

So now what?

By  Chris Brewer

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Over the last few weeks, I've been going through the basics of how to create a good (hopefully great) advertising campaign. If you've been reading them all, I hope that if you're already in the business, it will have reminded you of some of the basics.

But if you're still trying to “get in” to the industry, then the [last few articles](#) should give you an edge.

You may find my own experiences interesting and, who knows, it may give you some inspiration, too.

I fell into advertising by accident, really. Two things happened when I was floundering around in London trying to qualify as a lawyer (yes, I really did and thank goodness I gave it up – terrible occupation).

The first was that my girlfriend was working in classified sales at the *Evening Standard* and she knew there were three vacancies for “advertising executives” in the Beaverbrook Newspaper group and thought I'd enjoy the life, the car and the excitement.



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The second was that I saw two films at the time; one was [Morgan](#), a suitable case for treatment, and the other was [I'll never forget What's i'sname?](#) In *Morgan*, one of the lines the man guy (David Warner) said to his wife was “you married me for insecurity” and in *What's i'sname*, Oliver Reed played a confident ad man who chops his desk to pieces with an axe.

The thought of insecurity and living on my wits appealed no end and I was always a fan of Oliver Reed.

So I jumped at the chance of joining “advertising” and applied for the *Evening Standard* job. I don't know how I got one of the three jobs out of several hundred applicants but I remember the interviewer (Colin Owen-Browne) was incredibly rude and I didn't take any offence and just made a joke of just about everything he said. He eventually asked me to sell him a pen and I said: “If you don't buy this pen, I'll stab you in the eye with it.” And that was that.

So I joined the “suits” and had a lot of fun.

Then I transferred to the *Cape Times* (in Cape Town, duh) and began doing the same job there – but I didn't like it too much, so I applied for jobs in five agencies.

All five turned me down because I had no experience.

But I joined the “Publicity Club” and met some people and, eventually, John Turvey at VZ (Ogilvy & Mather, actually) offered me a job as a media planner. And that's where I learned that advertising is a business, and like any other business, it's serious.

By the way, within six months of being at VZ **all** five of the original agencies I'd applied to work for offered me a job – every single one of them.

So, on the assumption that you're just entering the business, I would like to leave you with a couple of pieces of advice.

Turvey always told me to take the **initiative** – and it took me at least ten years to understand what he meant. In short, it means don't wait, use your brain and instinct and take action – even if it means upsetting senior management along the way (but use caution – don't make enemies).

Don't believe all you are told (including what I've been writing!) Think things out for yourself and then, with a firm belief in what you believe, go forth and DO IT.

Don't just do what your boss or client tells you. If you do then you'll quickly become dispensable.

The second piece of advice comes from the expression about “not what but who you know.”

You must learn to “network” (horrible word, but it has to be done). That doesn't imply sucking-up and grovelling – that's strictly short-term and terminal.

Get out there and meet people who are important and who can open doors for you.

Circulate and make sure the industry knows who you are. Be eccentric if necessary. Certainly be bold but never be insufferably argumentative.

If you ever feel the need to write to me then do so. My email address is chris@brewers.co.za and the reason I don't mind giving my address out publicly is because, who knows, YOU may become important to ME one day!

Finally, although advertising would appear not to be a cautious business, you would be well advised to remember what my father (a wise man) often told me:

Measure twice, cut once.

Good luck.

I'll be taking a couple of weeks off and then I'll be writing about more topical stuff.

Read my blog (brewersdroop.co.za) or see what other amazing things we do at brewers.co.za

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Having joined the ad industry in London, Chris Brewer spent most of his career in media analysis and planning - but has performed just about every advertising task from Creative to Research. He's an honorary lifetime member of the Advertising Media Association and regularly advises agencies and clients regarding their media plan costs and strategies. He is also often asked to talk at industry functions. Email: chris@brewers.co.za. Twitter: [@brewersapps](https://twitter.com/brewersapps). Read his blog: www.brewersdroop.co.za

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