

A Brief Overview of the History of Branding

If you think that the idea of branding is relatively modern, starting with the industrial age in England, then moving to the rest of Europe and the U.S., then you're in for an interesting surprise.

Since the time people created goods to trade or sell, or as far back in time as when people owned cattle, there have been trademarks, symbols, signs or posters, pictorial signs, and hawkers.

In order to distinguish their goods, craftsmen imprinted trademarks on their goods and creations to signify the maker and origin. Ultimately, trademarks assured the buyer or trader of the quality of the merchandise.

To denote ownership of property, at first cattle were branded with paint or pine tar; later, unfortunately, cattle and sheep were branded with hot irons. Humans were also branded for various reasons. Slaves were branded to mark ownership; criminals were branded with disgrace. During World War II, victims of Nazi persecution who were interned in concentration camps were branded with numbers. Horrifically, people have used branding to indelibly mark people and animals. For a sound purpose, tradesmen have used branding to mark possessions and goods. Although some terms and connotations stay in our vernacular, for the most part, the negative connotation of branding has been abandoned for one that is positive and commercial, referring to the use of distinguishing brand name goods and services.

Ancient Marketplace

In ancient Babylon, to entice buyers to purchase goods that had arrived on ships, barkers solicited customers with a verbal (barked out) sales pitch describing spices, rugs, wines, and other goods. Announcements written on papyrus were posted in ancient Egypt for a variety of reasons, including lost items and rewards for runaway slaves. To explain their offerings and goods to a mostly illiterate mass—as early as ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome—merchants hung pictorial signs (using symbols and pictures) and painted their storefronts. Writing was also used to advertise, as evidenced by writing on walls from the ancient city of Pompeii.

Dating back to over 3,000 years ago, in the Western Zhou Dynasty of China, trade fairs were held, where hawkers pitched displayed wares. Although the early Egyptians invented papyrus, it was in China that paper was invented. Along with block printing, these two inventions would set the stage for mass communication.

Medieval Marketplace and the Sung Dynasty

With the fall of the Roman Empire and the onset of the Middle Ages, commerce fell precipitously. For the most part, the level of craftsmanship declined miserably. With the exception of the clergy and a rare few others, people were largely illiterate. Although initially their roles were restricted by officials, town criers fulfilled the need for the spreading of information.

In the thirteenth century, the Magna Carta, the decline of feudalism, and trade between east and west, among other things, helped to change lives and towns for the better. There was a revival of crafts with the formation of craft guilds and the emergence of a middle class. During this period, to control trade, guilds made *proprietary marks* mandatory. Town criers were paid to advertise a merchant's goods. Hand-lettered handbills were hung and

distributed to advertise and attract customers. Signs were hung to help identify both a merchant and the merchant's type of business; for example, a boot-shaped sign denoted a shoemaker.

In China, during the Sung dynasty (960–1279, an enormously rich artistic and technological period), block-printing for printing entire pages and movable type cast in clay paved the way for mass communication. During this dynasty period, due to a shortage of copper for coins, paper money was invented and issued in China. In Korea, in 1403, movable type was cast in metal, further refining the technology.

Also in China, a wide variety of early forms of branding and advertising were utilized, including printed wrappers, banners, painted lanterns, painted pictures, and signboards, as well as printed advertisements. The high quality of and the great interest in painting—and the known printing technology—allowed the Chinese to create these early forms of brand identification and advertising.

The Gutenberg Printing Press and the 1400s

Although the first form of movable type was invented in China, it was the invention of the Gutenberg printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, in Germany in 1448, and its popular rise in Europe that allowed the distribution of information to the public to flourish. From then on, printed information could be easily distributed, and the rise of advertising was ensured. By the late fifteenth century, the first English language announcement in the form of a handbill (which one could consider an advertisement) promoting the availability of a book appeared. Soon thereafter, great quantities of posted advertising, announcing information and hawking goods, hung in the streets of London.

The 1600s to the 1700s

In 1625 in England, the first ad appeared in a newspaper—the first modern mass media. The very early eighteenth century (1704) marked the appearance of the first known newspaper advertisement in America, in the *Boston Newsletter*. Unlike today's newspaper ads, early newspaper advertisements were limited to one section of the newspaper, and most were simple announcements. In order to attract readers' attention, many newspaper advertisements repeated a line of copy several times. One could think of this as the predecessor to the ad slogan and a latter-day advertising giant's notion of the power of repetition in successful advertising solutions. Later on, advertisements would appear throughout the newspaper, as they do today.

By the 1700s, trademarks and stamps were becoming standard practice. A trademark became crucial to governments, producers, and consumers. Governments saw the need to institute patent, trademark, and copyright laws as incentives to encourage development and progress in science, technology, and the arts. The first patent laws were developed in Italy in the late 1400s, and it was the craft guilds in Europe that prompted the first trademark laws to ensure the distinction and identification of goods and services. Not only did trademarks identify and distinguish products, they aided consumers by citing origin and thereby quality. Today, trademarks must be registered with national governments. The first copyright laws were passed in England in the 1700s.

The Industrial Revolution

Beginning in England in the mid 1700s and reaching North America in the early 1800s, the Industrial Revolution—the great thrust toward a modern, industrialized society—caused a great impact on the future of branding and advertising. Mass production allowed for goods to be produced in a cost-effective way. Early forms of advertising and branding aided the dissemination of information about goods, identifying goods and quality, and stimulating demand. This early advertising was aimed not just at the rich, but also at the burgeoning middle class—as a mass market. Many people didn't read newspapers, so inventive advertisers and their advertising agencies (which started to crop up in England in the 1800s) found other ways to reach potential consumers, including men wearing placards, banners streaming from hand-held poles, and even umbrellas sporting signs.

The mass manufacturing and marketing of the Industrial Revolution spurred the growth of visual identification and trademarks. It also pointed out the importance and value of visual identification systems and trademarks.

Before the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865), bulk goods were sold by weight from barrels and open containers. These products weren't offered as “brand names” as we know them today—although some manufacturers, such as producers of tobacco, wine, and ale, did brand their trademarks onto wooden packages or casks—but, rather were sold as commodities. The Civil War-time economy created a ripe climate for technological advances and for the start of a “packaged goods” society. Soldiers needed canned goods and uniforms. People began to buy ready-made clothing and shoes. More and more, people were drawn away from commodities sold out of barrels to attractively packaged goods that promised “sealed freshness” and more sanitary products.

Before the 1880s, people simply bought crackers from a cracker barrel (or any other example of unpackaged product), and didn't really know the name of the manufacturer. Companies had to find ways to pro-

mote their “brand names” to customers through more earnest visual identities and attractive packaging—labels, boxes, wrappers—and heavier promotion through advertising. During this period, advertising took on a rather dramatic flavor, utilizing over-blown copywriting styles and melodramatic headlines. Infamous advertising for patent medicine (that gave advertising a lingering bad reputation) was strong, and introduced numerous brands, each vying for a larger share of the customer base. At first, tobacco companies burned their “brand names” into the wooden barrels sold to shopkeepers; later tobacco was sold in packages. Patent medicine manufacturers and tobacco companies led the way with proprietary names, uniquely decorative labels, and packaging.

The folding box enabled the cereal industry to flourish. “A manufacturer put a commodity in a small box, injected ‘personality,’ added information to increase its usefulness, and turned the goods into something both desirable and extremely profitable. The success of selling packaged goods also depended on advertising a ‘name.’ Yet it was something more than a name—it was the established identification of a ‘brand name.’ This identity differentiated the product from others of the same category and enabled buyers to appraise its value before buying.”¹

The role of the brand name's brand mark, label, packaging, and advertising designers was to stimulate sales and make the brand desirable. Thus it began that people wanted brand names, names that were impressive and reliable, names they could trust for a variety of reasons, such as freshness, quality, and sanitary packaging. They wanted brands that would make their lives easier and more pleasurable; they wanted brands that would make them more attractive, socially acceptable, and desirable.

A convergence of modern factors—such as the invention of photography and typewriters, a rising literacy rate, the rise of mass media, the increase in railways, the telephone, and better postal systems—would all greatly facilitate the success of brands.

Corporate executives and owners quickly recognized the important role that visual communications played in the success of their business, of driving consumers to use their brands and to create a loyal customer base. Whether it was the early advertising success story of Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound® or the meticulously planned campaign and launch of the Uneeda® biscuit, brand manufacturers realized how integrated branding programs could stimulate sales. Advertising for Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, a tincture of alcohol and roots for women's ailments, greatly increased its sales. In the 1880s, when Pinkham's son decided that he didn't need to spend any more money on advertising since sales were very good, he stopped advertising. Sales precipitously dropped.

Uneeda biscuit, a packaged brand-name cracker made by the National Biscuit Company (now Nabisco), hired the advertising agency N. W. Ayer & Son to create an integrated brand campaign for their product. The agency suggested the brand name, the character (a little boy in a raincoat to suggest air-tight freshness and crispness), and the slogan "Lest you forget, we say it yet, Uneeda biscuit." This historic campaign, launched in 1899, was the first multimillion-dollar ad campaign; it would change everyone's perception of the critical role of branding and advertising.

The Twentieth Century

During the first twenty years of the twentieth century, America prospered. Industrial growth was great. Many people had enough income to spend some on goods, services, and luxuries, small and big.

Graphic design, advertising, and marketing stimulated this "consumer" economy. People with extra money spent it on branded goods, from automobiles to phonographs to soft drinks such as Coca-Cola®, and to condiments such as those manufactured by Heinz.

The rise of mass media in industrialized countries contributed greatly to the rise of a "brand world" and

the desire for brands. Radio sponsorships by brands, and later radio advertisements, paved the way for people to embrace the notion that brands could bring them happiness, both directly and indirectly. Not only would a brand name soap clean your clothes better than the others, it also paid for a broadcast radio program that was entertaining. Television would be the next big venue for brands. Imitating radio marketing, brand names sponsored television programming and later paid for television commercial spots. Besides the brand identities created for consumer goods and services, it was the identification systems for corporations that set certain standards for the creation of all identification systems, comprehensive programs that went far beyond the design of a logo or trademark. A cohesive image created by a unified, consistent, professional visual communication program was the goal. Corporations wanted an advantageous visual image that could be used to represent the huge entity that is a corporation. Visual identity or corporate identity programs could give a corporation a "look," a style, an image, a personality.

Early on, print advertising was still king. And, rather unbelievably, it would take corporate executives until the late twentieth century to understand what N. W. Ayer & Son knew in 1899: just how effective *integrated branding experiences* can be.

Designing brand experiences that are strategic and relevant will resonate—and that is simply smart business.

Notes on Inventions

- In 105, it is believed that Ts'ai Lun, a Chinese court official, invented papermaking from textile waste using rags.
- Chinese papermaking techniques reached Korea early on, and in 610 were introduced to Japan.
- In 1810, the invention of the can by British merchant Peter Durand allowed for better food preservation and canned goods. The subsequent invention of the can opener, in 1858, by American Ezra J. Warner, facilitated the use of canned goods. William W. Lyman's newer model introduced in 1870 was easier to use, and therefore household use increased.
- In 1833, the first sewing machine was invented by Walter Hunt, but it went unpatented. Elias Howe secured a patent, but didn't manufacture or sell it. Howe also invented the safety pin. Isaac Singer produced Singer® sewing machines.
- In 1846, Richard M. Hoe changed printing by inventing a cylinder printing press; by rolling a cylinder over stationary plates of inked type, then using the cylinder to make an impression on paper, he eliminated the need to make impressions directly from the type plates.
- In 1865, William Bullock invented web offset printing, a process whereby paper could be fed into a printing press, on a continuous roll, and printed on both sides at once.
- In 1870, Robert Gair made his first plain-paper folding box.
- In 1908, cognizant that the upper-class market for automobiles was now saturated, Henry Ford introduced the term "mass production" to economics and began manufacturing his Model T®.

Notes:

¹ John McDonough and Karen Egolf, *The Advertising Age Encyclopedia of Advertising*, vol. 2 (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2003), p. 755.

Showcase: Heinz®



H. J. Heinz Company.

In 1896, "Henry Heinz turns more than 60 products into '57 Varieties®.' The magic number becomes world-renowned and now is virtually synonymous with the H. J. Heinz Company."

— www.heinz.com



The pickle pin, 1893.
H. J. Heinz Company.

Heinz introduces the pickle pin at the Chicago World's Fair, known as The Columbian Exposition. It becomes one of the most popular promotional pieces in the history of American business.

— www.heinz.com



Historical advertisements: Heinz.

Advertising helped make H. J. Heinz Company a household name.

In 1869, Henry J. Heinz and L. Clarence Noble launched Heinz & Noble. The first product is Henry's mother's "pure and superior" grated horseradish, bottled in clear glass to show its purity.

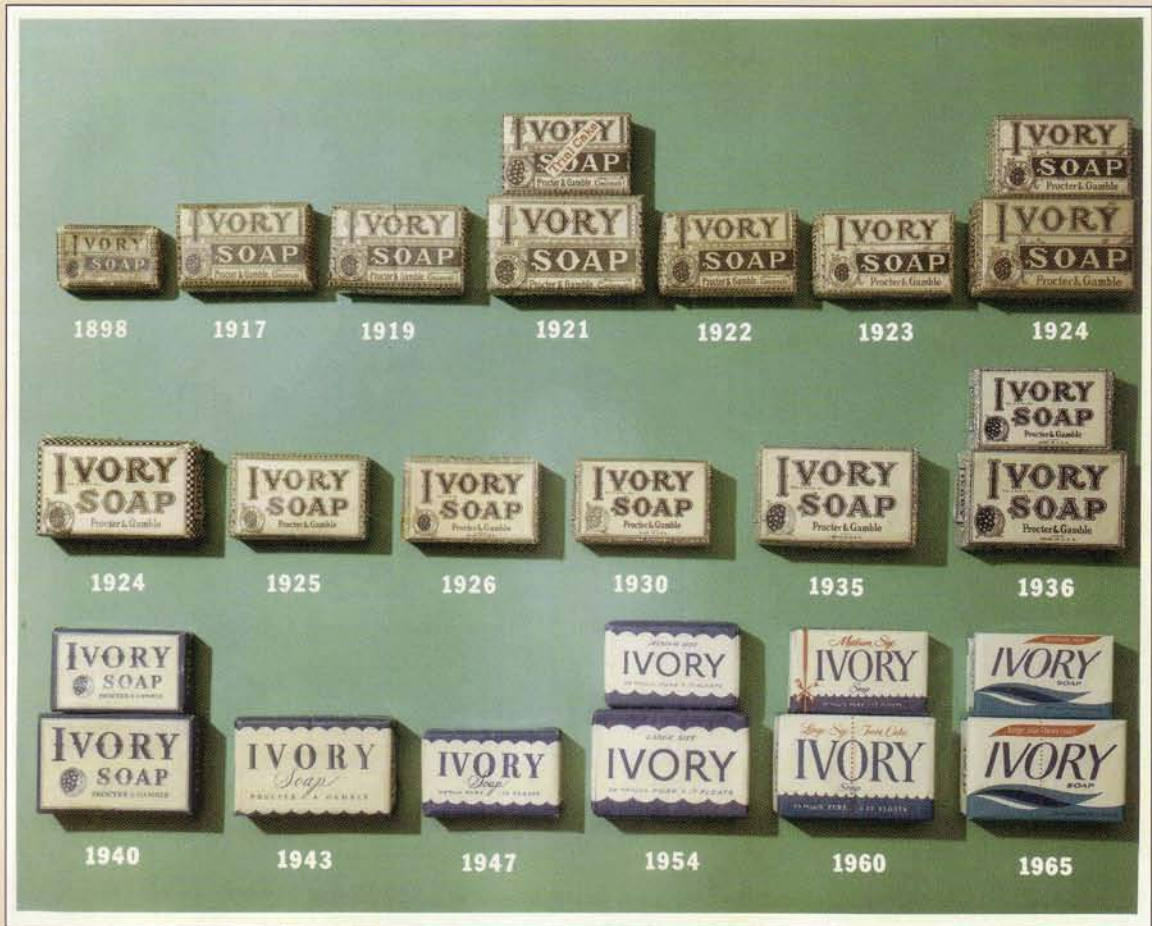
In 1876, ketchup is added to the company's condiment line, which also includes celery sauce, pickled cucumbers, sauerkraut, and vinegar.

— www.heinz.com

Showcase: Ivory™ Soap

"In 1878, James N. Gamble developed the formula for a white soap; appropriately enough, the product would be called P&G White Soap. But Harley Procter insisted the new white soap deserved a more distinctive name, one that people would remember when they went to the store. Finally, after weeks of consideration and rejection of a variety of names, Mr. Procter had a sudden flash of inspiration while attending Sunday church service. The search for a name ended when the minister read from Psalms 45:8—'All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad.' In October 1879, the first bar of Ivory was sold."

— www.ivory.com



Ivory Soap Evolution, 1898–1965. Courtesy of Procter & Gamble Co.



Contemporary Packaging for Ivory. Courtesy of Procter & Gamble Co.

Showcase: Campbell's® Soup



Placard: "Only a few minutes required in preparing."



Placard: "Particular Soups for Particular People."



Poster.



Soup can.



Charlie Chaplin.



Posters.

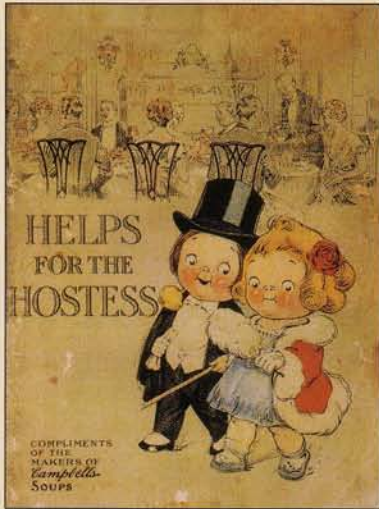
Courtesy of Campbell Soup Company.

"Advertising helped trumpet the benefits of soup to consumers and contributed to the success. In 1904, the cherubic Campbell Kids™ were introduced in a series of trolley car advertisements, as a way to appeal to working mothers. Around this same time, the first magazine print ad boasted 21 varieties, each selling for a dime. In the 1930s, Campbell entered into radio sponsorship, using the familiar 'M'm! M'm! Good!'® jingle to captivate listeners. When television made its way into American homes in the 1950s, Campbell introduced TV commercials, and some forty years later, the Campbell Kids were found dancing to rap songs on the small screen. Today, Campbell remains one of the leading advertisers in the U.S."

— www.campbellsoupcompany.com/history.asp

Showcase: Campbell's® Soup

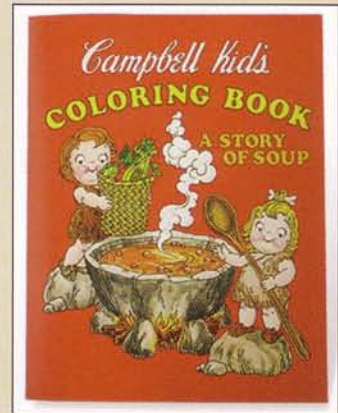
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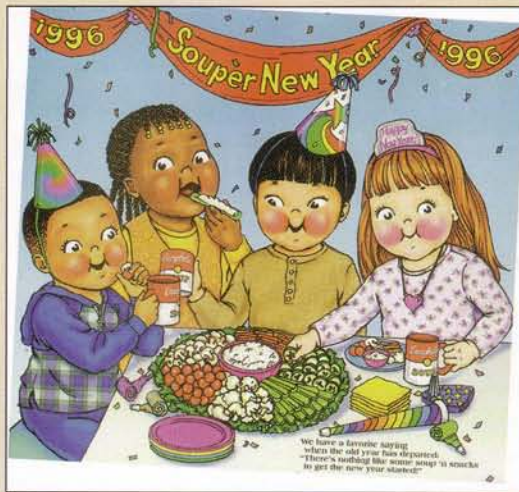
Hostess book, 1916.



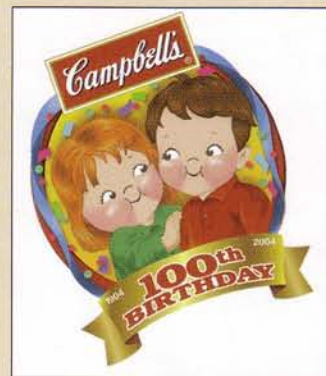
50th Anniversary.



Coloring book, 1970s.



Party, 2000.



Logo, 100th Birthday.



Cornerstone logo.



Campbell's round logo.

Showcase: Trix® 1954–1991



1954.



1955.



1956.



1957.



1960.



1962.



1964.



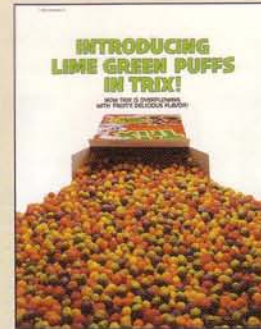
Front of box, 1968.



Back of box, 1968.



1988.



1991.

Courtesy of General Mills Archives.

General Mills first introduced Trix® cereal in 1954. The rabbit was first used on packaging beginning in 1960. The rabbit is a wonderful device—an icon that gives the brand great personality.

“There is a reason the Trix® rabbit is always trying to get his hands on great-tasting Trix® cereal. He just can’t resist those fruity flavors: raspberry red, lemony lemon, orangey orange, wildberry blue, grapy purple, and watermelon.

Fortified with 12 vitamins and minerals, Trix® is also a good source of calcium, making Trix® a fun and healthy way to start the day.

Try as he might, that rabbit still can’t get his hands on delicious fruity Trix® cereal.”

“Silly rabbit! Trix are for kids!”

— www.generalmills.com



Packaging design: Cockburn's® Port, 1969. Design studio: Blackburn's Ltd., London, U.K. Creative director/Designer: John Blackburn.

This was a launch of the world's first popular port brand. This is a design classic; it is unchanged since inception.

"New product development aimed at opening up port to a younger mass audience. 'Special Reserve' redefined imagery of market with accessible populist personality."

— www.blackburnsdesign.com

I ♥ NY



Logo and button: I LOVE NEW YORK®. Design: Milton Glaser, New York, NY.



Packaging design: Taylor's™ Late Bottled Vintage Port™, 1966–1970. Design studio: Blackburn's Ltd., London, U.K. Creative director/Designer: John Blackburn.

"The benefits of being first—NPD creating now buoyant 'Late Bottled Vintage' port segment. Still brand leader in category it founded."

The inspiration, according to Blackburn's, was "Hidden in the small print of the brief, the now famous phrase: 'late bottled vintage'."

— www.blackburnsdesign.com

Showcase: Historic Ad Council Campaigns



Savings Bonds, 1942–1980. Sponsor: U.S. Department of Treasury, War Finance Agency. Volunteer agency: Leo Burnett, Chicago, IL.

The War Advertising Council's first campaign, the Savings (or War) Bonds campaign, encouraged Americans to support the war effort by purchasing war bonds. The bonds were referred to as Defense Bonds until 1942, when agency executive Walter Weir decided it was more logical to call them War Bonds.

From January 15, 1942, to August 14, 1945, the organized power of advertising focused on informing the American people about what needed to be done to win World War II quickly and that buying War Bonds was near the top of that list. In that time, American advertising and media businesses contributed an estimated \$350 million worth of space and time in support of War Bond promotion and approximately 85 million Americans bought more than 800 million War Bonds.


After World War II, the bonds were called Savings Bonds, and the ads promoting them appealed to prudent investment, rather than patriotism.

By the time the U.S. Government Savings Bond campaign ended in 1980, the campaign drew \$75 million annually in donated media.

— Ad Council (www.adcouncil.org)


Showcase: Historic Ad Council Campaigns

continued





Pollution: It's a crying shame

But it won't be, if we start doing something about the problems. Things as easy as using a hand mower if your lawn is small. Or not overtaxing sewage systems by running water needlessly. Or actively supporting programs to clean up our rivers, lakes and streams. Let's restore the natural beauty that was once this country.



**People start pollution.
People can stop it.**



Keep America Beautiful

HELP FIGHT POLLUTION CAMPAIGN
MAGAZINE AD NO. HFP-1790-72—7" x 10" (110 Screen)
Volunteer Agency: Marsteller Inc., Volunteer Coordinator: W. Howard Chase, American Can Company

B-50

Historic Ad Council Campaign: Pollution: Keep America Beautiful® —“Iron Eyes Cody” (1961–1983). Sponsor: Keep America Beautiful. Volunteer agency: Marsteller, Inc., New York, NY. Used with permission of Keep America Beautiful, Inc. All rights reserved.

On Earth Day, 1971, a PSA (public service advertisement) featuring Native American actor Chief Iron Eyes Cody and the tagline, “People Start Pollution. People can stop it.” aired for the first time. Iron Eyes Cody became synonymous with environmental concern. The PSA won two Clio awards, and the campaign was named one of the top 100 advertising campaigns of the twentieth century by *Ad Age* magazine.

During the height of the campaign, Keep America Beautiful reported receiving more than 2,000 letters a month from people wanting to join their local team. By the end of the campaign, local Keep America Beautiful teams had helped to reduce litter by as much as 88 percent in 300 communities, 38 states, and several countries. The success of the Keep America Beautiful anti-litter campaign led to hundreds of other environmental messages through the years, from many different sources, including the Ad Council.

— Ad Council (www.adcouncil.org)