



## A colourful tale of Don Draper, George Lois and something that has almost disappeared in our business today - RESPECT

I trust you are watching Mad Men. If you're not, then do yourself a favour and start.

After all, you are in the communications business. So you should be interested. This wonderful show gives you an interesting insight into what it was like on Madison Avenue in the inspirational 60's.

So, if you haven't checked it out yet, it's really worth a look. It is *superb*...

Of course, as a TV show, it has been created as entertainment. It's not a 'fly on the wall' documentary on how great ads were made. Actually, that would be boring to most people, as the true process is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration - and that isn't a formula for good television.

So, it takes a lot of poetic licence. Not a lot of the creative process is seen. More of the sausage than the sizzle, you might say.

And, on the subject of sausages, there's an awful lot of bedroom activity going on as well. Nothing wrong with that. All part of the business.

Creative people being creative - if you get my drift...

But, one of the main things that Matthew Weiner - the producer - has got spot on, is the **respect** that clients had, in the main, for great creative people - and the enormous benefit that they knew these giants could add to their businesses.

**Respect.** Remember that? Sadly, it's now almost a forgotten word in our business.

In the series, Don Draper, the CD of the fictitious agency Sterling Cooper, enjoys one of the highest reputations around. Clients wanted him to work for them. They wanted his inspiration and his creative brilliance.

They **respected** his talent and his genius. That was the way it was back then. And it was for a simple reason. Clients knew that by employing talent like Don's, it would help them sell more of their products. A hell of a lot more.

Which is what the clients wanted. Funnily enough, it's the same thing clients want today. Now isn't that strange?

But in the show, Don does not suffer fools gladly. And more power to him for that. He is aware that he knows more about selling than his clients do. So, he is right to expect the work he produces, to be **respected** and, by and large, accepted by them.

A lot of the great creative people and top copywriters over the years were like that. They were strong characters, who took no prisoners.

Bill Jayme - the greatest DM copywriter ever to walk the earth in my view - was out at lunch once with a client.

Over lunch, he presented the creative and copy for a new direct mail pack. The client looked at it - and starting picking flies out of it. Bill took another pull on his drink and said nothing, while this rather outrageous critique was taking place.

The client kept wittering on about this - and that - and pointing at stuff on the creative. Bill got up. He picked up the client's glass of red wine and calmly poured it all over him, then left the restaurant, grabbed a cab and went back to the office.

It simply had to be done. Bill was a genius. The client was not...

Anyway, in one recent episode of Mad Men, a similar situation arose. Don Draper presented some great work to a client, whose company had been suffering from low sales and poor performance levels.

The reason why, in Don and his team's opinion, was down to the client's boring, pedestrian ads, that were more interested in a brand look and feel, than the vital aspect of selling product.

Don switched that around and presented a number of ballsy, benefit-laden ads that would sell product. His creative was all about the benefits of the company's products to the potential customer, not the features of the product or the brand 'look'.

The client team just looked at each other. The MD said: *"that's not the way we present ourselves. That's not our brand image. Our consumers will be confused"*

Don calmly explained why these ads needed to run. He reminded the client that the 'rubbish' they were running at that time, had failed. Sales were at an all-time low.

*"Customers aren't confused",* said Don in his presentation. *"They are disinterested. And it is resulting in your sales going through the floor".*

*"Your poor advertising is the main reason. It is truly awful",* he said. *"And that's why you are here, talking to us..."*

The client once again stated his dislike of the ads, because they were *"too off-brand and a bit too 'salesy' for a brand like us..."*

*"Get out!"* Don screamed - and threw the ads at the client. *"And don't come back. You have totally wasted our time".*

Funnily enough, I did the same to a client recently. Not exactly in the same way, but the end product was the same. I felt really good about it too.

It needed to be said. They were wasting my time. Not any more...

Today in our business, there are too many time wasters. Too many penny-pinchers. But frighteningly, one particular group are the worst of all.

Clients who think they are creative and can write copy.

Every one of you reading this, who creates and writes for a living, know the type of people I mean. You will all be having issues with them.

And it drives you mad, doesn't it?

I have to tell you this. In this business right now, there are very few clients that have the faintest idea about creative. And copy? Well, don't even get me started...

Yet most clients would disagree. They fancy themselves. A retail client of mine would regularly include scribbled layouts with the brief. "I'd like it to look like this", he'd say...

On one occasion, I had to leave the office and walk around the block when I got a particular brief with this childish drawing, otherwise I would have called him and said something colourful I might have regretted.

I would ask you this. Would he go to a garage when he wants his car serviced and tell the mechanic how to do it? Of course not.

Would he go into the cockpit of a plane he is travelling on - and give the pilot instructions? No he wouldn't.

Yet, he feels that it's OK to tell a creative person how he wants an ad to look, or why he would like the copy to be like this - or that.

The whole thing is total madness. Dog and bark yourself come to mind...

Lack of **respect** comes to mind, too. Anyway, I digress. Back to Mad Men.

Not everyone thinks the series is quite as good as I do. In fact, advertising legend George Lois thinks it's quite the opposite.

*"Everyone says it's a fun show, but I think it's total bullshit"* he said in recent interview I read.



*George Lois is the only person in the world inducted into The Art Directors Hall of Fame, The One Club Creative Hall of Fame, with Lifetime Achievement Awards from the American Institute of Graphic Arts, The Herb Lubalin Award (Society of Publication Designers), a subject of the Master Series at the School of Visual Arts, and a recipient of The 2013 Clio Lifetime Achievement Award.*

George is 80 years old now, but he's still as feisty and opinionated as ever. Long may he thrive...

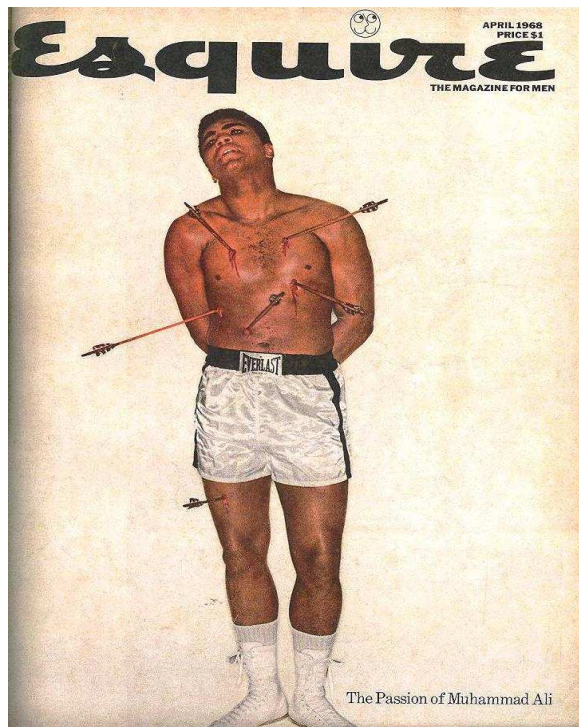
I *love* him. And his work. He is a *giant* in our business. I show some of his stunning work in my Masterclasses around the world.

He is one of the true *greats*. Read his books. They are superb.

George produced award-winning work for literally hundreds of iconic brands over many decades. These included American Airlines, Xerox, ESPN, *TIME* magazine and many, many more.

My particular favourite is the Wolfschmidt Vodka ads which featured the bottle talking to an orange and a tomato.

Google them. They are stunning bits of work.



In 1968, this *Esquire* cover of Mohammed Ali as Saint Sebastian created by George, became a sensation and made him nearly as famous as the patron saint himself.

Anyway, when *Mad Men* was being planned, the producers apparently identified George as a key person and consultant to get a picture of what *Mad Ave* was like in the 60's.

George commented. *"In the beginning, I thought it was going to be about the creative evolution of the 60's. It was such a heroic period in advertising, literally changing the culture. But the show is total bullshit!"*

*"I watched it the other night, and it's more disgraceful than I've already said it was. Every man in that show is a despicable WASP, anti-Semitic, son-of-a-bitch.*

*They say they're telling it like it is, that women were playthings, they were taken advantage of. But how can you look at what's going on at that ad agency and say you'd want to set foot in there? I just don't understand the popularity of that show".*

Sorry George. I disagree with you on this. It's *fabulous* television. But I do agree wholeheartedly with your final criticism:

*"Where's the brilliant marriage of copy and image? "*

George, that's a really interesting question I've been asking for over two decades. Because I don't see very many successful 'marriages' any more.

Just consider that statement in itself. The 'marriage' of copy and image.

It's the coming together of great copy and stunning creative, to produce ART that addresses a marketing problem – and then solves it.

Isn't that a wonderful thing? When done correctly, it certainly is. And, whoever creates it deserves oodles of **respect**.

But do they get it? Rarely.

**So, I invite you clients to the table for a discussion on this. I would love to hear your views. Have I got it wrong? Am I being hard on you?**

Do you feel you do understand how creative and copy works? Have you studied it? Do you know the techniques?

Do you allow your creative person and your copywriter the room to breathe? Or are you a red-pen merchant and change copy because you personally don't like it.

Even though it isn't aimed at you. Why would you do that?

Do you think you are creative and can write copy better than the professionals? If so, what are your credentials? And do feel you give the correct level of **respect** to whoever creates and writes your work?

Please let me know. I am genuinely interested in your views. And it could start a lively debate.

I'll leave the last word on respect to the wonderful George Lois. As usual, it's a fabulous story, made even better by George's colourful observations.

He was invited to a party for Mad Men. He walked in unannounced and no one knew who he was. He walked around for a few minutes and no one even approached him.

One of the greatest living creatives. Can you believe THAT?

Anyway, he asked someone to point out the producer, Matthew Weiner. He took a glass of champagne off a passing tray, waited until Weiner was on his own and calmly walked up to him.

He said, "*Mr. Weiner, my name is George Lois.*"

George continues the story. "*He almost shit in his pants. He was very complimentary, almost to the point of being silly. He said, "You are very important to the show," and George said, "In what way?"*

Weiner started waffling and George soon moved away. He spotted Jon Hamm, who plays Don Draper. He introduced himself.

*"He was so excited meeting me. I fell in love with the guy. He said: "I know everything you did. My God, I'm so thrilled..."*

George commented that Jon went on and on, and he meant it. "*I tell you, I really liked the guy. Weiner, I got no **respect** for.*"

Clearly, one thing that Don, George and I share passionately in this crazy business, is the need for **respect**.

I've used it 10 times in this article. But, unfortunately, it's pretty much a forgotten word in the world of copy and creative these days.

And the business is a sadder place because of it.

Keep the faith



**P.S. I have some exciting news. In a few weeks time, I will be launching my new website. It will be close to 100 pages and will contain some wonderful stuff for you to enjoy. Included will be FREE downloadable marketing advice and a range of 'How To' articles under the 'Marketing Gold Dust' banner.**

**There will also be a DM Archive containing some exclusive classic stuff that's never before been made available. These will be both audio and video - and I can tell you that you will be amazed at what I will have on the site.**

### **ABOUT YOUR AUTHOR**

Andy Owen is MD of **Andy Owen & Associates**, a leading International direct marketing consultancy, specialising in all aspects of creative, copy and strategy for direct and digital marketing.

The company's corporate website is [www.andyowen.co.uk](http://www.andyowen.co.uk)  
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Andy is personally involved in every creative and copy element that is produced by Andy Owen & Associates. As well as his International speaking engagements, Andy runs **in-house copywriting and direct marketing Masterclasses, Workshops and Seminars** for companies and organisations all over the world.

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If you feel your company could benefit from any of these, or if you would like further information on any aspect of copywriting and creative for direct marketing, please contact Andy personally at [andyowen@aol.com](mailto:andyowen@aol.com)

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