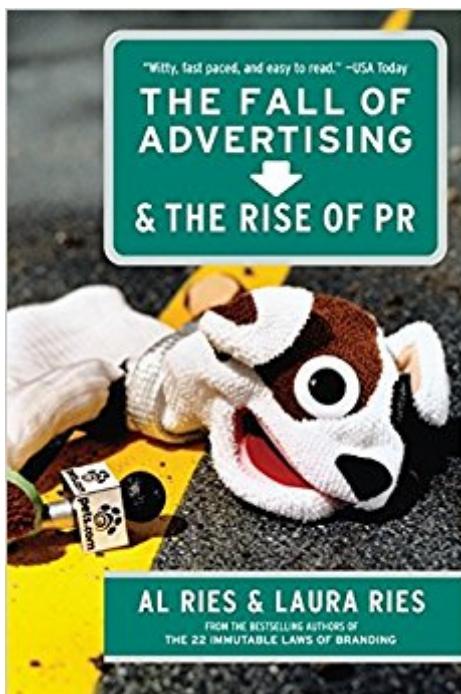


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# The Fall Of Advertising And The Rise Of PR



## **Synopsis**

Bestselling authors and world-renowned marketing strategists Al and Laura Ries usher in the new era of public relations. Today's major brands are born with publicity, not advertising. A closer look at the history of the most successful modern brands shows this to be true. In fact, an astonishing number of brands, including Palm, Starbucks, the Body Shop, Wal-Mart, Red Bull and Zara have been built with virtually no advertising. Using in-depth case histories of successful PR campaigns coupled with those of unsuccessful advertising campaigns, *The Fall of Advertising* provides valuable ideas for marketers -- all the while demonstrating why advertising lacks credibility, the crucial ingredient in brand building, and how only PR can supply that credibility; the big bang approach advocated by advertising people should be abandoned in favor of a slow build-up by PR; advertising should only be used to maintain brands once they have been established through publicity. Bold and accessible, *The Fall of Advertising* is bound to turn the world of marketing upside down.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR*, longtime marketing strategist Al Ries and his daughter/business partner Laura Ries offer solid arguments championing the latter over the former for modern-day brand building. Such a stance is hardly new for these two, who have jointly, individually, and with others written eight previous books on related topics since Al penned *The Positioning Era Cometh for Advertising Age* some three decades ago. What's fresh this time is the dissection of contemporary corporate hits--like Starbucks, Botox, eBay, and even Harry Potter--that

have eschewed traditional advertising and nevertheless soared to the top through the savvy use of public relations. The authors spend the first part of the book discussing how advertising lost credibility among consumers as it became more of a creative art than a sales tool, and the second part showing how PR subsequently supplanted it in effectiveness. Using the above examples and others, they explain how such practices can work in various situations (building a new brand, rebuilding an old one, dealing with line extensions, etc.), as well as ways advertising can still be usefully employed (primarily to maintain a brand and "keep it on course"). The result is both provocative and practical. --Howard Rothman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Marketing strategists Ries and Ries spend all 320 pages of their latest book arguing one point: skillful public relations is what sells, not advertising. Case in point: the failure of Pets.com's sock puppet ads. However, in a chapter devoted to dot-com advertising excesses, the authors never mention that many dot-coms had miserable business plans and neophyte management. (The Rieses may be counting on the sock puppet to sell another commodity, as a deflated sock puppet dominates the book's jacket.) Today, most small companies aren't bloated with venture capital to buy TV ads, yet the book has little practical advice on how these companies' executives should use public relations, particularly PR's most important role: crisis control. Some readers might resent paying \$24.95 for what amounts to an advertisement for pricey PR consulting firms like Ries & Ries. The authors frequently poke fun at the most outrageous TV ads of recent years, paralleling Sergio Zyman's *The End of Advertising As We Know It* (reviewed above), a more thoughtful critique of current advertising trends. The inherent flaw in the Rieses' logic: time and again they cite ad campaigns for new products that are "off message" and then say how much sales declined; this supports the notion that products and services are sold by good advertising. Although their book is occasionally entertaining, the argument is simplistic and self-serving. Illus. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR," the 2002 offering from marketing experts Al and Laura Ries, is not a bad book for young entrepreneurs looking for simple advice on promoting a startup. As a serious business text, it falls far short. The Rieses promise a new angle on their tried-and-true formula. Disappointingly, "The Fall of Advertising" is just a rehash of earlier work that reduces the field of public relations to press agentry. While Al Ries describes himself as "legendary," he and his co-author manage to completely

misunderstand the strategic value of public relations. Al Ries has made a fortune repeating the same ideas with new headlines. In 1972, he and Jack Trout published "The Positioning Era Cometh" in "Advertising Age" magazine, itself an extension of a 1969 "Industrial Marketing" article. In these articles (and their first book, "Positioning"), they argued that the advertising landscape required a shift in philosophy from "image," where a brand's reputation was the most important factor in its success or failure, to "positioning," where a brand's success was to be determined by "what the advertising does for the product in the prospect's mind." Ries and Trout turned the popularity of these articles into four books, including the still-popular "22 Immutable Laws of Marketing." Through these and six books additional (on his own or with Laura), Ries has not introduced any more truly new ideas. "The Fall of Advertising" should have been limited to a trade journal article. The book is summed-up in the third and fourth paragraphs of the introduction: "You can't launch a new brand with advertising because advertising has no credibility," and, "You can launch new brands only with publicity or public relations [which] allows you to tell your story indirectly through third-party outlets, primarily the media." The authors proceed to repeat variations of these two maxims for the rest of the book (credibility appears no less than 47 times). They add bits of anecdotal evidence along the way, more often than not citing the same brands—Duracell and Energizer; Hertz and Avis; Coke and Pepsi; Budweiser and Miller—used in many of their previous works. The failure of "The Fall of Advertising" lies not with its assertions. Most of what the Rieses say is largely true, if overly simplified. Few would argue that consumers trust a journalist's product review more than they trust an advertisement. The book's failure is that, in addition to short-selling the complex field of public relations, so many of their bold predictions have become so demonstrably, horribly wrong. These failed predictions fatally undermine the book's credibility. Al Ries is not afraid to make bold predictions. Among his predictions in "Marketing," he said Microsoft would become a high-profile failure like IBM for trying to extend its dominance of the operating system market into dominance of the business software market. He doubted Office's ability to overtake Lotus, WordPerfect, and Harvard Graphics (remember them?). According to business data company Statista, nearly one in five enterprise software dollars worldwide now goes to Microsoft. The bold predictions don't stop in "Fall." The Rieses fault Procter and Gamble for the Crest Whitestrips

product, predicting its failure due to: launching the product with advertising instead of publicity; using a “line extension” (thus weakening Crest’s position in toothpaste); and failing to give the product a meaningful category name. Again, according to Statista, in 2007-8 (five years after “Fall” publication), three of the top four tooth-whitening strip brands were Crest products, accounting for a combined \$130.1 million in sales, or 56 percent of the market. Most incredibly, the Rieses predicted, “We don’t think that 3G phones are going to become a big business.” After reading this (especially if reading the Kindle version on an iPhone), it is tempting to dismiss the rest of the book. But the “Postscript” is where the Rieses get the most right, and also the most wrong. They argue that advertising continues to dominate public relations partly due to advertising’s hold on the business curriculum, citing a survey which found, “more than half of MBA programs offered coursework in advertising, but only twelve offered coursework in PR.” They also correctly point out that PR is second-fiddle to advertising because “Nine out of the ten largest U.S. PR firms are owned by just three ad conglomerates, with Edelman the lone exception. But they also completely miss the point of strategic public relations, which is the final nail in the coffin for their arguments. Their narrow view of public relations as nothing more than a way to deliver marketing messages through earned media is completely off the mark. They criticize public relations practitioners for being “the voice of the consumer inside the corporation, rather than the voice of the corporation itself.” They further state, “Too many PR professionals would rather counsel the CEO than work in the trenches with the marketing folks.” They criticize the industry for focusing on “facilitating the exchange of value in our world” rather than “building brands” (and in their own words, “everything is a brand”). The power of public relations lies not just in its ability to add credibility to nascent brands. It can do that for sure. The real power of public relations, the strategic value it brings to a company, goes beyond the narrow confines of marketing. The value of public relations lies in its ability to facilitate a conversation between company and consumer, helping the company to understand the wants and needs of its customers. The customer needs a voice within the company; public relations provides that voice. That might not fit Al and Laura Ries’ vision of what public relations should be, but their vision of public relations is as wrong as their vision for 3G phones.

Where to start. There are so many overwhelming obvious ineptitude's in this book it is amazing. The two writers of this book have cherry picked examples of bad marketing strategies and try to argue that good PR could have saved bad products or ideas. I find the most amusing part of this book to be examples the authors use of their "good ideas" which are usually terrible. It is also painfully obvious the writers have no clue as to what consumers want. They talk about the convergence of products and how this is a fad that wont catch-on, examples used included interconnect phones. Really this book should be called Bad Advertising Dissected. It is almost painful to read this book. I feel dumber for having wasted my time reading this "book". Save your time, read something else, and let this book fall into obscurity where it belongs.

The thesis is that PR is needed to launch a brand and establish its identity; advertising is for maintaining an existing brand's position. The reason is that advertising has no credibility, so it can only remind people of what they already believe. Huge sums of money are spent on advertising campaigns with a poor track record of return on investment. The authors cite multiple examples in which award-winning advertising campaigns led to declining sales and market share. And therein lies their point. Advertising agencies are more focused on winning awards for their creativity, rather than helping their clients sell product. The ads lose function and become art. Another theme repeated in this book is the authors' disdain for brand extension. This rings familiar from The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing, a book Al Ries coauthored with Jack Trout. Line extension dilutes the meaning of the original brand. A new brand is a PR opportunity. I don't agree with everything in the book. I think Pets.com failed because it was a dumb business model, not simply because the brand was launched with advertising rather than PR. Also, the authors claim that IBM was unsuccessful in the PC business because they didn't create a new brand name for it. I think there were many other factors. Nevertheless, I found the book engaging and insightful.

This book gives me insight on how we should look the function of PR in the company. I would recommend this book for CEO and top management in the company so that they will realize that they should spend more on PR instead of advertising.

Most of these reviews are acting like this book killed their dog. Settle down people. It's not about how to do PR. You should be able to tell that from the title. It's about how advertising fails, mainly on the basis of establishing a brand. With so much skepticism in the market today, you can't just throw a

bunch of advertising out there. People don't trust it anymore. The best way, but not the easiest, it to get them to talk about it themselves. Then you support those talks with advertising to remind people of what they have already heard (he says that in the book, so quit acting like he thinks PR is the end-all, be-all). Your product needs to support those themes too. None of this flies without a product that stands up to the hype. If nothing else, this book should just be read as a cautionary tale.

Al Ries's book is a MUST READ for anyone in business. Period. You cannot understand business without it. Buy it TODAY!

Practical, with a host of relevant examples to illustrate points. A must read for advertising and PR professionals.

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