are so infernally dull, because they don't, they're made by dull people,

right? Albert Lasker made \$50 million, partly because he could stomach the atrocious manners of his great copywriters. And they list them. One of these guys is this guy named Claude Hopkins. I've done two podcasts on Ogilvy talks about Hopkins over and over again. He says, you could, you shouldn't, no one should be allowed to ever create an ad without reading Hopkins book scientific advertising six times. And so Hopkins is a main character in Albert Lasker's biography as well. And then Ogilvy expounds on why there's such crappy advertising everywhere. He says, some of the mammoth agencies are now being managed by second generation caretakers who floated to the top of their organizations because they were smooth contact men. But these type of men cannot create potent campaigns. And Ogilvy summarizes his main point here. Beautifully. Talent, I believe, is most likely to be found among non conformist dissenters and rebels. And so just like he said in the introduction, he is constantly insulting and making fun of these businesses that are run by committee. He, like Edwin Land, like Steve Jobs, like a bunch of the people you and I study in the podcast, he believes in the capacity for individual greatness. He hates teamwork, calls teamwork. I think there's a line later on the book, like teamwork is just like this made up term by mediocre men. So this is very, I'll get there in one second. I just love this guy. It is very fascinating. Because I think this is, you know, you hear me talk over and over again, the importance of building ourselves into formidable people. And I'm pretty sure like becoming a formidable individual. I've repeated it over and over again for over the last couple of years. And I'm pretty sure that idea came from Ogilvy in this book. I think that might be the first time I've ever heard that. And something that just stuck in my mind. But before I get there, he has this this great idea where I do think like you have the benefit of being incapable of logical thought. This is going to sound crazy. But listen to what he says here. The majority of businessmen are incapable of original thinking, because they're unable to escape from the tyranny of reason. Their imaginations are blocked. I am almost incapable of logical thought. But I have developed techniques for keeping open the telephone line to my unconscious in case that disorderly repository has anything to tell me. I listen to a great deal of music. I take long hot baths. I garden. I go into retreat among the Amish. He's not kidding about that, by the way. I watch birds. I go for long walks in the country. And I take frequent vacations so that my brain can lie fallow. I think that is the most important phrase in this entire this entire paragraph. Give your brain a rest. So my brain can lie fallow. No golf, no cocktail parties, no tennis, no bridge, no concentration, only a bicycle. While thus employed in doing nothing, I receive a constant stream of telegrams from my unconscious. And these become the raw material for my advertisements. But more is required. And he's going to list some traits that he desires in himself and others. But more is required, hard work, an open mind, and an ungovernable curiosity. And then he states his belief in the individual capacity for greatness. I have observed that no creative organization, whether it is a research laboratory, a magazine, a parish kitchen, an advertising agency will produce a great body of work unless it is led by a formidable individual. And if founders wasn't called founders, that's what it would be called because that is who we are studying. We are studying formidable individuals. And formidable individuals do not have bland personalities. Few of the great creators have bland personalities. They are cantankerous egotists, the kind of men who are unwelcome in the modern corporation. Consider Winston Churchill. He drank like a fish. He was capricious and willful. When opposed, he salt. He was rude to fools. He was wildly extravagant. He wept on the slightest provocation.

He was inconsiderate to his staff. Yet Lord Allenbrook, his chief of staff, would write later, I shall look back on the years I worked with him as some of the most difficult and trying ones in my life. For all that, I thank God that I was given the opportunity of working alongside of such a man and having my eyes open to the fact that occasionally such supermen exist on the earth. Okay, so then he has an entire chapter on how to get clients and he goes into what are some of the customer acquisition techniques that he used when he was starting his advertising agency. He says 15 years ago, I was an obscure tobacco farmer in Pennsylvania. Today, I preside over one of the best advertising agencies in the United States with buildings of 55 million a year. How did this come to pass? On the day in 1948, when I hung out my shingle, I issued this following order of the day. So now this is Ogilvy writing, he says, this is a new agency struggling for its life. For some time we shall be overworked and underpaid. In hiring, the emphasis will be on youth. We are looking for young Turks. I have no use for totes or hacks. I seek gentlemen with brains. And what's remarkable is how much he wrote this out in advance and he wanted it becoming true. Agencies are as big as they deserve to be. We are starting this one on a shoestring, but we are going to make it a great agency before 1960, what he did. And he also the very next day, he made a list of the five clients that he wanted the most. And so some of these are like Campbell Soup Company, remember this is more than half a century ago, Shell, all these other companies. This is the crazy thing. He has this footnote here. He says, to pick such blue chip targets was an act of mad presumption, but all five of them are now clients of Ogilvy and Mather. And so when he has no money and no one knows who he is, all of his client acquisition has to be outbound. So he's like, okay, well, what's the smartest play here? And he comes, he does something that's really smart. He's like, okay, well, if you already have, you're an existing company, you already have an advertising agency, maybe you like them, what's the chance I'm going to be able to go in there and convince you to go with me? I have no proven record. So this is what he did. Following Henry Ford's advice to his dealers that they should solicit by personal visitation, I started by soliciting advertisers who did not employ an agency at all. He also does something that I thought was genius because this is genius the first time I read this book. And I still think it's genius. He does this like highly targeted, direct mail campaign, but it's not just, hey, Ogilvy, I can do your advertising. He doesn't even do that at all. He sends useful and valuable information that pertains to them. Let me tell you what I mean. I sent frequent progress reports to 600 people on every walk of life. This barrage of direct mail was read by the most august of advertisers. For example, when I solicited part of the Seagram account, Sam Bromfman, who's the founder of Seagrams, I think I covered him back on like episode 115. He's got a crazy life story. For example, when I solicited part of the Seagram account, Sam Bromfman played back to me the last two paragraphs of a 16 page speech that I had sent him shortly before. And he hired us. Gentle reader, if you are shocked by these confessions of self self advertisement, I can only plead that if I had behaved in a more professional way, it would have taken me 20 years to arrive. I had neither the time nor the money to wait. I was poor, unknown, and in a hurry. And so another thing that he repeats over and over again, is his belief in midnight oil, his belief in hard work. He says next to luck, midnight oil is the best weapon to use in hunting new business. And so a few pages later, he demonstrates this and I just wrote it the top of the page. How bad do you want it? How bad do you want it? The biggest account I ever got was Shell, so the oil company, right? The Shell

people saw the work that he had done. This is later in his career, he had done some great advertising work for Rolls Royce. And so they, the Shell people send this like long questionnaire. And I think it's, they're trying to test out, or there's a competition, I think there's like something like, I don't know, 15 or 18 different potential advertising agencies. And so Ogilvy's like, okay, there's, you know, maybe a thousand advertising agencies out there. I'm down to maybe the, the, the, now, now that the numbers from a thousand, now I'm to 15, how can I make myself stand out again? How bad do you want it? So they send out this long questionnaire, all these agencies are supposed to fill it out, send it back. And Ogilvy does it himself. He says, I stayed up all night drafting answers to the Shell questionnaire. My answers were more candid than his customary. Another way to say, I was trying to differentiate myself, right? My answers were more candid than his customary. But I thought they would make a favorable impression on Max Burns, who at that time, was the president of Shell. The next morning I learned that he had gone to England. So he fills out the questionnaire, sends it to Max, thinks Max is going to get it. He's like, oh no, Max isn't in New York. He went to England. What do you think Ogilvy is about to do? What would most people do? They're like, oh, sit there and just wait till he gets back. No, wrong answer. The next morning I learned that he had gone to England. So I flew to London and left a message at his hotel saying that I wanted to see him for 10 days. There was, there was no reply and I had almost given up hope. When my telephone rang and it said, uh, and he reported that Mr. Burns wanted me to lunch with him on the following day. Now this is just a good, this is also, he said, midnight luck and midnight oil, right? That's what you need in the hunt for, uh, for new business. So imagine trying to chase down the president of Shell and to prove to him how bad you wanted his account, right? Doesn't hear from him for 10 days. The day he says, oh, come to lunch with me tomorrow. Ogilvy was going to be lunching with the Secretary of State of Scotland, right? Again, that looks good on Ogilvy. He's like, oh, this guy must be important. Uh, for 10 days there was no reply and almost gave it up hope. My telephone rang. Mr. Burns wanted me to lunch with him on the following day. I had already engaged myself to lunch with the Secretary of State for Scotland. So I sent Burns the following signal. Mr. Ogilvy. Now this is hilarious. He's writing this. He doesn't say, Hey, I'm having lunch. Mr. Ogilvy is lunching with the Secretary of State of Scotland at the House of Commons. They would be delighted if you would join them. He wrote it himself. I don't know why I find this so funny. He wrote it himself. So what happens? Mr. Burns, like, yeah, I'll come along. And so he says on the way to the house, I was able to give Burns the gist of my answers to his questionnaire in person. You cannot understate how important in person is. It'll always be important. So I gave him my answers to the questionnaire. Back in New York, the next day, he introduced me to the man who's about to succeed him as the president of Shell. Three weeks later, the new president telephoned me to say that we got the account. So let's go back to this idea of the importance of making yourself into a formidable individual. One of the reasons is the better you are at doing that, the less competition you have. And he talks about this, like he knows how good they are. So he says, we take immense pains to select our clients. It is not generally realized that there aren't enough first class agencies to go around. So by prioritizing excellence, right? Maybe there, there might be a thousand good agencies in the world, there might be 15 great agencies in the world, there might be five truly excellent agencies in the world. So his whole point is like, just keep doing more work that other people won't do, make yourself into a formidable individual. And as a result, you'll

just have less competition than the mediocre majority. If you set high standards in one department, you're likely to set high standards in every department. The number of men who can preside over an agency's entire creative output can be numbered on the fingers of one hand. He clearly knows that he's one of them. He calls them, he calls, he's a weird term for this, for super child supremely talented people, he calls them trumpeter swans, which is just bizarre. He says these rare trumpeter swans must be capable of inspiring a motley crew of talented people like writers and artists, right? They must be sure-footed judges of campaigns for a wide range of different products. They must be good presenters, and also salespeople, and they must have a colossal appetite for midnight oil. See? See what I mean here? He finds these terms, these distinctive

terms, and he repeats them over and over and over and over again. How many times do you use the word midnight oil in the books so far? It's probably like the fifth time I read it, and I'm only in page 69. Word got around that I was one of these rare birds, and it occurred to several of the big agencies that they should hire me, even if they had to take my whole agency, even if it took, even if they had to take my whole agency to get me. And so what he's referencing there is that Real recognizes Real. So you have all these other formidable advertising agency founders, they're a little bit more established than Ogilvy was at this point in his career. And so what do they always try to do? They try to buy them. Smart on their part, no doubt, and also smart on his part to say nope. And part of the reason he would say no is because he wants to be a great man. He doesn't want to work for a great man. He's got this great, I always say one of my favorite, descriptions of the role of the founder came from this description of Steve Jobs. It says that Apple was just Steve Jobs with 10,000 lives. Ogilvy says that a great company is just a length and shadow, the length and shadow of a great individual. Some agencies pander to the craze for doing everything in committee. They boast about teamwork and to cry the role of the individual, but no team can write an advertisement. And I doubt whether there is a there is a single agency of any consequence. So again, goes back to this whole thing is like, I don't care about you, the mediocre majority, I'm care about excellence, right? And the way to think about it is like an agency of any consequence. So he's like not talking about the the agencies that are ruled by committee, only interested in competing with and being my peer group is excellent people, right? So he says they boast about teamwork and to cry the role of the individual, but no team can write an advertisement. And I doubt whether there is a single agency of any consequence, which is not the length and shadow of one man are said another way Apple is Steve Jobs with 10,000 lives. Then he continues on the steam that's really important to have ridiculously, like your entire you hold your team to ridiculously high standards. And he says, if you think that your business is performing badly, don't beat around the bush. Speak your mind loud and clear, disastrous consequences can arise when a founder pussy foots in his day to day dealings with his business. It is better to say, what you have just shown me is not up to your usual high standard. Please take another crack at it. That's a great, that's very diplomatic actually, right? It's better to say, what you have just shown me is not up to usual high standard, please take another crack at it. At the same time, you should explain exactly what you find inadequate about the submission. Do not leave your team to guess, set high standards, discourage bunting, make it plain that you expect your agency to hit home runs and pour on the praise when they do. And when I got to that part, it reminded me of this section from the forward. So the forward of this book is written by an advertising guy who was like a young guy

starting out his career in the early 1960s, when this book was originally published. And he read it when he was a young man, and it like had a huge influence on like the quality of his work throughout his entire career. And I thought it was interesting because it tells you a lot about Ogilvy's perspective and what was important to him. And it says, Ogilvy was an Englishman interested in baseball. He would say, don't bun, aim out of the park, aim for the company of immortals.

And in the world of advertising, Ogilvy did that. He is in the company of immortals. And then Ogilvy continues like not only setting high standards of being excellent, but you need to hustle. You need to work with gusto. As he always said, this is under the subheading, hurry. Most big corporations behave as if proffer were not a function of time. When Jerry Lambert scored his first breakthrough with Listerine, which is a new product at this point, he speeded up the whole process of marketing by dividing time into months. Instead of locking himself into annual plans, Lambert reviewed his advertising and his profits every month. The result was that he made \$25 million in eight years. So that'd be what, probably 10x, because he's talking about like 1950, 1960 dollars. So he says he made \$25 million in eight years. In Jerry Lambert's day, the Lambert pharmaceutical company lived by the month instead of by the year. And then he repeats his observation not only that he sees inside of his company, but he also sees with his best clients, tolerate genius. My observation has been that mediocre men recognize genius, resent it, and feel compelled to destroy it.

There are very few men of genius, but we need all we can find almost without exception. They are disagreeable. Do not destroy them. They lay golden eggs. So then he goes into how to build a great advertising campaign. And we're going to see that he had a lot in common with Napoleon. If you heard

episode, the recent episode I did on Napoleon, episode 302, it's called The Mind of Napoleon.

It's just literally Napoleon speaking directly to you. He's constantly referencing. This is what Alexander did. This is what Julie Caesar did. Ogive is the same thing. I'm an inveterate brain picker and the most rewarding brains I've picked are the brains of my predecessors and of my competitors. I have learned much from studying the successful campaigns.

Napoleon would repeat that over and over again. He did it for himself. When he's close to death, he's like, this is what I want my son to do. Like this is the curriculum and education I have my son. It's like study the great work that came before you. So Ogive says, your most important job is to decide what you are going to say about your product. What benefit you are going to promise in Ogive and advertising, which I have not read probably in three or four years, maybe, but I've read the highlights over and over again. He says in Ogive and advertising, that is the most important sentence in the book. And he tells you to read it again, that you have to figure out the most important thing you do. The most important thing to decide is what benefit you're going to promise. Another one of his maxims is the more you tell the more you sell, give facts. Very few advertisements contain enough factual information to sell the product. Study the copy in Sears catalog. It sells a billion dollars worth of merchandise every year by giving the facts.

In my Rolls Royce advertisements, I gave nothing but facts. No adjectives, no gracious living. The consumer is not a moron. She is your wife. You insult her intelligence if you assume that a mere slogan and a few vapid adjectives will persuade her to buy anything. She wants all the information you can give her. When I was a door-to-door salesman, I just he sold ovens

door-to-door for God's sake. When I was a door-to-door salesman, I discovered that the more information I gave about my product, the more I sold. Claude Hopkins made the same discovery about advertising 50 years ago. But most modern copywriters find it easier to write short, lazy advertisements because collecting facts is hard work. So he wants you to collect facts, but he says you cannot. You absolutely cannot bore people. This is one of his most famous maxims here.

We make advertisements that people want to read. You can't save souls in an empty church. And then here's another one of his most famous maxims. I have repeated this in private conversations.

I'm not kidding. A thousand times. It is amazing how many times this comes up over and over again, how many different things you can apply this to. If you're lucky enough to write a good advertisement,

repeat it until it stops pulling. Scores of good advertisements have been discarded before they lost their potency. This is the maximum. It's definitely one I repeat the most in my day-to-day life, the one I think about the most. You are not advertising to a standing army. You are advertising to a moving parade. Three million customers get married every year. The advertisements which sold a refrigerator to a new married couple last year will work just as successful to those who get married next year. That is also why he would run the same ad in the same magazine

for like 20 years. The idea that you think the same people are reading the magazine every time or the same people happen to see that ad or the same spot in their life where they actually need the product that you're advertising, you're crazy. You're not advertising to a standing army. You're advertising to a moving parade. This is so difficult for people to understand and to actually implement

because humans are obsessed with novelty. So he says, it takes uncommon guts to stick to one style in the face of all the pressures to quote, unquote, come up with something new every six months. It is tragically easy to be stampeded into change. And then he has an entire section of the book on how to write really good copy. And he spends an enormous amount of time talking about headlines. And this will make sense why he spent so much time talking about headlines.

All right, here, the headline is the most important element in advertisements. It is the telegram which decides the reader whether to read the copy five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. When you have written your headline, you have spent 80 cents out of your dollar. If you haven't done some selling in your headline, you have wasted 80% of your money. A change of headline can make a difference of 10 to one in sales. I never write fewer than 16 headlines for a single advertisement. Every headline should appeal to the customer's self interest. It should promise her a benefit. He repeats that include your selling promise in your headline. This requires long headlines. Research has found the headlines of 10 words are longer consistently sold more merchandise than short headlines. The best headline I ever wrote contained 18 words at this is the best headline he ever wrote at 60 miles an hour. The loudest noise in the new Rolls Royce comes from the electric clock. And what's fascinating about that headline is the fact that he's a big advocate of just doing more work than anybody else would. He's a big advocate about researching. He was reading like, I think he was on like page 50 of something of like this internal Rolls Royce engineering document where he came across that line. If he had not done all that research in that reading that very few other people were

willing to do, he wouldn't have come up with the best headline he ever made in his entire career. More advice, you should always include testimonials in your ad. The reader finds it easier to believe the endorsement of a fellow consumer than the puffery of an anonymous copywriter. Keep your opening paragraph down to a maximum of 11 words. A long first paragraph frightens readers away. All your paragraphs should be as short as possible. Long paragraphs are fatiguing. And a perfect description of that is the book itself. It's full of short, easy to read, memorable paragraphs.

Early in the book, he talked about the importance of repetition and building your company culture, repeats it again and advertising the average consumer is subjected to over 10,000 advertisements a year. Make sure that she knows the name of the product being advertised in your commercial. Repeat it ad nauseam throughout. He repeats the same idea so much he says that his sister suggested

that the name of his ad agency should be changed to ad nauseam incorporated.

And then he gives a lot of advice on how to rise to the top. I've told you before that I think the best talk available on YouTube for any founder is this presentation that Bill Gurley gave a couple years ago. I think it was at the University of Texas MBA students. It's called running down a dream, how to succeed and thrive in a career you love. And one of my favorite lines from that talk was that Bill said that you have zero excuse for not being the most knowledgeable person in any subject that you want, because these information is right there at your fingertips. And we're going to see Olga V echoing that very sage advice. After watching the careermanship of my own employees for 14 years, I have identified a pattern of behavior which leads rapidly to the top. First, you must be ambitious. Set yourself to becoming the best informed man in your agency on the account

to which you are assigned. If for example, it is a gasoline account, read textbooks on the chemistry, geology and distribution of petroleum products. Read all the trade journals in the field. Read all the research reports and marketing plans that your agency has ever written on the product. Spend Saturday mornings in service stations, pumping gasoline and talking to motorists.

Visit your clients refineries and research laboratories. Study the advertising of all of his competitors. At the end of your second year, you will know more about gasoline than your boss and you will be ready to succeed him. Most of the young men in agencies are too lazy to do this kind of homework. They remain permanently superficial. Nowadays, it is fashion to pretend that no single

individual is ever responsible for a successful advertising campaign. This emphasis on teamwork is bunk, a conspiracy of the mediocre majority. No ad, no commercial and no image can be created by committee. Most top managers are secretly aware of this and they keep their eyes open for those rare individuals who lay golden eggs. Several years ago, a client of ours asked their seven advertising agencies to submit papers on the television medium, which was then quite new. The other agencies put in adequate papers of five or six pages. But a young man on my staff took the trouble to assemble every conceivable statistic and working day and night for three weeks came up with an analysis which covered 177 pages. His lazy colleagues sneered at him as a compulsive worker,

but one year later, he was elected to our board of directors. On such isolated incidents, our most successful careers built. And that is where I'll leave it. Highly recommend buying this book, reading it, spending some time inside the mind of David Ogilvy. You'll learn a lot and he'll hold you to a very high standard. There's a link down below in the show notes if you want to

buy the book. Using that link, you'll be supporting the podcast at the same time. If you haven't already

joined my email list, that link is down below as well. Every week, I email the top 10 highlights of every book that I read. Winnowing this book down to just 10 great sentences is going to be really, really difficult because he's probably got 50 or 100 great sentences in the book. But if you want to get an email every week from the top 10 highlights of the book that I'm reading, the link to get on that list is down below in the show notes, available on your podcast player and at founderspodcast.com. That is 306 books down 1000 to go. And I'll talk to you again soon.