When author Phil Dusenberry began his career at the giant ad agency BBDO in 1962, advertising—and really all of marketing—was a very different industry. Products were simpler, customer segmentation and targeting less sophisticated, and even the vocabulary of sales and marketing less extensive. In the ensuing four decades, as Dusenberry rose to become Chairman and Chief Creative Officer of BBDO, the world changed. Still, the relative simplicity of a bygone era comes through in Then We Set His Hair on Fire—it's a refreshing read and a throwback to the time of David Ogilvy's classic, Confessions of an Ad Man. Partly a memoir, partly a textbook on classic advertising campaigns, and partly one man's discourse on the complicated art of persuading people to do a simple thing—buying more stuff—Dusenberrys work will satisfy different audiences. Most obviously, eager business students wanting to learn the behind-the-scenes details that went into the creation of world-famous advertising campaigns will find a trove of rich anecdotes. Dusenberry describes the epiphanean moment that led to GE's two-decade slogan, Bringing Good Things to Life. He then weaves an entertaining narrative around the clients and campaigns that defined his career: HBO (There's no place like HBO), Pepsi (Generation Next), Cingular (Raising the Bar), even President Reagans 1984 re-election campaign (Morning in America), and others. Dusenberry pays brief lip service to the science of advertising, describing the kind of background research that underlies great ad campaigns, but he admits a greater faith in gut instinct and the all-important insights that drove his clients success. The alternative? Dullness and failure. According to the opinionated and colorful Dusenberry, overly careful reliance on empirical data leads to copycat advertising, which in turn produces the worst of all situations: a parity economy in which goods and services are relatively commoditized, without the kind of special differentiation that creates lasting...
businesses. Instead, Dusenberry exhorts his readers proverbially to
move the needle in non-trivial ways, to get sauce on your sleeve, to stand
for something, and every once in awhile, when circumstances warrant, to
make the boldest of all moves, betting the farm. These axiomatic phrases
might seem trite from another author, but somehow, Dusenberry makes
them seem trenchant with his never-ending stories. In one of the newer
stories, for example, he recounts how BBDO staged a pro bono campaign
for New York City shortly after the 9-11 terrorist attacks, using celebrities
such as Henry Kissinger, Robert DeNiro, Billy Crystal, Ben Stiller, and
Barbara Walters to illustrate the power of the dreams that draw so many
young people to the city, even today. Its those powerful dreams that
have become lost in so much advertising today, and which Dusenberry
recalls in spades. While his playfully titled volume cannot be taken as a
comprehensive, scientific manual for better advertising, it does well in
reminding us of the qualities from advertisings origins that remain ever-
relevant. --Peter Han

My Personal Review:
And I've read A LOT. This one, however, goes behind the scenes on how
a product lets the consumer know it's here by a "memorable" campaign,
not the the 24/7 onslaught of pop-ups or product placement or posters-in-
public-bathrooms that we have been experiencing of late. It's enough to
make a person wistful for the good ol' days of advertising. I'm NOT in the
business, but I can still remember each and every ad Dusenberry
mentioned. (And I can still recite: Two all-beef patties, special sauce,
lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions, on a sesame seed bun! :-) ) At the same
time, I can't remember a single ad that aired last night during "Desperate
Housewives." Newcomers may blow off the meanderings of a mere high-
school graduate who "did good" in advertising, but from this consumer's
viewpoint, Dusenberry GOT it, and that's an insight I'll cherish.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
Then We Set His Hair on Fire: Insights and Accidents from a Hall of Fame Career in
Advertising by Phil Dusenberry - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!