

How to write an advertorial (feat. Anna Wintour and David Ogilvy)

 By [Hansie Smit](#)

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David Ogilvy storms into (Vogue editor) Anna Wintour's office and screams, "Anna I've got it! Let's combine an ad and an article. We'll call it *The Advertorial!*"

Anna Wintour takes a stiletto (Prada) and lunges at David's throat screaming, "Over my dead body!"

David Ogilvy stops the shoe inches from his aorta. "Just hear me out," he cries. "The writing will be tight. No superlatives. No exclamation marks."

1. Choose a useful topic

"What about topics?" Anna hisses piercing David's loose neck skin.

"Topics will always be relevant and useful. If I'm selling lipstick, I'll talk about lipstick shades that bring out the perfect smile. If I'm selling fish, I'll describe ways to cut the perfect fillet."

2. Watch your tone

"And tone? You copywriters struggle with tone," Anna asks.

"Anna, darling, you and I both know men's magazines have a dumbed down tone to accommodate a face-value demographic. A glossy like the one you're running requires glossy copy aimed at a sophisticated demographic - with lots of emotion."

3. Check your facts

Anna Wintour relaxes her grip on David Ogilvy's neck. She wipes the blood from her stiletto.

"You know what I like about my job, David? People reading content and going, 'It says here butter is actually *good* for you'. Can I count on you, David, to get your facts straight?"

"I'll check the facts. Then I'll check them again."

4. Add expert opinion

Free to move David Ogilvy paces up and down the room. He snaps his fingers.

"How about this! Whenever I can, I'll add quotes from experts in the field of whatever I'm writing about. I can call them up. Surely they're not sitting in a field somewhere. And if I can't find an expert, I'll call up the CEO of the brand."

5. Get the length right

"What about length? Size is important you know," Anna says.

"400-600 words," David replies. "Longer than a blurb; shorter than a feature article."

"Okay old man, it's growing on me but we'll have to write the word advertorial fairly big in the top right corner," Anna demands.

"10 point font, lower case," David replies.

"12 point, title case," Anna says.

"Sure," David says.

ABOUT HANSIE SMIT

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