

Preliminary

REPORT

on the

SHELL NEWSPAPER CAMPAIGN



Last fall, newspapers all over the country carried the story of an extraordinary advertising campaign, one without precedent in the petroleum industry: the Shell Oil Company had decided to place its multi-million dollar budget almost entirely in daily newspapers.

The campaign was reportedly designed to:

1. Stand out by its dominant position in a major medium.
2. Get additional impact by appearing in a medium where a long product story could be told effectively.
3. Be of a "newsy" nature in the primary news medium.

A campaign of this nature was bound to be watched closely, not only by oil men and newspaper men, but by people in advertising and marketing. As the campaign progresses, questions are asked. How well is the campaign doing? Are the ads making an impression on newspaper readers? What is the reaction of the dealers—the all-important point of consumer contact in the vast Shell sales organization?

Readership Records

Preliminary studies have been made by independent research firms both for Shell and for the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. These studies, conducted during the first half of the year's drive, provide some of the answers to these questions.

A Bureau analysis of readership studies by the Daniel Starch organization covered more than 18,000 newspaper ads from 1952 to 1959, including all gasoline and oil ads in the size category into which the Shell ads fall. The average "noted" score

by men for all the petroleum ads was 32%, and the highest observation attained by any one of them in the eight-year period was 59%.

Fourteen ads in the current Shell campaign have now been measured in similar fashion. *Every one of the fourteen* exceeded the eight-year average; *eight of them* even topped the previous record score, and one set a new high of 81%.

Also significant were the "read most" scores, in which a respondent's "yes" answer indicates he read at least half the copy. Against a 10% "read most" average for petroleum ads, the Shell copy has been averaging almost double this, and has attained scores as high as 41%—a notable performance in view of the fact that Shell's ads carry long, detailed, and sometimes technical text matter. These results confirmed Shell's confidence that a long copy story *can* get across to newspaper readers—one of the major reasons for Shell's choice of the medium.

"Before and After"

The ads' impact on consumers was measured by a two-city "before and after" study made for the Bureau of Advertising by ARB Surveys, Inc. Before the start of the campaign, the respondents were tested on their general advertising awareness—did they recall seeing *any gasoline* advertising? In both cities, 7% named Shell advertising. Only three weeks after the new campaign started, a similar question produced 17% and 19% *unaided* recall for Shell ads in the two cities. With *aided* recall—did they remember seeing any *Shell* advertising?—the positive responses jumped to 32% and 40%. (Subsequent research, in later stages of the

campaign, has produced even higher scores.)

In another study, comparative attitudes toward Shell and the respondent's usual brand of gasoline were sought in three cities—a case of "stacking the deck against yourself," as it were. "Which company," the consumers were asked, "Shell or (the respondent's own brand), is doing the most work in product research and scientific development?" Consumers actually rated Shell ahead of their "own brands" by a margin of 37% to 22%. The question was also asked, "Which company, Shell or (the respondent's own brand), is doing the best job of giving people the straight facts about gas and oil?" The score was: Shell 26%; "own brands" 25%.

Dealers Say "Yes"

In a survey designed to determine dealers' reactions to the campaign, interviewers asked 6,000 of them: "Is the new campaign better than, as good as, or not as good as last year's?" Nine out of ten of the dealers who expressed an opinion called the campaign "as good" or "better." By far the majority answered "better."

Thus, at the halfway point in Shell's 1961 newspaper campaign, it was clear that the persuasive selling messages were reaching a record number of newspaper readers, registering a distinct impression with them, and developing new high levels of dealer support.

An appropriate summing up of the preliminary evidence is this statement by one of the prime movers behind the project:

"The campaign is working. The voice of Shell is being heard this year. We intend to keep it that way."

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF NEWSPAPER SELLING POWER AT WORK