



## Chapter

# 16

## Business- to-Business

### **B2B: Challenges and Opportunities**

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Some beginning copywriters dread business-to-business (B2B) assignments. The products aren't fun. The target audience is deadly serious. You're mostly stuck with trade magazines and collateral pieces. Many creative directors tell their team, "There are no boring products, only boring advertising." But many times, you don't know enough about a product to make it interesting. Too often even the clients don't know why anyone should buy their products. So they settle for a sterile recitation of facts and figures. While it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out beer, soap, or toilet paper, you have to know something about your subject as well as the customer when you're creating business advertising.

While creating good B2B concepts can be a challenge, it also presents a great opportunity, especially for entry-level writers. Rather than being stuck with a small piece of the account, you're more likely to work on a whole campaign. You might be able to work out a whole integrated plan that uses a lot of fun promotional and Web components in addition to print ads and collateral. You can probably work in some cool guerrilla marketing ideas. Some clients love that, since they think they're getting more for their money. In *Hey Whipple, Squeeze This*, Luke Sullivan praises B2B: "Trade ads are just as important to your client's economy as its consumer work, and they're usually a better gig than a consumer campaign."<sup>1</sup>

#### **Why B2B is different**

- The customer is buying products with his or her company's money.
- Traditionally, the copy has been more factual and less emotional than what's usually found in consumer advertising.
- In general, the emphasis is on generating immediate response rather than on long-term brand building.
- Ad budgets are usually much smaller than with mass-appeal consumer products, restricting many creative options.



### **Words of Wisdom**

*"It's . . . likely your trade assignment will have a cleaner playing field than a mass-market ad. There's a built-in villain: the other guy's product."<sup>2</sup>*

—Luke Sullivan