

**Monday,
Tuesday,
Wednesday,
Thursday,
Friday,
Saturday,
Sunday,
every day
for over
35 years.**



Thanks, Herb Ehrenthal, for all your days and years of dedicated service.

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Herb Ehrenthal

Reaching Consumers about Their Health through Education



After initially pursuing a degree in education, Herb Ehrenthal's career path changed after taking on a part-time job. *DTC Perspectives* spoke with the 2009 DTC Hall of Fame inductee about this shift, and how even though he did not pursue education, it always remained at the forefront of his focus.

BY JENNIFER HAUG

While attending the City College of New York, Herb Ehrenthal was working part-time as a messenger in the advertising department for R. H. Macy & Co. delivering materials. He became so interested in the advertising business, that he soon began working within the department with the people who were writing copy, working on strategy and those who were very involved with the creative part of the advertising.

"As a result, when I graduated college, I decided not to move forward with education, but instead see what I could do within the advertising and marketing area," Ehrenthal told *DTC Perspectives*. He then landed an entry position at Grey advertising, which at the time had a very large training program. His boss, a senior officer at the agency named Herb Lieberman, took Ehrenthal under his wing and taught him the business of advertising and marketing. He soon was assigned specific accounts to work on and that is how he got his start in the advertising world.

Ehrenthal furthered his marketing experience when he was hired by one of his clients, Block Drug Company. He was placed in the new product area and was taught how to launch new products by Howard Gersten, the vice president of new products.

Throughout his career, Ehrenthal has worked on a number of campaigns, from launches for Tegrin Shampoo and Caress, to campaigns for Wisk, Sucrets, Vicks Formula-44, Premarin, Norplant, Nasonex, Levitra and Zetia, among several others.

Creating ground-breaking campaigns

Ehrenthal said he "truly learned marketing and advertising" while working on his first major brand, Palmolive dishwashing detergent. The campaign? **Madge the Manicurist**. This is also one of the campaigns that he is most proud of. "It softens your hands while you do the dishes," he noted, fondly reciting the campaign's tagline.

Another notable campaign Ehrenthal worked on was in 1975 for the acne treatment, Clearasil. He enlisted famed radio D.J. Wolfman Jack to help with the promotions. The result was a "very dramatic break-through campaign."

In 1987, Ehrenthal co-founded his own advertising agency, Rubin Reid Noto and Ehrenthal (later Rubin Ehrenthal and Associates, and subsequently merging and being renamed Healthworld). As president of the Rubin Ehrenthal division, he helped the pioneering DTC division become one of the leading pharmaceutical agencies in the industry, with more DTC brands than any other agency. He and his team launched an unbranded DTC TV campaign in 1988 for the then-prescription smoking cessation drug, Nicorette. Having gotten the OK from Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop's office and the FDA, a branded Nicorette commercial – the first ever – was aired on network television.

As for his current work, Ehrenthal is "most proud" of his two sources of cholesterol "*Food & Family*" campaign for cholesterol treatment Vytorin and the "*Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday...*" campaign for the birth control, NuvaRing.

Applying past marketing experiences

Ehrenthal was trained as a packaged-goods marketer. As a result, he "understood the need for statistics, the



need for research, the need to understand people who buy products. In packaged-goods, you put a message out there and the customer goes to a store directly to buy something. It provided me with an understanding as to how to communicate directly with the customer. That may very well have helped me understand people and become very committed to educating them about their health.”

In addition to having experience marketing directly to the consumer, Ehrenthal has worked on both the agency and client sides of the pharmaceutical industry. This enabled him to more fully “understand the sales and marketing process from both the corporate and agency perspective.” Such an advantage has provided him “the ability to integrate with market research, the professional area and PR. Having done that in a pharmaceutical company as well as an agency, it really broadens my knowledge base and makes me more of a contributor to the overall process.”

With DTC evolving as quickly and massively as it has over the past 10 years, it is crucial that Ehrenthal is able to “apply that knowledge and experience to successfully lead the communication process.” As he pointed out, DTC “is much more diverse today than ever. It is certainly more regulated and FDA-controlled; yet we have far more choices and locations for information and entertainment than in the past. We have a tightening control of claim and fair balance on one hand, and the digital explosion on the other. The result is an opportunity to reach more people and improve health education.”

Keeping pace with digital media

“Passive communication is losing out to active, selective participation of patients through the various digital offerings,” Ehrenthal explained. “There is an explosion going on and I’m happy to say we are very involved, staying very close to it and active within it – living within FDA guidelines.”

Staying up-to-date on regulations and trends is imperative in the DTC marketplace. Schering-Plough colleague Mary-Frances Faraji, who is vice president of global product communications and advocacy relations, also shared this sentiment as a major reason behind Ehrenthal’s successes. “He is always learning and interested in what’s going on ... watching what’s evolving, what’s changing, staying on top of trends,” she said during the interview. Calling such actions critical to lead change and pioneer advertising, Ehrenthal quickly concurred. “I’ve always believed the people that look ahead are the people that are going to get ahead,” he added.

In addition to staying on top of or ahead of the game, Ehrenthal also “strongly urges” those just entering marketing to start their careers by working in a corporation first, before joining an agency. “The knowledge that is learned from the inside of a company will pay significant dividends, if and when they join an agency,” he remarked. “I just think the agency person is a stronger ally with a corporation if they understand how corporations work from the inside.”

Filling the education void

Committed to educating consumers globally about bettering their health is something Ehrenthal is very passionate and enthusiastic about. As a result, he established what he considers his most important achievement – Public Health Education Communication (PHEC) at Schering-Plough. The international initiative allows him to “communicate with patients outside of the U.S. in a non-branded educational way” about their health.

“I have always felt the importance of education, and health education is critical to the well-being of society,” he explained. “In my view, PHEC is very successful. Certainly the programs educate patients about their own health and it improves their dialogue with physicians about medical conditions. I just think it empowers the patient to be a better patient.”

After nearly 45 years of marketing, approximately 35 of which have been healthcare-related, Ehrenthal doesn’t appear to be slowing down anytime soon. As group vice president of global advertising and marketing for the Schering-Plough Corporation, he currently oversees the creation of all consumer advertising and marketing programs worldwide, the Schering-Plough in-house creative studio, all company relationships with advertising agencies and PHEC.

With such an accomplished career, there is still one thing that he doesn’t feel he has completed yet. “It’s looking ahead to continue educating people around the world. I’ve just really started,” he said. “I travel overseas often now; I work and meet with consumers all around the world as part of my job and they’re lacking information about their health, so I’m trying to share health information with them. I’m in the early stages of that now, but I am working on it.”

Ehrenthal firmly believes that marketers should “just keep at it. Keep fighting the good fight. Keep educating people and don’t stop. DTC, communicating with consumers, it is all encompassing. It is very important. [Consumers] deserve to know more about their own health. I think we contribute to that in a big way. That’s what I want to keep doing and that’s what I believe our industry should keep doing.”



Herb Ehrenthal accepts the Hall of Fame award from Anne Devereux of Lyon-Heart / TBWA WorldHealth.