

The Power Of **Deletion As An Advertising Persuasion Tool by Dan O'Day**

An advanced strategy for radio advertising professionals.

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An advanced strategy for radio advertising professionals.

My educational background is Psychology. My post-graduate work focused on Hypnosis. In fact, I even produced an audio seminar, [Hypnotic Radio Advertising](#), that some reviewers have called “ground-breaking” and “phenomenal.”

Deletion actually is a hybrid technique that comes from two distinct disciplines: Linguists and Hypnosis.

It's an extraordinarily powerful tool that forces the recipients of your message to voice that message themselves.

And when your listeners voice your message themselves, guess what?

Your sales message is 100% to 300% more effective. And your advertising is 100% to 300% more profitable.

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Which Do You Think Is More Effective?

Which of these two circumstances do you think would be more effective in motivating you to eat ice cream?

A) Hearing a commercial announcer say, “You really feel like eating ice cream right now.”

or

B) Hearing the thought in your own head, “I really feel like eating ice cream right now.”

Obviously, it’s much more effective if the suggestion comes from your own mind instead of from a commercial announcer.

And believe it or not, you can create an environment in which your target audience creates the “sales message” for themselves...without you ever voicing it.

How?

By utilizing **Deletion**.

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Deletion is one of the most powerful weapons in your arsenal....when used properly.

What Is Deletion?

Deletion is when you deliberately do not verbalize the message you want the other person to receive.

A Traditional Hypnotic Suggestion

When inducing a hypnotic trance, the hypnotherapist might say to the client:

“You might notice that your right arm is feeling heavy, very heavy....So very heavy as though a great weight is pushing it down so hard that probably if you tried you would find it very hard to lift off the table at all....And it might even be impossible....”

The above is typical of what is commonly referred to as the Standard Hypnotic Induction — that is, in causing the subject to enter an hypnotic trance.

An Alternative **(And More Powerful)** Hypnotic Suggestion

But here’s a more elegant way to give that message, using **Deletion**:

“As you sit there, almost every part of you feels completely normal.

“Your left arm feels fine.

“You can wiggle the fingers on your left hand. “You can wiggle the toes on your left foot.

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“You can bend your left knee.

“You can pat your left thigh.

“You can wiggle the toes on your right foot.

“You can bend your right knee.

“You can feel the air rustling past your right ear....”

Question: What has been omitted from the above list of the things the hypnotic subject has been told he can do?

If you didn't already spot it, look again.

The one part of his body that has been conspicuously left out is...His right arm.

And guess what happens?

The person can't lift his right arm!

Why not?

Because of Something Called Closure

The hypnotic subject cannot lift his right arm because his subconscious mind goes crazy, trying to fill in “What's been left out?”

Deletion utilizes the principle of **Closure**.

Closure = The natural tendency of the human mind to impose order upon chaos.

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You've heard the phrase, "Nature abhors a vacuum"?

Well, the human mind abhors an information vacuum.

And when the communicator leaves something out, the mind spins 'round and 'round, trying to fill it in.



I'm sure you've experienced this yourself. For example, think of the "teases" done by your local nightly TV news:

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“An Academy Award-winning actor has been arrested. Details coming up on Eyewitness News.”

Did you ever notice how they always manage **not** tell you the actor’s name in that tease?

And did you ever notice how curious that tease makes you?

Maybe even so curious that you’ve kept the TV on long enough to find out the one big piece of information that was withheld from you — the actor’s identity?

Then you experienced the **Closure** Principle.

But Deletion is **not** Closure. Deletion simply makes use of the power of the Closure Principle. When the “meat” of the message is not spoken, the recipient of that message automatically will fill in the blank for himself.

Deletion In Action: Some Conversational Examples

Spoken Message: “Are you going to the party dressed like that? The invitation said ‘formal,’ you know.”

Recipient Thinks: “Oh. I guess I should change into fancier clothing.”

“Deleted” Message: Wear fancy clothing to the party.

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Spoken Message: As you and a friend climb out of your convertible, with the top down, your friend says, “You know, it’s supposed to rain this afternoon.”

Recipient Thinks: “If it might rain, maybe I should put the top up.”

“Deleted” Message: Put the top up on your convertible.

Spoken Message: The bartender announces, “Last call.”

Recipient Thinks: “They’re about to close. I’d better order my last drink now.”

“Deleted” Message: If you want another drink, order it now.

Deletion In Action: Some Commercial Examples

One of my favorite commercials can be heard in my “ultimate radio advertising seminar,” [How To Create Maximum Impact Radio Advertising](#). The first 25 seconds are devoted to a leisurely recitation of reprimands such as...

“Don’t sit so close to the television; it’ll ruin your eyes.”

“You’re not going out dressed like that, are you??”

“If he tries to kiss you, call me.”

“You’ll thank me for this some day.”

As you listen to this commercial, you gradually become aware that these are the kinds of things your mother told you when you were growing up. But you have no idea what is being advertised...yet.

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At the very end of the commercial, the announcer says, “Mom. How could you forget her? Mother’s Day is this Sunday. See’s Famous Old-Time Candies.”

And that’s where it all falls into place...without the announcer spelling it out for you.

Spoken Message: “Mother’s Day is this Sunday. See’s Famous Old-Time Candies.”

Listener Thinks: “I need to get Mom a Mother’s Day gift. Maybe I’ll get her a box of See’s Candies.”

“Deleted” Message: Buy your mother a box of See’s Candies for Mother’s Day.

Question:

Why doesn’t the announcer simply say that?

Why doesn’t the announcer say, “Mother’s Day is this Sunday. And if you haven’t already gotten her a gift, See’s Candies would be a great idea!”

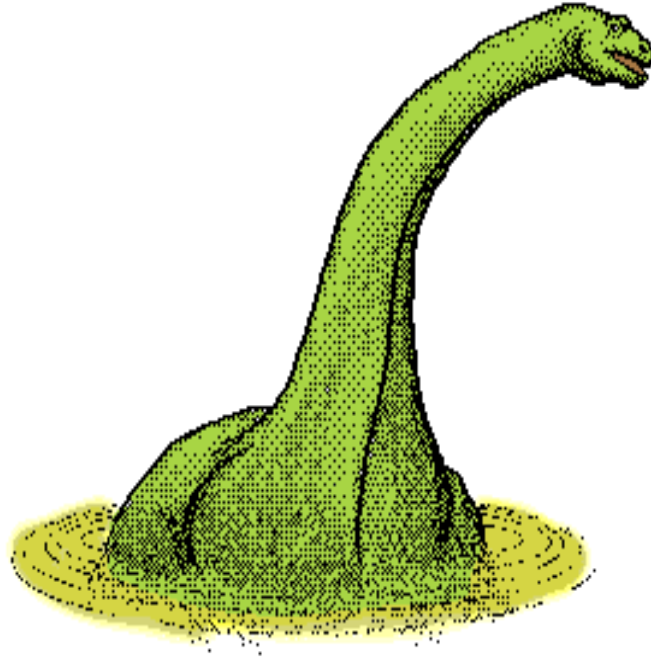
The announcer doesn’t say that because it’s infinitely more powerful to have you reach that conclusion yourself....To have those words come from your own mind, rather than from a radio commercial.

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[How To Create Maximum Impact Radio Advertising](#) also includes a commercial for a business journal. The announcer describes a fascinating exhibit about dinosaurs at the Museum of Natural History. He points out that for thousands of years they were the most powerful creatures on Earth. But, “due to an inability to adapt,” they became extinct.

Then he says, “If in today’s competitive business environment you don’t think you don’t need Crain’s New York Business to survive, we encourage you to visit this educational exhibit without delay.”

That's **Deletion**. They don’t tell you **why** you should visit this educational exhibit without delay. And for a moment, your mind spins around, trying to fill in the blank...until it thinks:

“Oh, I see! Because otherwise I’ll become extinct, like the dinosaur.”

That’s Deletion; they allow **you** to fill in the blank.

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A less sophisticated (and less effective) commercial copywriter would have spelled out the message:

“So remember, if you don’t want to become extinct like the dinosaur, you’d better read Crain’s.”

But **that** wouldn't have been as powerful as the targeted consumers hearing that message **in their own minds**.

Spoken Message: “If in today’s competitive business environment you don’t think you don’t need Crain’s New York Business to survive, we encourage you to visit this educational exhibit without delay.”

Listener Thinks: “Oh, I get it! If I don’t want to become extinct like the dinosaur, I’d better read Crain’s!”

“Deleted” Message: Read Crain’s, so that you won’t be left behind by your competition.

If you can make people make that leap themselves, they remember it...and they enjoy it more.

You can hear a commercial like that 100 times, and every time you hear it you’ll still make the connection for yourself.

By the way, In addition utilizing **Deletion**, that commercial uses something else I teach at length in [Hypnotic Radio Advertising](#): Effective use of **Metaphor**. That commercial utilizes the metaphor of the dinosaur representing what you might become if you don’t read Crain’s.

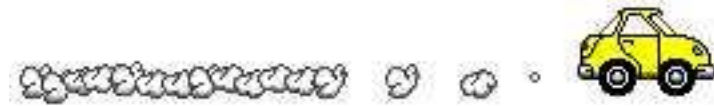
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Hypnotic Radio Advertising also contains a second example from this campaign. In this commercial, it talks about piranhas...and uses Deletion to allow you to make the leap: “If I don’t want the competition to tear me apart....”



Each year I produce an event called **The International Radio Creative & Production Summit**. One year one of our attendees, a Belgian copywriter named **Philip Maes**, brought with him a spot he had created to promote the use of children’s safety seats in automobiles. Most of the commercial is devoted to the playful babbling of a toddler. Then the announcer intones:

“Have you ever heard a better argument for using a child’s safety seat? Strap them in. You never know....”

It’s a wonderful commercial.

And its effectiveness is doubled by its smart use of **Deletion**.

“You never know....”

You never know...What?

The announcer never finishes the thought, **so the listener does!**

Rather than have the announcer describe some terrible consequence of not using a child’s safety seat, it’s infinitely more powerful when **you** fill in the worst scenario your mind can devise.

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Spoken Message: “You never know....”

Listener Thinks: “Gee, I never do know when a drunk driver might swerve into my lane or I might lose control of my car....”

“Deleted” Message: If you care about your child, you’ll make sure he or she uses the safety seat.

In [Hypnotic Radio Advertising](#), I share a commercial for a gas company in the United Kingdom. The spot consists of a man interviewing a woman who has **not** switched over to this gas company...even though it can save her a lot of money and requires no extra effort on her part.

The woman acknowledges that she understands she would save money if she made the switch. And she understands that it’s very easy to do.

Finally the interviewer asks:

“When, then, **haven’t** you switched over to Amerada Gas?”

And the woman explains that she is convinced that gas company actually is a front for an interstellar invasion force that plans to colonize the Earth and enslave us all.

After a long pause, the interviewer replies:

“Fair enough.”

He does **not** say the one message that the advertiser wants every listener to hear:

“You’ve got to be **crazy** not to switch to Amerada Gas!”

And when **he** doesn’t say it, the listener automatically thinks:

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“That woman must be crazy! She has no good reason not to switch to Amerada Gas!”

Spoken Message: “Fair enough.”

Listener Thinks: “That woman must be crazy not to switch to Amerada Gas!”

“Deleted” Message: This is such a good deal that you’d have to be crazy not to take advantage of it.



Take this test.

An apple a day keeps_____.

Did you mentally fill in that blank?

Did you think, “...the doctor away?”

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If you were raised in North America, I'm pretty sure you did.

I did not **tell** you to finish that sentence.

No, I simply left it unfinished. And your mind would not allow that. (**Closure**, remember?)

I deleted the "moral" of that sentence, so you automatically filled it in for yourself.

Here's one more example from [Hypnotic Radio Advertising](#).

In a soft voice, over intriguing yet unobtrusive music, a woman interviews what sounds like a five-year old girl:

WOMAN: What would you do if a stranger talked to you?

GIRL: I wouldn't talk to him because he might be bad.

WOMAN: What would you do if you saw someone playing with matches?

GIRL: I'd tell them to stop, because they might start a fire.

WOMAN: How come you know so much?

GIRL: My mommy told me.

WOMAN: Oh! And what did your mommy tell you about drugs?

(Five-second pause, as music continues)

ANNOUNCER: Your children are listening. Are you talking? A message from Partnership For Drug-Free America.

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Spoken Message: “Your children are listening. Are you talking?”

Listener Thinks: “I’ve taught my children not to speak to strangers and not to play with matches. If I don’t want them to take drugs, maybe I should teach them about that, too”

“Deleted” Message: Talk to your children about drugs.

Note about that commercial: The **Deletion** effect actually occurs during the five seconds where nothing at all is said.

The little girl has been asked, “What did your mommy tell you about drugs?”

And the silence clearly implies the answer:

Nothing.

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[The International Radio Creative & Production Summit](#) — the only event in the world devoted to improving the skills of people who sell and/or create radio advertising! Produced by Dan O'Day and Dick Orkin, every August in Los Angeles.

“MUST HAVES” FOR RADIO ADVERTISING PROFESSIONALS

[Hypnotic Radio Advertising](#) — A ground-breaking exploration of startlingly powerful techniques you can begin using immediately to greatly increase the effectiveness of your advertising message!

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