

Overuse syndrome

You've probably seen or heard some words or phrases in ads/commercials so much that they have become meaningless. They do nothing to bring you in or tell you anything about the product or service. Yet, you will continue seeing and hearing them. Why? Because copywriters and in certain cases the advertising manager is enamored of the word or words and can't think of others.

At the top of my list of most overused words in advertising (and thus most meaningless) is the word **unique**. You've heard things like "a unique product," "unique way," etc. BTW, this is also overused in PR. Very few things in this world are unique, and then ad folk decide that some things are not only unique, but truly unique. Truly? (as opposed to fakely?). Other words/phrases that are overused as to become meaningless are: special, best, time of your life, out of the box, outside the lines, and so on.

If you find yourself about to use an overused phrase, think to yourself, is this a cliché? What other thing can be highlighted about my product? What is its USP—and that can't be that it is unique, but what MAKES it unique. No, it is not easy, and that is why we see these words and phrases used over and over. But if you want your materials to communicate the essence of what you are trying to sell, then you will benefit from being unique in avoiding this word.

What are your most overused words?

