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Advertising Week: A Time of Introspection and Inspection

Advertising is an art as well as a science. It is passion and creativity infused into the business of marketing and communications. It is both creative and strategic; it is both chaos and focus. It’s a reflection of who we are, and this week the entire beautiful, messy industry comes to New York City for the tent-pole event called Advertising Week.

Advertising Week: I describe it as Cannes without the beaches, the sun, or the awards. But there are positives, too, starting with the fact that it takes place in the greatest city in the world. New York’s backdrop of fascinating architecture, neighborhoods, diversity, lights and action makes it the perfect mosaic for an industry focused on visual delights and social interaction.

Advertising Week offers something for everyone. Celebration of the industry and the profession, check. Focus on the latest innovations and technology, check. Discussions of privacy issues, data mining and what the next “new” media will look like, check. Industry leaders, networking opportunities, music-filled parties -- they’re all right here.

I have always considered Advertising Week a time of both introspection and inspection. Although it takes place in the frenetic milieu of New York City, it also gives attendees respite from daily lives filled with work and family, emails and meetings, to think and consider. That’s important. We need to spend the necessary time to think -- to conduct the introspection -- to allow ourselves to do better in the new world ahead.

We need to consider some fundamental factors facing advertising and consider how they will change who we are and what we do. Some of the big issues that will be on my mind this week:

- The speed of change: What is the definition of “old” or out of date? How has that concept transformed? How do marketers and agencies stay ahead of the innovation wave (or at least ride it)?

- Technology: Some embrace it, few reject it and many fear it. How do marketers use these facts to its benefit?

- Media: How do consumers digest media today? How do they interact with it? How does that impact the need for content? What content will be successful in this new world order?
These and many other issues cause us to think -- to introspect. And I have found that Advertising Week, for all its stimuli and activity -- perhaps because of it -- is a wonderful time to do some valuable introspection" about the direction of advertising.

What about inspection? Well, think about buying a car and taking a test drive, or going to a restaurant and ordering a tasting menu -- sampling a variety of delicious foods and wines. At Advertising Week, you can kick the tires, if you will, and sample the food and wine (in the latter case, both literally and figuratively). Just take a look at the Advertising Week Guide and agenda, there is something for anyone and too much for everyone. It’s an overwhelming buffet -- an apt metaphor for the industry itself, as well as the host city for its most important week of the year.

Ronald R. Urbach is the Chairman of Davis & Gilbert and Co-Chair of the Advertising, Marketing & Promotions practice group. He can be reached at rurbach@dglaw.com / 212.468.4824 if you have any questions.