Van advertentiekruier tot reclameadviesbureau: de ontwikkeling in Nederland, de Verenigde Staten en Duitsland voor de Tweede Wereldoorlog
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Summary

This study focuses on the development of the advertising agency in the Netherlands, the United States and Germany before World War II.

The next two questions were in the focus:

• How and when is the advertising agency in the Netherlands created and how did this relate to the United States of America and Germany from the nineteenth century to World War II?
• What was the development of the advertising agency in the Netherlands, the United States and Germany? What were the similarities and differences in development in these countries?

The developments within the three countries were compared with each other using four phases that were taken from American studies on advertising history.

Four stages within the American Advertising history were identified:

• 1800–1870: The pioneers of the advertising agency.
• 1870–1890: The rise of the advertising agency.
• 1890–1920: The golden age of the advertising agency.
• 1920–1940: Towards a further professionalization.

Both questions were answered by looking at the similarities and differences in the three countries to the development of the advertising agency on the basis of the phasing in the United States. Within a phase, countries were set side by side. In addition to this synchronous analysis, a diachronic analysis was performed. The diachronic analysis included a quantitative analysis of the advertising agencies.

The analysis shows a great similarity in the development of the advertising agency in the researched countries. But the timing of the development that took place varied greatly. In all three countries forerunners of the advertising agency seem to have existed, although opinions on this subject are divided in German. This phase ended in the U.S.A. around 1870, in the Netherlands around 1880 and in Germany around 1860. The next stage consisted of the rise of the advertising agency. The core activity of the advertising agency existed in this phase of the mediation of ads.
In exchange for delivering ads to newspapers, advertising agencies were given a discount on the price of the inserted advertisements. Such a business model existed in all three countries. The interest of the mediator in advertising in this phase came close to that of the newspapers to which the advertisements were delivered. The period lasted in the U.S.A. from 1870 to 1890. In the Netherlands it started in 1880 and ended around 1920. In Germany it started in 1860 and lasted until about 1900. During the golden age of the advertising agency, agencies offered more and more services to customers. Texts of advertisements were written, advertisements were designed and advices on the placement of advertisements were given. The profession of the copywriter became important within the advertising agency. In the U.S.A. this period started in 1890 and lasted until 1920. In Germany, this period started around 1900 and ran until after the Second World War. In the Netherlands the period started around 1920 and also went on until after 1945. The fourth phase consisted of a further professionalization of the advertising agency and the advertising agency reached its final form. The business was still the same; the main advertising vehicle was still the advertisement. This phase began in the United States around 1920. In both other countries it didn’t start before 1945. In the United States J. Walter Thompson (JWT) became the leading agency. Stanley Resor, the owner, professionalized the advertising agency. JWT was mainly concentrating on the very large customers. Smaller customers were abandoned. From the beginning of the twenties he said goodbye to the star copywriters and he put together account teams. Mainly people with a higher education were employed. Resor also tried to introduce a more scientific approach. He did this by hiring a leading psychologist and a marketing pioneer. Most companies outsourced their advertising completely to the advertising agencies. Those companies kept a small advertising department that commissioned and supervised the agencies.

In the second half of the twenties radio advertising was discovered as a new medium for advertising in the United States. From the early thirties specialist advertising agencies arose for radio advertising. After an initial hesitant start the radio developed into a significant form of advertising. A new form of radio advertising the soap opera developed. At its height in 1950 approximately 11% of total gross advertising expenditure was spent on radio advertising.

From the early thirties market research became part of the business of advertising. The breakthrough took place with the American presidential election in 1936 when George Gallup managed to predict the victory of F.D. Roosevelt.

The increasing importance of advertising was also reflected in the growth of the number of advertising agencies.