

A

“Accountants and accountancy

When you make a mistake of adding the date to the right side of the accounting statement, you must add it to the left side too.

Anon

The term “earnings” has a precise ring to it. And when an earnings figure is accompanied by an unqualified auditor’s certificate, a naive reader might think it comparable in certitude to pi, calculated to dozens of decimal places. In reality, however, earnings can be as pliable as putty when a charlatan heads the company reporting them.

Warren Buffett, investor (1930–), letter to shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway

Mr Anchovy, but you see your report here says that you are an extremely dull person. You see, our experts describe you as an appallingly dull fellow, unimaginative, timid, lacking in initiative, spineless, easily dominated, no sense of humour, tedious company and irrepressibly drab and awful. And whereas in most professions these would be

considerable drawbacks, in chartered accountancy they are a positive boon.

John Cleese, comedian (1939–), “Vocational Guidance Counsellor”, *Monty Python* sketch (British TV series, 1969)

An accountant applied for a job. The interviewer asked him, “How much is two and two?” The accountant got up from his chair, went over to the door and closed it then came back and sat down. He leaned across the desk and said in a low voice, “How much do you want it to be?”

Joke

Budget: a mathematical confirmation of your suspicions.

A.A. Latimer, author

Accounting and control – that is mainly what is needed for the “smooth working”, for the proper functioning, of the first phase of communist society.

Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), *The State and Revolution* (1917)

There’s no business like show business, but there are several businesses like accounting.

David Letterman, chat-show host (1947–)

I have no use for bodyguards, but I have very specific use for two highly trained certified public accountants.

Elvis Presley, musician (1935–77)

Balanced budget requirements seem more likely to produce accounting ingenuity than genuinely balanced budgets.

Thomas Sowell, economist (1930–)

“Advertising

Let me try and clarify some of this for you. Best Company Supermarkets are not interested in selling wholesome foods. They are not worried about the nation's health. What is concerning them, is that the nation appears to be getting worried about its health, and that is what's worrying Best Co, because Best Co wants to go on selling them what it always has, ie white breads, baked beans, canned foods, and that suppurating, fat-squirting little heart attack traditionally known as the British sausage.

Denis Dimbleby Bagley, character in *How to Get Ahead in Advertising* (feature film, 1989)

Without promotion something terrible happens ...
Nothing!

P.T. Barnum, showman (1810–91)

Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark.

Stuart Henderson Britt, academic (1907–79), *New York Herald Tribune*, October 1956

Make it simple. Make it memorable. Make it inviting to look at. Make it fun to read.

Leo Burnett, advertising executive (1891–1971)

Any fool can write a bad ad, but it takes a real genius to keep his hands off a good one.

Leo Burnett

Fun without sell gets nowhere, but sell without fun tends to become obnoxious.

Leo Burnett

There was a time when I used to get lots of ideas ... I thought up the Seven Deadly Sins in one afternoon. The only thing I've come up with recently is advertising.

Peter Cook, satirist (1937–95), as the devil in *Bedazzled* (feature film, 1967)

If you don't like what's being said, change the conversation.

Donald Draper, character in *Mad Men* (American TV series)

Advertisements contain the only truths to be relied on in a newspaper.

Thomas Jefferson, American president (1743–1826), letter to Nathaniel Macon

Advertising may be described as the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it.

Stephen Leacock, writer (1869–1944), *The Garden of Folly* (2004)

Advertising is the greatest art form of the 20th century.

Marshall McLuhan, teacher and philosopher (1911–80), *Advertising Age*, 1976

The business of the advertiser is to see that we go about our business with some magic spell or tune or slogan throbbing quietly in the background of our minds.

Marshall McLuhan, *Commonweal*, September 1953

The modern Little Red Riding Hood, reared on singing commercials, has no objection to being eaten by the wolf.

Marshall McLuhan, philosopher (1911–80), “Book of the Hour”, *The Mechanical Bride* (1951)

The medium is the message.

Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (1967)

Never write an advertisement which you wouldn't want your own family to read. You wouldn't tell lies to your own wife. Don't tell them to mine. Do as you would be done by. If you tell lies about a product, you will be found out – either by the Government,

which will prosecute you, or by the consumer, who will punish you by not buying your product a second time. Good products can be sold by honest advertising. If you don't think the product is good, you have no business to be advertising it.

David Ogilvy, advertising executive (1911–99) *Confessions of an Advertising Man* (1961)

The public are swine; advertising is the rattling of a stick inside a swill-bucket.

George Orwell, author (1903–50), *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936)

In our factory, we make lipstick. In our advertising, we sell hope.

Charles Revson, founder of Revlon (1906–95)

Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half.

John Wanamaker, merchant (1838–1922), attributed

Advertising is legalised lying.

H.G. Wells, author (1866–1946)

“Advice

The first thing a new employee should do on the job is learn to recognise his boss's voice on the phone.

Martin Buxbaum, author and humorist (1912–)

The only unforgivable sin in business is to run out of cash.

Harold Geneen, businessman, (1910–97)

Never ascribe to malice that which can be explained by incompetence.

Robert J. Hanlon, *Hanlon's razor* (1980) (sometimes attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte)

The main thing to remember is, the main thing is the main thing.

Brigadier General Gary E. Huffman

Simple can be harder than complex: you have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it's worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains.

Steve Jobs, founder of Apple (1955–2011), quoted in *BusinessWeek*, May 1998

Ten minutes are not just one-sixth of your hourly pay. Ten minutes are a piece of yourself. Divide your life into ten-minute units and sacrifice as few of them as possible in meaningless activity

Ingvar Kamprad, founder of IKEA (1926–)

Never pick up someone else's ringing phone.

Mark McCormack, writer (1930–2003), *What You'll Never Learn on the Internet* (2001)

Don't worry about your physical shortcomings. I am no Greek god. Don't get too much sleep and don't tell

anybody your troubles. Appearances count: get a sun lamp to keep you looking as though you have just come back from somewhere expensive; maintain an elegant address even if you have to live in the attic. Never nickel when short of cash. Borrow big, but always repay promptly.

Aristotle Onassis, shipping magnate (1906–75)

If you're not confused, you're not paying attention.

Tom Peters, management writer (1942–)

I want to share something with you: the three little sentences that will get you through life. Number 1: Cover for me. Number 2: Oh, good idea, boss! Number 3: It was like that when I got here.

Homer Simpson, character in *The Simpsons* (American TV series)

Son, you be sure to set your goals so high you can't possibly accomplish them in one lifetime ... I made the mistake of setting my goals too low and now I'm having a hard time coming up with new ones

Robert Turner, father of Ted Turner, media mogul

Swim upstream. Go the other way. Ignore the conventional wisdom.

Sam Walton, founder of Walmart (1918–82)

“Agriculture business

He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

The Bible, Proverbs 12:11

Agriculture is now a motorised food industry, the same thing in its essence as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and the extermination camps, the same thing as blockades and the reduction of countries to famine, the same thing as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs.

Martin Heidegger, philosopher (1889–1976), lecture, 1949

When you concentrate on agriculture and industry and are frugal in expenditures, Heaven cannot impoverish your state.

Xun Zi, Confucian philosopher (312–230BC)

“The airline industry

If the Wright brothers were alive today Wilbur would have to fire Orville to reduce costs.

Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines (1931–), quoted in *USA Today*, June 1994

We need a recession. We have had ten years of growth. A recession gets rid of crappy loss-making

airlines and it means we can buy aircraft more cheaply.

Michael O'Leary, CEO of Ryanair (1961–), quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, November 2008

If we went into the funeral business, people would stop dying.

Martin Shugrue, PanAm executive (1941–99)

A recession is when you have to tighten your belt; depression is when you have no belt to tighten. When you've lost your trousers – you're in the airline business.

Adam Thomson, former chairman of British Caledonian (1926–2000)

In one fell swoop, we have shrunken the earth.

Juan Tripp, founder of PanAm (1899–1981), on the introduction of the first jet-engine planes

Running an airline is like having a baby: fun to conceive, but hell to deliver.

C.E. Woolman (1889–1966), founder of Delta Air Lines

“Ambition

Ambition is a poor excuse for not having sense enough to be lazy.

Edgar Bergen, ventriloquist (1903–78)

[Ambitious men] may not cease, but as a dog in a wheel, a bird in a cage, or a squirrel in a chain, so Budaeus compares them; they climb and climb still, with much labour, but never make an end, never at the top.

Robert Burton, scholar (1577–1640), *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621)

The great Western Disease lies in the phrase, “I will be happy when ...”

Marshall Goldsmith, management writer (1949–), “Making a Resolution that Matters”, *Fast Company*, February 2004

The worst fault of the working classes is telling their children they’re not going to succeed, saying: “There is life, but it’s not for you.”

John Mortimer, barrister (1923–2009)

Empty pockets never held anyone back. Only empty heads and empty hearts can do that.

Norman Vincent Peale, church minister (1898–1993), *Enthusiasm Makes a Difference* (1967)

Ambition is a dream with a V8 engine.

Elvis Presley, musician (1935–77)

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him

step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.

Henry David Thoreau, author (1817–1862), *Walden* (1854)

“America

The chief business of the American people is business.

Calvin Coolidge, American president (1872–1933), address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors

I was slightly cynical of the American mentality before I came over here, but now I preach it. Here, no one's going to tear you down if you buy yourself a \$300,000 car. They're likely to say: "Well, you probably worked hard for it. Good luck to you."

Simon Cowell, showbusiness man (1959–), quoted in the *New York Times*, May 2004

If you were really, really, really rich ... what part of your life would be American? If you had the money, I'd bet you'd drive a German car, wear British shoes and an Italian suit, keep your savings in a Swiss bank, vacation in Koh Samui with shopping expeditions to Cannes, fly Emirates, develop a palate for South African wine, hire a French-trained chef, buy a few dozen Indian and Chinese companies, and pay Dubai-style taxes. Were you to have the untrammelled economic freedom to, I'd bet you'd run screaming from big, fat, wheezing American

business as usual, and its coterie of lacklustre, slightly bizarre, and occasionally grody “innovations”: spray cheese, ATM fees, designer diapers, disposable lowest-common-denominator junk made by prison labour, Muzak-filled big-box stores, five thousand channels and nothing on but endless reruns of “Toddlers in Tiaras”.

Umair Haque, consultant, *Harvard Business Review*, October 2011

Americans are apt to be unduly interested in discovering what average opinion believes average opinion to be; and this national weakness finds its nemesis in the stock market.

John Maynard Keynes, economist (1883–1946), *The General Theory of Employment Interest and Money* (1936)

The problem with American management today is that it has succeeded in assuming many of the appearances and privileges of professionalism while evading the attendant constraints and responsibilities.

Rakesh Khurana, Nitin Nohria and **Daniel Penrice**, *HBS Working Knowledge*, February 2005

Businessmen are the one group that distinguishes capitalism and the American way of life from the totalitarian statism that is swallowing the rest of the world. All the other social groups – workers, farmers, professional men, scientists, soldiers – exist under dictatorships, even though they exist in chains, in terror, in misery, and in progressive self-destruction. But there is no such group as businessmen under a

dictatorship. Their place is taken by armed thugs: by bureaucrats and commissars. Businessmen are the symbol of a free society – the symbol of America.

Ayn Rand, author (1905–82), *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (1966)

Americans used to be “citizens.” Now we are “consumers.”

Vicki Robin, writer (1945–), *Your Money or Your Life* (1999)

What’s great about this country is America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest. You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you can know that the President drinks Coke, Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke, too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking. All the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good.

Andy Warhol, artist (1928–87)

“Appraisals

An appraisal is where you have an exchange of opinion with your boss. It’s called an exchange of opinion because you go in with your opinion and leave with their opinion.

Guy Browning, humorist (1964–), *Office Politics: How Work Really Works* (2006)

“The arts

The culture industry not so much adapts to the reactions of its customers as it counterfeits them.

Theodor Adorno, sociologist (1903–69)

Charge less, but charge. Otherwise, you will not be taken seriously, and you do your fellow artists no favours if you undercut the market.

Elizabeth Aston, author, *The True Darcy Spirit* (2006)

I'm not a driven businessman, but a driven artist. I never think about money. Beautiful things make money.

Geoffrey Beene, fashion designer (1924–2004)

I find it rather easy to portray a businessman. Being bland, rather cruel and incompetent comes naturally to me.

John Cleese, comedian (1939–)

I can't change the fact that my paintings don't sell. But the time will come when people will recognise that they are worth more than the value of the paints used in the picture.

Vincent van Gogh, artist (1853–90)

Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.

Andy Warhol, artist (1928–87)