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*Brand-Aids™ are practical, easy-to-use tools you can apply to brand building and messaging through ads, PR, literature, websites, and so forth. Just like Band-Aids® stop the bleeding from annoying cuts, Brand-Aids stop the pain and cost of branding confusion.*

## Brand-Aids #3— The simple secret to better advertising—AIM



*Too many ads miss the mark. They're jam-packed with captions, callouts, photos and more. To make sure your ad gets to the point—and hits your target (audience), just AIM: Attract, Inform, Motivate.*

*By John Favalo, CBC, Managing Partner  
Eric Mower and Associates, Group B2B*

You pay a lot for ads. You invest your time in planning them and designing the strategy. You pay your agency or creative people to develop them. You pay photographers or illustrators or computer artists to visualize them. You pay for space in magazines or on the Internet. Some of you pay for TV or radio time to advertise b-to-b brands. You've heard it before...with all the resources tied up in ads, why are so many so ineffective?

### **Too little. Too much.**

Sometimes you'd think they were giving ads away. Why? Because lots of ads say zip. The visual makes no sense or is something you see a hundred of every day. The headline lacks relevance and resonance and assumes I give a damn. Net net? Nothing of value.

Sometimes you'd think Scrooge was paying the bill. You look at an ad and

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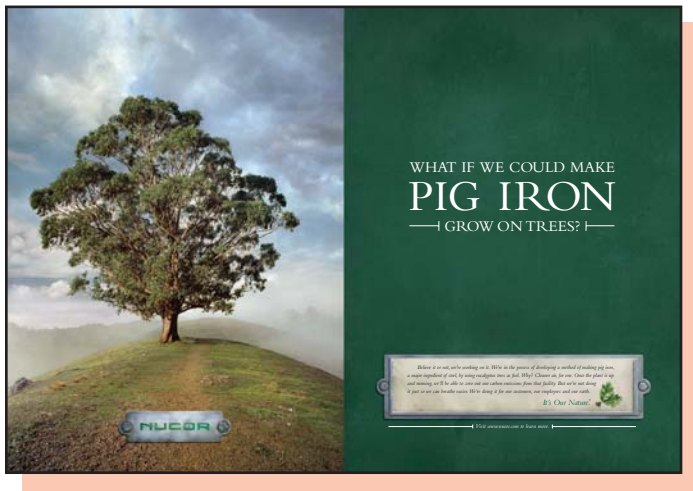
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it's jammed and crammed with heads, subheads, copy blocks, bursts, photos, callouts. More points than a boxcar of straight pins. Just because we communicate with technical audiences doesn't mean we have to be over-technical creatively. Even though many of our products are complicated doesn't mean we should over-complicate our messages.

I think simple ads are the best. Ads that make a point—a salient one—clearly and engagingly. Ads that make me think about the subject or proposition...my problem or myself.



The ad copy reads: “Believe it or not, we’re working on it. We’re in the process of developing a method of making pig iron, a major ingredient of steel, by using eucalyptus trees as fuel. Why? Cleaner air for one. Once the plant is up and running, we’ll be able to zero out our carbon emissions from that facility. But we’re not doing it just so we can breathe easier. We’re doing it for our clients, our employees and our earth. It’s Our Nature.® Visit [www.nucor.com](http://www.nucor.com) to learn more.”

The advertisement above is an ad my agency did for Nucor, the largest U.S.-based steel manufacturer and recycler. The campaign has won many awards. More importantly though, the research proves that people think better of Nucor. Way better than before the advertising.

This ad is simple. It’s engaging. It tells a story about how Nucor makes businesses better by making steel better. But enough about Nucor. How can you make your advertising better?

If you want to hit your target, AIM—Attract, Inform, Motivate.

**Attract**

What is it about your brand that’s arresting to the audience? What is it about the audience’s situation, needs, and wants that will drive attention to your brand?

Can the audience see a solution or their success in your brand? And see it depicted in a way that’s very different yet still relevant?

To attract attention strive for a WHAT, WOW, A-HA, AWW or COOL. Prompt a question with your creative like, “What’s going on here?” Make the reader go “WOW.” Inspire him or her with an “A-HA” revelation. Melt their hearts with an “AWW.” Or present something that gets the audience to go, “COOL.” Be careful with COOL though. It has to be relevant COOL. If you lose your COOL you’ll lose credibility and...your audience.

By the way, the Nucor ad hits on the WHAT very effectively.

**Inform**

What facts, examples, specifications, or materials will provide information of value to your audience? Repeat... *value*. How will the information you provide support the proposition, deliver on the promise you’re making, or help make the buying decision easier? What one or two points satisfy the curiosity your attraction devices pique?

**Motivate**

Motivation is what’s missing most in advertising. Proper motivation closes the loop and moves audiences to the next step. It makes them feel something or do something. Hopefully something that will create dialogue or opportunities.

What do we want the audience to do after they see your advertising? What additional materials or followup action of value can you offer? What advice or tools will you provide? Any incentives? How do you engage audiences, convert them from “interested” to “involved,” and get them to click through to a landing page or visit the website for a download?

With the Nucor ad above, you can see how quickly and effectively we informed our audience about Nucor’s steel making process and motivated them to visit [www.nucor.com](http://www.nucor.com).

Sure it’s basic, but next time you scan a magazine check how many ads AIM well. Not as many as you’d think. Next time you evaluate one of your own ads, see how well it AIMs. You might be surprised. If you are, start using this simple Brand-Aid. Your ads will communicate better and be more effective. Better ads make better brands.

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