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» MARKETING STRATEGY

Position Players

LOOKING FOR A MARKETING HIT? A NEW BOOK — DEDICATED TO CANTON'S DICK MAGGIORE — SAYS A SIMPLE MESSAGE IS BEST.

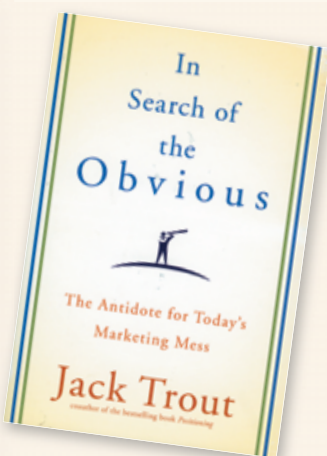
Jack Trout is "Captain Obvious," and he has Dick Maggiore to thank.

In 2004, the president and CEO of Canton's Innis Maggiore ad agency sent Trout a copy of *Obvious Adams: The Story of a Successful Business Man*.

Trout, a marketing consultant, had never heard of the little green book, which was published in 1916. Yet Maggiore, who'd worked with him on several projects, knew it affirmed many of Trout's marketing principles.

"The book resonated with Jack's simple-minded thinking. Positioning requires the discipline of clear thinking," Maggiore explains. "You have to focus on one differentiating idea."

But many companies try to stand out through complicated and overwrought marketing plans, Trout says. "We're trying to get people back to the simplicity and away from the complexity," he says.



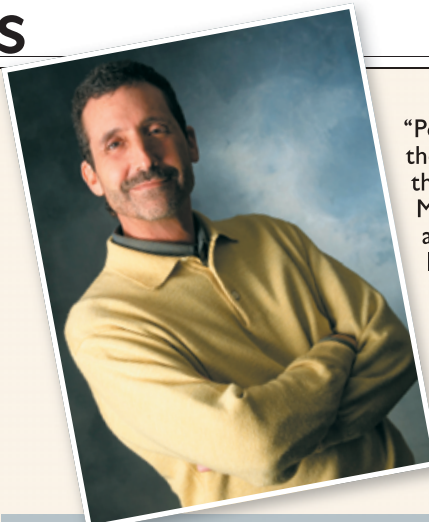
So how did Trout — who has done work for Southwest Airlines, IBM, Sears and the Democratic Party — repay Maggiore? That's obvious: He dedicated his new book, *In Search of the Obvious: the Antidote for Today's Marketing Mess*, to him.

"It is the compliment of a lifetime," Maggiore says. "Jack's ideas have been instrumental in shaping Innis Maggiore's position in its marketplace. It's rewarding to know that now, in some small way, we've had an impact on Jack's thinking."

Over the years, Trout and Maggiore have collaborated on projects for Microsoft and Uniroyal. "Any important strategy has to be an obvious strategy. It has to be obvious to you, it has to be obvious to the marketplace," Trout says. "The reason that they are so powerful is that they are so obvious to the marketplace."

— CHUCK BOWEN

For more information about positioning strategy, visit innismaggiore.com.



"Positioning requires the discipline of clear thinking," says Dick Maggiore, president and CEO of Canton's Innis Maggiore ad agency. "You have to focus on one differentiating idea."

CLIENT: Papa John's

Message: "Better ingredients. Better pizza."

The challenge: About 10 years ago, Trout helped develop the Papa John's slogan. The pizza maker's business was growing, but founder John Schnatter didn't know exactly why. Turns out the sauce he was using (a fresh-packed product that the big chains didn't use) made his pies stand out.

The obvious answer: The ingredients. "That is such a painfully simple, obvious answer, but John couldn't see it," Trout says. "That's what you own: simple ideas."



CLIENT: Microsoft

Message: "MSN 8: The advanced Internet"

The challenge: In 2002, Innis Maggiore brought Trout onboard to help with the Microsoft account. But AOL ruled the nascent dial-up Internet market. The strategy was to take AOL's strength — that it was really easy to use — and position it as something that wasn't advanced enough for adults. "We repositioned AOL as Kiddie Land," Maggiore says. "When you're ready to step up, MSN is here."

The obvious answer: "We had to find a weakness in the leader's inherent strength and attack from that point," Maggiore says.



CLIENT: Express Oil

Message: "Your auto dealer alternative"

The challenge: Facing a crowded quick-change oil market, Express Oil needed a way to distinguish itself. Innis Maggiore created a middle-market: between quick-service options and a full-service dealer. While acknowledging the dealer's expertise, the campaign tapped into consumers' dissatisfaction with dealer prices and convenience to create a market opening.

The obvious answer: "Marketing is a game of keep-away or take-away," says Maggiore. "You can't talk about growing market share in a mature category without talking about how to reduce the market share of competitors."



Jack Trout