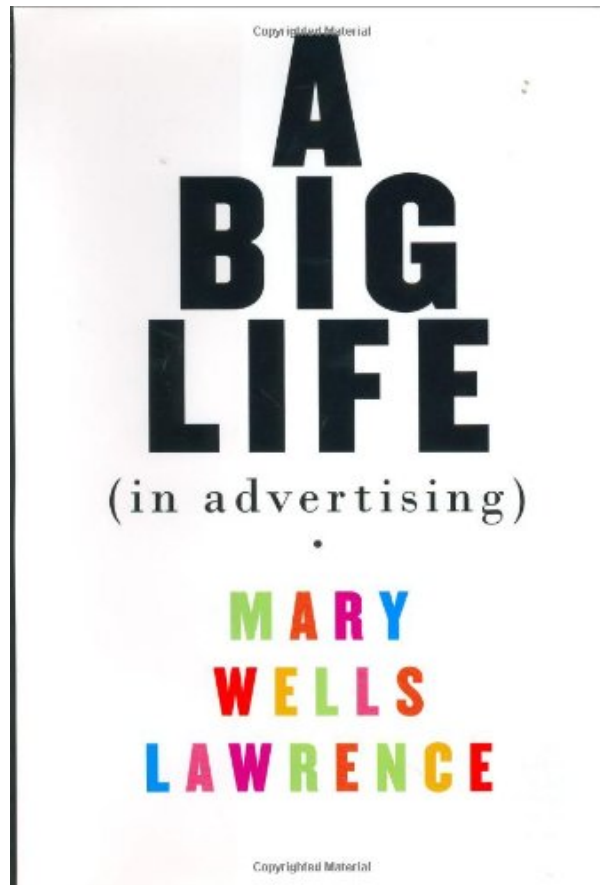


A BIG LIFE IN ADVERTISING BY MARY WELLS LAWRENCE



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A BIG LIFE IN ADVERTISING BY MARY WELLS LAWRENCE

PDF

One of advertising's all-time greats, Mary Wells Lawrence, shows us the American ad world from the 1950s through the 1980s in all its brilliance, excitement, fun and craziness.

She captures the thrill of being a young copywriter in the 1960s at Doyle Dane Bernbach, working for the dazzling, revolutionary Bill Bernbach ("There was something volcanic [about him] . . . a little like being in the company of Mao or Che or the young Fidel"); how he took on a car rental firm that barely existed, announced to the world it was Number Two and therefore it tried harder—and overnight made the unknown Avis second only to the mighty Hertz; how Bernbach's "Think Small" campaign made big car-obsessed America fall in love with the unlikely Volkswagen; how his Polaroid ads explained the mysterious instant camera to the public without saying a word.

She writes about leaving Doyle Dane Bernbach (for seven years her Heaven on earth) for a new ad company, and how she made it her own, producing the simple and unforgettable "Plop Plop Fizz Fizz" Alka-Seltzer commercial by getting rid of the cartoon tablet, Speedy, and creating a frothy, luminous commercial composed of nothing but two Alka-Seltzers dropping into a crystal glass of water; how she gave Braniff Airways brilliant visibility by painting its airplanes fresh, vivid colors—and then fell in love with and married the head of the company.

She writes about her campaign for the French tourist bureau and how she used a single image—a country man on a bicycle—that today is still the symbol of France's rural life . . . how she traveled the world for Betty Crocker's casserole dishes, how she brought theatricality and fantasy to TV advertising.

She tells how she started Wells Rich Greene and ran it like a movie studio. She writes about the clients and the campaigns . . . how she created a new line of cosmetics—Love—for a conservative drug company (it became one of the most successful cosmetics launches in history) . . . how she helped save American Motors from bankruptcy, redesigned its cars and put together an ad campaign that did the unthinkable—compared its unknown Javelin with Ford's beloved Mustang . . . how Midas was "Midasized" . . . how, when thousands of Ford dealers had gone out of business, the Ford ads focused not on Ford's cars but on the dedication of its workers, with the slogan "Quality is Job One"; how she made New York the place to be when it was seen as a sinking ship, with the slogan "I Love New York."

She writes about taking Wells Rich Greene public and how she became the first woman CEO of a company on the New York Stock Exchange . . . how she made a movie with the last of the Hollywood moguls, Jack Warner. She tells how she transformed a dilapidated, once-famous villa, La Fiorentina, at Cap Ferrat (a Nazi stronghold during the war) into a Mediterranean Eden, and writes about her battle with cancer. She talks about her refusal to globalize Wells Rich Greene and her decision, finally, to sell the company she'd built into the fastest-growing ad agency in history, and what happened to it afterward.

Here is the extraordinary story of how Mary Wells Lawrence lived her life in advertising—helped shape her profession, was shaped by it and left her mark on it.

- Sales Rank: #313802 in Books
- Brand: Knopf
- Published on: 2002-05-07
- Released on: 2002-05-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.57" h x 1.16" w x 6.61" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 307 pages

Features

- Great product!

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Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Less than Meets the Eye

By A Customer

Narcissism never had it so good. The personal pronoun is overdone even though this is an autobiography. This book lacks context in almost every instance. Years from now, many readers will remember that Mary Wells and Harding Lawrence had a grand time living on the French Riviera and the Caribbean. They won't have more than a clue how the couple worked together on Braniff (which went bankrupt), or how Mary came to claim and reclaim the Continental Airlines account (bankrupt a couple of times) or felt about a client with little chances for long-term success, American Motors (bought-out before it could go bankrupt). (See the pattern here?) The writing is sometimes a twisted jumble -- one can almost envision the author speaking into a tape recorder as she "wrote" this book. If you're inclined to get this volume, a used paperback will suffice.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

For old ad guys and gals

By A Customer

This is indeed a poorly written book, but it does share the insight of a great icon of the 70s and 80s ad game. For those who were/are in advertising, the perspective Lawrence gives is fun to remember when people and personalities really made a difference. An easy read, a few insights but really like reminiscing with a colleague about the "good old days." Lots of us would have loved to have just one of those tales to tell. The other reviews I've read on Amazon are pretty accurate. Reader beware.

6 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

From the Golden Age

By Amazon Customer

Mary Wells Lawrence took the advertising industry by storm in the 1960's by becoming the first woman, and the first true celebrity to dominate Madison Avenue. Her advertising and business accomplishments are part of modern marketing history. However the drive; confidence and determination that made her success a reality are outlined in a simple, easy to read and easier to enjoy prose that made her the dominant force in a business that was, and still is, dominated at the top by men. Her secret seems to be a total devotion to talent and to client. She found, nurtured and generously rewarded the best writing and art direction skills of the day and she totally immersed herself in the business of the clients that she served. Her story is warm, funny, and totally lacking in self promotion. Its provides a behind the scenes peek at the blood; sweat;tears and talent that produced the most memorable ads of a generation.

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