

Fascinate the Goldfish

WHY YOUR OLD TRICKS WON'T WORK IN A WORLD WITH A NINE-SECOND ATTENTION SPAN

The Birth of Marketing and the Death of the Attention Span

Egyptians were the original advertisers, using papyrus to create sales messages and posters. (One might imagine putting ads on the sides of chariots rather than city buses.) Then, for about the next five thousand years, the development of new marketing media and outlets kept a veritable snail's pace with the times' slow technological advancements.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the a cappella radio commercial and characters such as Tony the Tiger and the Pillsbury Doughboy entered the advertising scene. But still, even with the arrival of the three-martini lunch, there were still only three television networks to distract you and compete for your attention. In this relatively simplistic marketing environment, advertising excelled largely by virtue of one persistent tactic: repetition. And to illustrate why the repetition method worked so well, join me on a tour of three-hundred-year-old English landscaping.