

Marty Orzio

Chief Creative Officer, Energy BBDO

Marty Orzio began his professional life as a high school English teacher. He made a career change at 28, going to work in the direct-mail department of Wunderman Worldwide. His next job was at Lowe&Partners, where he rose from copywriter to executive vice president to creative group head. Prior to joining BBDO, he was executive creative director at Merkle Newman Harty. His clients have included Forbes, Citibank, Sprite, Diet Coke, BMW Motorcycles, United Healthcare and Partnership for a Drug Free America. His work for Mercedes Benz has won virtually every industry award, including a Gold Lion at Cannes.



COURTESY, MARTY ORZIO

What is Energy BBDO?

Previously known as BBDO Chicago, we're a new agency brand that's part of BBDO Worldwide. We have over 200 people who provide a wide range of creative solutions and commercial content. We work with clients in every time zone in the U.S. and we are the lead global agency for two of BBDO's largest clients.

Does Chicago have its own advertising ethos and sensibility?

In a global market, an agency's location is becoming more and more irrelevant. Besides, packaged goods have dominated Chicago, which was fine at one time, except that now, as we acknowledge that the consumer is the boss because the consumer has the control, the principles for packaged goods are generally the same as other categories—it's about the principles of communication, as opposed to category formulas. In the end, if there's an ethos in Chicago, it's not something that will allow us to be great. That's why we created Energy BBDO. It places our focus on people, what's important to them, what will add value to their lives, what will truly resonate in them, what energizes them. "Energy" says we're in the business of human motivation.

You've hired some really great photographers for jobs, people like Eugene Richards and Nadav Kander. What do you look for creatively from these people when you hire them?

An ability to serve an idea and the talent to express it as artfully as possible. As artists, there is a little bit of self-expression in their ads. Whether it's Eugene's work for Chock full o'Nuts coffee or Nadav's work for Orbit gum, it's the difference between being informative and being provocative.

Recently, we did ads for the United Way, which have been getting some attention. Most people comment on all the retouching, which really was impressive. The photographer, Vincent Dixon, did a perfect job because he sort of took a step back, did not get fancy and was responsible to the idea. That has to be the priority.

Have you noticed any trends recently in print advertising that you've really liked/disliked?

It seems that the washed-out William Eggleston look isn't the thing anymore. I do love that look. But I'm tired of seeing it not add anything to a concept. The Brits are so much better than us at maximizing an idea through the photography, and generally being more adventurous.

Can advertising make a brand cool?

Absolutely. And photography has contributed to some of them being cool, too—brands like Diesel, Nike and Adidas are always fresh. Fashion advertising has been doing it for years. We've done it with Juicy Fruit and I think we've started to do it with Winterfresh. The ultimate challenge, though, is to make a brand meaningful, as well as cool, especially in today's market. "Cool" is okay in the early stages of a brand, but eventually the communication has to lead to something important. Diesel is cool but it goes along with an ethos. Personally, this is incredibly exciting because our work will have more dimension.

Do you think print advertising has a long-term future?

Yes. I don't know about the future

of magazines, but they won't go away. The fact is, there's immediacy and intimacy to this kind of communication. The way a reader makes a connection between a visual and a thought, the way it can deliver a point with impact, will always be sought after—in one venue or another. The tools may change, the paper may change—if it's even on paper at all—but the combination of words and pictures will be around for a long time.

What has been the most successful print campaign that you've worked on? Why did it succeed?

Though both campaigns—Nadav's Orbit and Eugene's Chock work—were very successful in the market, we learned a valuable lesson with Orbit: That, generally, a low-involvement product should not be hard to figure out. We're thinking of them as posters. I suspect that's partially why it helped sell gum—it's appropriate. A few months later, we applied that learning and created a campaign for Eclipse that recently won a Clio. So Orbit's success led to another success.

Is it harder to be creative in a slow economy?

Clients have always been more cautious, invested less money and had higher expectations during such periods. Naturally, it's easier when there are fewer restraints and ideas are the first and only priority. You have an idea, you think of its implications and you execute it appropriately. If you can't be pure to the idea, it's best to kill it and come up with something else. And so on, until there's a great idea that can be executed affordably. However, very often, out of a greater challenge, out of the need to be more resourceful, can come the sweetest successes.

What would be your dream print campaign?

I'm a fan of photography. My wife and I have black-and-white photographs all over the house, which culminate in my most prized possession, "Picnic on the Marne," by Cartier-Bresson. My dad has been a photographer. So, my dream would be a campaign of ads that become collectibles, part of the culture. You know the way people used to collect Absolut ads? Like that, only more relatable and personal.

What are your three favorite Web sites?

iTunes, Netflix and Dead Guy: The Cartoon (an old friend is the writer). □

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