Sustain promotion, service

The subject of the "total selling" approach by the nation's daily newspapers and comparable efforts among broadcasters (BROADCASTING, *Jan. 26*) *was broached Jan. 28 by Robert F. Hurleigh, Mutual's news vice president. He told the South Carolina Radio & Tv Broadcasters Assn. at its winter convention at the Wade Hotel, Columbia:*

When I was in print media I was impressed with the behind-the-scenes activities of the promotion and circulation men. These men always were in the fore in top-level management on newspapers. A publisher wouldn't move without consulting his promotion or circulation executive.

But broadcasters tend to be opportunists. They stage specialized promotional drives only during rating weeks and die on the vine during other periods.

The Storz formula may differ from the Plough formula, and the McLendon formula may have a secret ingredient, while other stations seek the secrets of all three. But news has become the one common merchandise for all, including the stations disdaining the set formula. I think we are all agreed that the juke box formula—the "Top 40" formula—has had it. The enterprising entrepreneur must look for a new formula, while the present highly successful (from a financial point of view) top 40 station begins to spend itself like a satellite with a given, but not quite predictable, time left before it burns itself out.

If you believe in responsible journalism you are going to have to admit the fraud of the frenetic announcer accompanied or preceded by whistles, klaxons and piercing frequency tones, and using an echo chamber to report a fire in some outlying section when, after the frenzied newscast, it is learned that a trash can was afire and was out before the fire engines arrived.

While the station rating is a yardstick of immense importance to the timebuyer and the operator, we must be prepared for more attacks on the rating yardstick for buying, with that embarrassing question "Who buys your product, Mr. Advertiser?"

Advertising and Uncle Sam

While quick to defend capitalism and democracy, many are too quick to criticize advertising, a foundation stone of the free economic system, Ivan Hill, executive vice president, Cunningham & Walsh, Chicago, observed in a talk before the board of directors of Brand Names Foundation Inc., New York. To cure this, he said "we must be much more concerned with the political values in advertising than we have been," continuing:

Perhaps we should recognize the fact and tell the American public that advertising is the very essence of our continuing the free enterprise system as we have known it. It may be that whereas advertising and the brand name concept contributed considerably to the growth of our economy in the past, in the immediate future it may contribute even more to the maintenance of modern capitalism and the stability of an ethical democracy. . . .

This is also the time when advertising, in spite of its being a real economic workhorse, is being kidded too much. I would like to see an element of patriotism associated with advertising.

The benefits that advertising produces in a democratic society cannot be obtained any other way. . . .

Could it be that the maligned huckster is really one of democracy's heroes?

Institutional ads sold short

American business has failed to sell confidence along with its products, according to Charles F. Adams, executive vice president, MacManus, John & Adams Inc. Mr. Adams, speaking before the Des Moines Advertising Club, voiced the need for more institutional salesmanship:

Of advertising money there has been an abundance. But most of it has been devoted to the immediate case in point: the moving of goods. Each year since the end of World War II an increasingly smaller portion of each advertising dollar has been earmarked for building confidence in the institution rather than the item.

Institutional advertising, the building of a compelling public image not of a product alone but of its maker, also, was practiced like Republicanism in Alabama . . . by little nests of fanatics operating in the dark of the moon.

But circumstances were conspiring to bring about a renaissance of institutional advertising. Squeezed by cost and competition, business was forced to maintain its profit margin by expansion and diversification, by mergers and re-groupings. The market swarmed with new products—or old products under new sponsorship—and there existed no protecting umbrella of the corporate image, no reservoir of public goodwill that would embrace any worthwhile product or service because it was a part of the corporate image.