

The First Television Commercial

"Make it simple, make it memorable, make it inviting to look at"

Leo Burnett, Advertising Legend

On July 1, 1941, The Bulova Watch Company ran a television commercial on The New York station WNBT. It aired before a Brooklyn Dodgers vs. Philadelphia Phillies baseball game. It was the first of its kind: a TV ad.

From the 1940's through the 1990's the most effective way to reach an audience with an audio/visual commercial was to buy time on television. The more money you had the more time you could buy. The more time you could buy the more public awareness you could create. You bought an audience.

It was very successful. The ads played during TV shows. You sat on your couch, forced to sit through them, and waited for your TV show to return.

The internet has destroyed that model. People now have the option of watching or not watching a commercial. Information is delivered through a "click-through" culture. And people do not want to watch commercials. You are no longer able to "buy" an audience by simply spending a large amount of money. You are now forced to create an audience by creating advertisements people want to see and more importantly, share. If your advertisement, your information, is not shared it immediately begins to die.

The principal vessels for sharing are there - Facebook, twitter, Instagram, youtube., etc. News, opinions, music, images and other data are shared constantly. Twenty years ago "trending" was just a word. Now "trending" can lead to world-wide changes in history.

The internet is massively crowded, confused and competitive. Millions of words and ideas are dying every minute. That word and that action, "share", is now the most crucial, overriding aspect of internet advertising. It has even been given its own name: "viral video". This is the new world of advertising. And it is here to stay.