

RECOMMENDATIONS

The AMA has two strong motives for improving its relations with medical advertisers. The AMA is the logical agency to exercise leadership in medical advertising. This leadership will enable the AMA to raise the standards of medical advertising and to help convert the \$130 million now being spent each year on medical advertising from an annoyance to the average physician into a constructive source of useful information on new developments in the fields of drug and other medical products.

The second motive for improving its relations with medical advertisers is the possibility of increasing its advertising revenue by several million dollars per year.

The following recommendations, based on the comments and suggestions of advertisers, constitute a program for the AMA which will help to accomplish these objectives.

These recommendations are offered with the realization that the official nature of JAMA and the overall policies of the AMA involved may militate against their complete adoption as given.

1. Improve AMA-advertiser relations

The advertisers should be made to feel that the AMA personnel believe in the honesty of the advertisers, and that they feel that medical advertising has a worthwhile place in AMA publications.

The advertisers, in general, feel that the AMA, especially through the Councils, distrusts them and views them as potential crooks who would become actively unethical if not constantly watched.

This feeling of the advertisers may or may not have foundation. If it does, then the AMA should review its attitude and attempt to correct it.

In any case, whether true or not, this mutual feeling of distrust must be eliminated as the first step in improving AMA-advertiser relations. The basis for cooperation and for a really successful sales campaign on the part of JAMA must rest on the establishment in the minds of the advertisers of a feeling of mutual respect and a belief in the willingness of the AMA to go half-way in working out mutual understanding between the AMA and the advertisers.

The professional advertisers must be made to feel that their advertising is wanted by the AMA. At present, they have the feeling that the AMA looks on space-selling as a favor to the advertisers, and merely as a source of some additional revenue which it can very well do without. The fact that in 1952 the AMA derived \$3,137,000 from advertising, most of it from JAMA, is an indication of the importance of advertising to the AMA.

The manufacturers of drugs and other medical supplies are no longer in the position where they have to bow down to the AMA. They can circumvent direct control of their advertising and products by the AMA by refraining from submitting products to the Councils and by channeling their advertising and promotion efforts through non-AMA journals or through detailing and direct mail. The fact that since 1948 advertising space in *Medical Economics* and *Modern Medicine* has increased 40% while AMA space sold has decreased 3% during the same period, is proof that advertisers are tending more toward non-AMA media.

The fact that the AMA gets as much advertising income as it does, the majority of advertisers state, is because of the unique position of JAMA, and in spite of the feeling toward the AMA, and the AMA's relatively ineffective space-selling methods.

The report will show that a number of advertisers question the need for getting Council Acceptance for the ordinary product, and question whether or not JAMA is well-read by physicians. It seems likely that more than a little of this feeling is an attempt to rationalize the advertisers' resentment at AMA "aloofness."

The industry expresses a desire for working with the AMA in maintaining high standards in the medical field, rather than in working independently of it. It feels, however, that the AMA should give some concrete evidence of willingness to cooperate on the other side.

Good advertiser relations can be built if the AMA will make a systematic effort, thorough editorials, through speeches, and through personal contact with manufacturers and their trade associations, to explain its point of view to the industry, and to attempt to understand the industry's problems and point of view.