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## Promote Your Product or Lose Your Market

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I WOULD LIKE TO DEAL here briefly with one important part of the fishing industry's job—to sell its production profitably and the role of industry-backed promotion and advertising in doing this. The battle for the consumers' food dollar is a battle of advertising, promotion and new products. Twenty-four new products a day are presented to chain buyers to add to their more than 5,000 items in a super market. In 1959, sales in the United States rose to an all-time high of \$78.8 billion for food and drink—about 24c out of every dollar of disposable consumer income. To spark this sales increase, the food manufacturing industry increased advertising expenditures from \$320,000,000 in 1947 to a whopping \$759,000,000 in 1959. It is worthy of note that many of the food companies showing the greatest sales growth and the best profits also showed the greatest expenditures for advertising.

No figures showing the amount spent for advertising by fish and seafood

processing companies is available (none were listed in Advertising Age's 1959 list of 100 top food advertisers). Of the total measured advertising (magazines, newspapers, TV and radio) expenditures by the combined meat, fish and poultry industries amounting to \$22,258,000 in 1959, I am sure that everyone knows that only a small fraction of this amount was for fish and seafood advertising. But our advertising effort in the seafood industry is improving. More fish processing companies are finding that good advertising programs are sound investments for both the present return and for the future. As this fact becomes more generally a fact of business life, more seafood companies will turn to advertising to increase sales and profits rather than to depend on low prices to move the product. As these advertisers sell more products through advertising, the progress of the fish and seafood industry will move along with it.

For the balance of the seafood industry to wait for individual companies to do the entire promotion and advertising job will not protect the industry's stake in the fiercely competitive food business. Even with such strong brand advertisers as Maxwell House, Chase and Sanborn and many others, the Pan American Coffee Bureau spent \$441,000 in 1959 in promoting the sale of coffee in magazines and newspapers. There is a real need for strong industry-wide advertising and promotional support by the fish and seafood industry and the industry has made a good start at the job.

A brief look at the advertising expenditures of other food industry trade associations show us the kind of competition we face in industry-wide programs. Here are a few of the top advertising trade associations and their 1959 expenditures in Measured Media Advertising (magazines, radio, TV and newspapers):

Florida Citrus Commission	\$5,328,000
American Dairy Association	3,866,000
Sunkist Growers Association	2,272,000
American Sheep Producers Council	658,000

All told, 31 leading food associations spent \$18,542,000, not including trade publicity, industry point of sale materials, or other promotional activities.

The funds for these programs are usually raised by assessments against production by member companies—per box of oranges, per 100 pounds of milk, etc. A good example of the effectiveness of this joint advertising effort occurred last fall in a Florida Citrus Commission campaign, supported by 22 producers of orange concentrate, which spent \$3,359,000 in a September thru December advertising and promotional campaign to bolster what looked like a bad season because of heavy production. Result—sales up 31 per cent over the corresponding period in 1958. In the past, many efforts have been made in the seafood industry to get industry-backed advertising programs going. Some of these efforts have succeeded, at least for short periods of time, but many failed as the philosophy of "price-selling" overcame "product-selling." In times of oversupply and low prices, firms decided that advertising costs offered the most visible targets for cost-cutting and programs folded. In such times, as shown by the Florida Citrus Commission program last fall, advertising increases can help the profit picture.

The past decade has seen some solid progress in industry programs for advertising and promoting the sale of fish and seafoods. During this time the

joint program of publicity and promotion supported by United States National Fisheries Institute members, by their Canadian counterpart, the Fisheries Council of Canada and by Norway fish fillet producers, has spent about \$60,000 per year, primarily in promotional and publicity activities with excellent results. In 1955, "Fish 'n Seafood Parade," an industry-backed fall sales promotion, was started on a \$5,000 budget. This promotion has grown to a \$25,000 annual budget and genuine success. In 1959, a similar Lenten promotion, "It's Fish 'n Seafood Time," was started with a \$15,000 budget. This too, filled a big promotional need and efforts are being made to increase its budget. What are the results of these expenditures?

In the basic joint advertising and publicity program carried on through NFI, in "Fish 'n Seafood Parade" and in the new Lenten promotion about \$90,000 was spent in 1959. Most of these funds went to publicity and sales promotion with small amounts to trade publication advertising. A check of the newspaper and magazine articles on fish and seafoods and the TV and radio time resulting directly from recipes, photographs and other promotional materials furnished by the industry program indicated that space and time worth almost \$6,000,000 resulted from industry efforts—quite a return! Add to this the important support of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in making the industry programs pay off by field marketing help and the benefits mount up. Nor are the above programs the only seafood industry-sponsored programs operating. For ten years the Shrimp Association of the Americas, backed by shrimp producers of Texas, Florida, Mexico, and more recently El Salvador and Panama, have carried on an excellent program of advertising and sales promotion, spending over \$50,000 a year. This year saw the start of a similar program supported by the National Shrimp Breeders' Association—an additional \$35,000 per year. All this is good and certainly is helping the frozen fish and shrimp industries to do a better marketing job for its products, but is it enough in the face of increased competition from other food industries? Many industry people seriously concerned with the future think it is not enough—there are not sufficient funds for real consumer advertising and are working to expand these programs.

The seafood industry has come a long way in its product technology since World War II. Freezing now makes it possible to deliver fine quality fish or shrimp to Bismarck, North Dakota, and other places far from the sea. The seafood processing industry has developed many fine new products and will develop more, but there is a real need for the industry to tell its story of delicious protein food, low in fats and rich in vitamins and minerals. Its products have real romance in their harvesting and people want to know more about them. This is one of the reasons we get so much product publicity for our money, but if we are to gain the share of market our products deserve—yes, if we are to even hold our present place, we must increase our industry-sponsored advertising and promotional programs.

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