



# THE INSPIRATOR

INTERNATIONAL

BASICS EVERY EXECUTIVE  
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT  
HOW IMAGE SELLS YOUR  
PRODUCTS OR SERVICES!

By FORREST W. CATO

FIVE QUESTIONS  
ABOUT YOUR GOALS

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WORK IS LOVE  
MADE VISIBLE

By DRYAN VIVAL

STRUGGLES, CHALLENGES &  
OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

By JOAN POSIVY

THE BEAUTY AND  
WONDER IN NATURE

By STEPHEN W.K. TAN

HOW DAVID BANCROFT AVRICK  
BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL  
MARKETING LEGEND!

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## THE VIP INTERVIEW

This issue profiles a direct response living legend who is now breaking records globally in this demanding specialty discipline. (Forms of advertising and marketing where results can be measured.) Famous direct mail names of the past such as Maxwell Sackheim, Bob Stone, John Caples, Victor Schwab and Lester Wunderman, now are joined by a new role model. David Bancroft Avrck has emerged with the boom in technology yet retains many of the proven practices he learned as a youth working with Max Sackheim.

No doubt Avrck will be best remembered for writing the advertising line: "I've fallen and I can't get up". Unquestionably this is the most famous line in advertising history. It's been the source of thousands of stand-up comic routines, T-shirt slogans and the keystone of countless speeches. Yet, his slogan created an industry, and assured personal security for tens of thousands of people.

During the years Avrck has had many 'firsts.' He developed the first printing press capable of lithographing a ready-made envelope. The process has become the world-wide standard of the industry.

He launched the post-card deck industry. At the current time Standard Rate & Data has an entire section devoted to postcard decks. Again, this has become an industry. There is a postcard deck published literally every day. Every businessman has a shrink-wrapped deck arrive in his mailbox once or twice a month.

Literally sight unseen, Avrck paid cash for 5,000,000 animated art cels from Academy Award winning animator Chuck Jones. He turned these 'cartoon acetates' into works of art. Now hundreds of thousands of homes are decorated with 'original' Bugs Bunny, Wile E. Coyote, Daffy Duck and Road Runner cels. Thousands of art galleries, around the world

sell animated art, and many sell nothing else. It was Avrck's understanding of the art potential, and boldness that created this industry.

Every American watches Infomercials; but no one knows the creator. Avrck created the first infomercial two decades ago, then called long-form-advertising. This breakthrough advertising concept is now a multi-billion dollar industry on both sides of the Atlantic.

Over the years Avrck has unquestionably generated more sales leads than any other marketer in the world. As a matter of fact, he's created over 20 million for one client alone. That's not the number of pieces mailed, it's the number of responses that have been generated. One mailing that he created has generated over 5,000,000 responses, probably the most successful mailing piece ever written.

As a professional speaker, Avrck has taught marketing professionals throughout the USA and Pacific-Rim countries. He's the creator of *Avrck's Axioms*, a set of rules for direct response that are always true. He's considered by many, because of his pioneering and success, to be a direct response living legend.

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He is listed in *Who's Who In California*. Avrck has an international reputation. Advertising copy written by Avrck has appeared in Malaysia, Singapore, the USA, Canada, Hong Kong, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, plus parts of China.



# HOW, DAVID BANCROFT AVRICK BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING LEGEND!

By Forrest Wallace Cato

**Cato :** *How would you describe what you do for a living ?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I'm a marketing expert. My job is to help a client bring their product or service to the market place using direct response techniques. The area where I have the greatest reputation is lead generation. Companies with a nationwide sales force have a massive need for sales leads. I've developed an expertise in generating massive quantities of sales leads. It's easy to create a thousand sales leads a week; but when you start looking for five thousand or ten thousand or a hundred thousand, simple lead-generating techniques fail to work.

**Cato :** *How many sales leads has the Renaissance Man generated for any one client?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Over a period of many years of working with the Craftmatic/Contour organization they generated 23,000,000 responses to the various advertisements that I created. That's over a million a year for almost two decades. It also represents a marketing investment of hundreds of millions of dollars.

**Cato :** *It's been claimed that "you can't buy Avrick's expertise." What does that mean?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I certainly have gained a reputation as a result of being the marketing consultant to several major companies. But, I'm never interested in simply receiving a monthly fee. I'm only interested in getting involved with a corporation on an equity basis, or as a percentage of sales or profits. I don't think it's fair to ask a company to pay me a fee-per-month regardless of

how effective the work I do for them may be. Conversely, I think it's only fair that as long as I'm willing to take a risk with the company, I should be handsomely rewarded.

**Cato :** *What kinds of clients have you worked with?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** The clients I have worked with fall into certain categories. First of all there are firms that need leads for their sales force. Second are publications that require subscriptions for their magazine and newsletters. Third, there are companies who sell some type of

continuity product who are looking for people to begin collecting their series. These three groups certainly make up the vast majority of companies which I've worked with. A final group would be companies who have a product to sell, and I help them generate sales. In the area of generating sales leads I've worked with every company that sells an encyclopaedia, including **Encyclopaedia Britannica**. I've generated sales leads for Beltone Hearing Aids and Dahlberg Hearing Aids. I've generated leads for every major Wall Street broker including Merrill Lynch and Dean Witter. And, of course, I've created hundreds of lead generating programs for Craftmatic Adjustable Beds and Contour Chair Lounge. At some point in time I've generated subscriptions for every major publication in the country including **TV Guide, Time, Newsweek, Playboy, Sports Illustrated, McCall's and Redbook**.

I also generated 'starters' for Disney and Grolier and **World Book** and dozens of other continuity clubs. There's hardly a major player in the industry that I haven't worked with, on some basis, over the years.



## Renaissance Man Honored ~ By US Senate

**Cato :** *You've been a pioneer in creating new media. Let's examine that for a moment. What new media do you think you've created that has had the greatest impact?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Unquestionably what is now called the infomercial. When I created this almost a quarter century ago I called it long-form advertising, or a movie sponsorship. The federal government's FCC had developed a series of guidelines that dictated the number of minutes of advertising that could be run in any half hour period of time. Those guidelines were ultimately challenged in court and the FCC lost. However, most of the stations, especially all those that were network affiliates, still adhered to the guidelines. When I decided I needed a format that would permit 30 minutes of advertising, I had to spread that over a 2½ hour television show. I would purchase the rights to a movie and buy 2½ hours of television time. I would then provide the station with a 2 hour movie, 30 minutes of commercials, and specific

instructions as to how to place the dozen or so commercials before, during and after the movie.

The idea was to have the advertiser 'sponsor' the movie. During the commercials, which were made to appear like a telethon, the viewer was urged to call an 800 number to receive free information on the product being offered. The concept was an immediate success. We generated sales leads for **Encyclopaedia Britannica**, **Niagara Therapy**, **Craftmatic Adjustable Beds**, **Colonial Penn Insurance**, and a host of other major national advertisers.

**Cato :** *I believe you were the person who started the original animation art craze. How did that happen?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I discovered that the animators stored all of the cels used in each and every cartoon they produced. They simply couldn't bring themselves to throw them away, and their union contract prohibited them from re-using the cels. But, there was no market for these cels. It was kind of a Catch-22. They couldn't discard them because they represented months or years of work - they couldn't re-use them - and there was no market to sell them. So each animation studio paid for warehouse storage.

One day I was visited by the accountant for Chuck Jones, unquestionably the world's greatest living animator. The accountant had been referred to me by a mutual friend who knew I was involved in the mail-order business. He brought a few dozen cels with him. They were beautifully matted and contained the images of the animation stars I grew up with - Daffy Duck, Wile E. Coyote, Yosemite Sam, Elmer Fudd, The Roadrunner. They were sensational. But I had no idea what they were. I asked him what they were, and he explained their background. He said that Chuck had a 'warehouse filled

with these' and wanted to convert them into cash. No one had ever figured out what to do with these.

I asked him how many good quality image cels they had. I was assuming he would say something like 5,000 or maybe 10,000. He told me 5,000,000. I made him an offer 'on the spot'. He called Chuck with my offer and Chuck accepted it. I was instantly the owner of millions of pieces of artwork, without any idea what I would

do with it. I also knew that unless I came up with some brilliant strategy I was going to be broke; because I had offered to pay Chuck a lot more money than I

The major challenge was to create an 'art' marketplace for this. As long as people viewed these as 'kid's pictures' and not an 'adult collectible' we would never sell our inventory. I then began a massive direct marketing campaign. Full page, full color ads were created and run in national magazines. I started to call on art galleries. Slowly, but surely, we started to sell animated art cels. The public became aware of the fact that they could own a piece of their childhood.

The rest, as they say, is history. You can now buy animation art in an art gallery, or specialty store, anywhere in the country. The market is so powerful that limited editions are being created all the time. The cels that I sold, retail, for \$39.95 are regularly sold, today, for \$1,000.00. When I visit an animation art gallery I will usually see cels that I, at one time, owned. It's amazing when you realize that an entire industry was just waiting to blossom. Now tens of thousands of people are enjoying this wonderful art form.



*David Bancroft Avrick's DM work has earned awards from major market cities across the USA.*

*He has even been honored by The US Congress for his accomplishments in direct marketing.*

## America's Best-Know DM Consultant



*Possibly America's best-known direct marketing consultant, David Bancroft Avrick resides in Santa Barbara, California. He is a world traveler and frequently visits his penthouse in Singapore*

**Cato :** *There are a great many lines in advertising that have become part of the general culture, such as "where's the beef?" But nothing compares to the impact of "I've fallen, and I can't get up." You wrote that line. What's the history of it?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** A client, Life Alert, had created a wonderful product. It's basically an alarm that you activate by depressing a button on a necklace or bracelet. This sends an emergency signal to a receiving and transmitting device in your home. In turn this device dials the Life Alert emergency center, which operates 24 hours a day. You can talk with their emergency staff and advise them of the nature of the problem - which could be requiring an ambulance, or police or fire equipment be dispatched to your home. If you are not able to talk, they will immediately contact 911 on your behalf.

In trying to create a situation that would demonstrate an emergency that everyone could relate to, I came up with the image of an elderly person falling, and then being incapable of moving. The copy was simply: "Help, I've fallen and I can't get up". The line caught on. It's now printed on hundreds of greeting cards and T-shirts, and used by dozen of comedians. Every president has incorporated the line into one, or more of his speeches. It's certainly a big part of our pop culture.

## Renaissance Man in Jerusalem

*The DM legend recently visited the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Avrick explained, "Here is Haram esh-Sharif, the Noble Enclosure of the Muslims. This is the third most important religious site in Islam, after Mecca and Medina. The rock is the spot from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven."*

**Cato :** *What project was the greatest disappointment to you?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I spent a solid year working on what I refer to as the "wine project". The idea was to create, for wine collectors, the world's greatest collectible. The idea was to have the world's finest wine, in the world's finest bottle. The bottle would be packaged in a beautiful wooden chest. There would be a special, limited edition art print enclosed in the chest - and the limited edition would be reprinted on the art label. The art print and label would be consecutively numbered, the chest would have a brass plate with the same number, and the art print would be hand signed by the artist.

I thought the most difficult task would be to sign the artist. I asked 10 museums to let me know who they felt were the top living artists. At the time Dali, Chagall and Miro were living - and their names were on each list. I contacted the agents for Chagall and Miro and couldn't make a deal. I met with Dali. He was interested; but wanted me to use an image he had already created; which was unacceptable to me. I was finally able to meet with and sign Andy Warhol. He was thrilled with the project and I was ready to move on to the next step. I met with Baccarat and was finally able to negotiate the purchase of 1,000 liter decanters and 200 magnum decanters. I had to view a zillion different models since most decanters are not used for holding a cork. Finally we were able to strike a deal on the decanters. This left the wine. I had been assured that we would be able to get the approval of Chateau D'Yquem. This is





## Renaissance Man No Stranger To Pac-Rim

*The direct marketing success case histories achieved by David Bancroft Avrick are studied at marketing courses taught throughout the Pacific-Rim countries.*



the world's finest white wine. That wine was critical to the program because it's the only top quality wine bottled in clear glass (all the red wines are bottled in green glass, which I didn't want to use). After working on this for about a year I flew to Bordeaux with my wine importer. The owner of Yquem said 'no'. No matter how hard I tried, I could not convince him to change his mind. He thought the idea was sensational; but wouldn't give us the exclusive rights to sell his wine, in this special bottling. So, the project died. I not only lost a years worth of work, but I loved this project and was devastated that it would never be launched.

**Cato :** *Was that your only failure?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Oh no. I've had hundreds of failures.

**Cato :** *Any other major failures?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Lots and lots. I often tell people that one of my major assets is that "I fail well." I don't let failures get me down. Too many people seem to go into a slump when faced with failure. I don't do that. One of my other great failures was Clark Aircraft. Right now there's a big problem with the production of equipment that will go into the Space Shuttle. The shuttle is quite wide, and launch economics dictate that you build your equipment to utilize the entire diameter of the Shuttle. But there is no plane capable of loading equipment that wide. This means that the equipment must be built, then broken down and shipped to the launch site, where it is rebuilt. You can imagine the inefficiencies of this. We had created a modification on the DC-10 which would permit loading completely assembled equipment. We would then fly this equipment to Canaveral, or any other launch site, where it would be unloaded and placed inside the Space Shuttle. My job was a get NASA to give me a contract to transport this equipment. Using that contract we had already lined up financing to

purchase and modify the DC-10. NASA and the Pentagon wanted to own the aircraft. I wanted to be in the airfreight business. I had no interest in building and selling them a modified airplane. I wanted to simply be in the freight business. We would use the plane for NASA when they needed transportation; and use it for other people when it wasn't being used by NASA. Again, this project took over a year; and I was never successful. Finally the Pentagon built their own plane, at a cost a trillion times more than our alternative. But this gave them the control they insisted on. It was pretty frustrating knowing I had a superior system and not being able to implement it.

inally the Pentagon built their own plane, at a cost a trillion times more than our alternative. But this gave them the control they insisted on. It was pretty frustrating knowing I had a superior system and not being able to implement it.

**Cato :** *What career accomplishment are you most proud of?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Everyone talks about getting a 1% or 2% response to their mailings. I have always been of the opinion that if I had the right offer and sent it to the right list, and had a rationale for responding, then everyone would respond. If I'm offering free information on how to maintain a germ-free swimming pool to a list of 10,000 people who just installed swimming pools; why wouldn't everyone respond? So my goal has always been to get a 100% response. I've never accepted the philosophy that states you should be satisfied with a 2% response. I was able to create a mailing piece for Craftmatic that offered the consumer an array of valuable information about health problems if they would give us some information about themselves. The mailing consistently pulled a 25% response and we generated literally millions of leads using this mailing package. I think that more replies were generated from this mailing package than from any other mailing ever created. So I'm proud of two things. First I created a mailing that shattered the 2% barrier by 1300 percent. And second I believe I created the mailing package that has generated more responses than any other mailing package in history - literally millions of responses.

**Cato :** *On a personal level, what are you most proud of?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I challenged an associate to a 10K race. I had never run more than a few blocks in my life. About 6 months later I recall running 10 kilometers, and then about a month later expanding that to 10 miles.

## Famous Man In Famous House



*David Bancroft Avrick's Doberman is named Sydney and is almost six years old. Sydney loves to play and the dog considers herself a part of the Avrick family.*

**Cato :** *When were you most embarrassed?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I had a business meeting with someone I did not know in Singapore. The cab pulled up in front of my hotel, where the meeting was to take place. As I exited the cab my pants split. I remember holding my attache case behind me as I skirted the outside walls of this huge hotel lobby. I was finally able to get into the elevator, get to my room, change and run down to the lobby for my meeting. I recall being red with embarrassment; but the person I was meeting with never knew what had happened. He just thought I was late for our meeting.

**Cato :** *What's your idea of enjoyment?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** There are two answers here. Career and personal. In my career it's coming up with a concept, implementing it and finding out it's a success. I remember when I was Jay Abraham's partner. We were selling a \$5000 MasterMind Marketing Seminar to business owners. I felt that there was a need for an advanced program that gave the people more one-on-one attention. I conceived of a 5-day, \$15,000 War College. I remember writing the letter and mailing it to a thousand people who had attended our 3-day program. I had arbitrarily set a limit of 24 people and within a few days we had 20 people signed up. That's very enjoyable. On a personal level I like challenging travel. I went to Nepal to trek Everest, I've trekked Kilimanjaro, I went into the jungles to visit the mountain gorillas, I spent a week in the midst of the Amazon. I like going to interesting places. I also like going to events. I've been to the Olympics, and World Cup, the Kentucky Derby and Super Bowl. I like being in the midst of the action.

**Cato :** *What's your greatest fear?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Not being able to do the things I want. I can't imagine what life would be like if I wanted to do things; but was physically incapable of doing them. I accept some reasonable amount of moderation is necessary; but I don't know how I would deal with the fact that I was not able to visit the North Pole.

**Cato :** *What person living, or dead, do you most admire?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Kristnamurti. He was opposed to the concept of people being controlled by other people, whether in the name of nationalism or religion or a police force. No one should control you, your movements or your thoughts. There is no substitute for freedom. People will often voluntarily give up their own freedom for what they call 'the better good'. That's absurd. There is no good that's greater than my own freedom.

**Cato :** *What is the greatest hoax?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Politics. We have this sense that we are electing officials who have an agenda that includes our best interest. The evidence is pretty clear that the only agendas that politicians have are their own. Sure, you can make political donations and get them to focus on your agenda. But that's not done because they care about you, or your agenda. Their efforts, on your behalf, are a direct result of their need for funding; and their supporting your agenda is simply something they must do in order to accomplish their own goals.

**Cato :** *Who do you think are the greatest talents in your field?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Clearly the copywriters. The days of the mail-order entrepreneur are gone. You hardly ever get a mailing, or see a space ad, offering a single mail-order product. Nowadays every company has either a catalog with hundreds of products, or some kind of



## Renaissance Man At Home

*Avrick's home has been featured in many US house or architectural magazines. The Avrick dwelling has been called, "One of the ten most famous houses in California."*

## Renaissance Man Is A Marketing Expert For Clients?

back-end or continuity program. That has turned the industry from one built by entrepreneurs to one controlled by large corporations that have no personality. The suppliers, whether it's printing, envelopes, lettershop, computer service bureau or list brokers, are all using the same tools. Group 1 software is used by every computer service bureau, the list brokers all use the same list search software, and there is little talent required in most of these industries. On the other hand the copywriters are usually the people who create the offer and use their skills to persuade the consumer to say; "yes - I want your product or service". There are also a handful of extremely talented graphic designers in the industry.

**Cato : What is your best known characteristic?**

**David Bancroft Avrck :** As I mentioned before, I fail well, I do not believe in spending months and months researching a concept. I'd rather take an idea and let the marketplace tell me whether it's a good idea or not. When you do things my way you try a lot of things that fail. And, if you're going to become depressed over these failures, you're never going to succeed. So, I've learned to use my instincts to identify 'probable' winning concepts. Then I let the marketplace tell me whether I'm right or wrong. My batting average is only 1 in 10 to 1 in 20 - so obviously I'm failing all the time.

**Cato : Do you have ghosts which haunt you, and if so, what?**

**David Bancroft Avrck :** Yes, the legal system. I found myself in serious legal problems because someone I rented names to was sending out illegal mailings. The government authorities decided that I was a participant in that program and caused me incredible grief. I ended up having to plead guilty to fraud charges even though I never was a part of this man's organization. I was forced to pay huge legal fees, a massive fine and restitution and suffer enormous consequences. I was not a principal in this event and yet I was held responsible as a participant. I don't know how a businessman can avoid these kinds of problems, so they create ghosts for me.



*Avrick says, "My skill, as a marketing man, is to identify what emotional buttons a product or service will fulfill for the prospect."*

**Cato : What would you advise others who desire to excel, as you have, in the same disciplines?**

**David Bancroft Avrck :** One of my major problems is lack of focus. As you can see from the answers that I have given you, my career has spanned dozens of different industries and disciplines. I think your chances of success are much greater if you are more focused than I have been. I would recommend people understand the tremendous potential of direct response marketing. When you market via traditional distribution routes you're fighting for shelf space and you're required to spend a virtual fortune in promoting your product if you want the consumer to seek it out in the retail environment. With direct response you can, with a very limited

budget, go directly to the marketplace. Once you understand that concept, and you are willing to accept failure, then you have the opportunity to market goods and services to a vast marketplace. There are 100,000,000 consumer households, and over 10,000,000 businesses in America. And all are looking for products and services that will make them more money, provide them with pleasure, ease their chores and make them happy.

**Cato : What irritates you?**

**David Bancroft Avrck :** Bureaucracy. I can't stand spending hours on the phone talking to voice-mail, and never getting a call back. Everyone has to deal with government offices, and utilities and large corporations. No one is willing to take a call, listen to the question, and take the responsibility of either giving an answer, or obtaining one. Tasks that should be accomplished in minutes take days, tasks that should be accomplished in days, take months.



## Renaissance Man Who Became A Legend

*Avrick explains, "For my direct marketing clients I come up with a concept, implement it, and find out if it is a success."*



## Renaissance Man Is A Dog And Cat Man

**Cato :** Do you have a personal motto?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Yes. Do it now.

**Cato :** How do you maintain your discipline?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I think it was fostered by my parents. They had no respect for 'doing nothing'. So if I'm not busy doing something, I hear this little parental voice, telling me to get busy.

**Cato :** When are you most satisfied?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** When things are working fairly smoothly. When suppliers aren't disappointing me. When schedules are adhered to. When I don't have to spend my time anticipating the next crisis.

**Cato :** Where do you see the direct response industry going?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** In a word: "soaring". Direct response has always been a very costly way to distribute goods and services. An economist might say it's patently absurd for a manufacturer to send a mailing offering a product to one person. And, if that person decides to make a purchase, a single order is processed, and the product packaged and shipped to one person. There is no efficiency in this, especially when you compare it to shipping 5,000 cases of the product to a central warehouse where it's then reshipped to each of 500 supermarkets in a chain store. However, the costs of traditional distribution have simply gotten out of hand. Manufacturers are now being asked to pay retailers a fee to have their merchandise get shelf space. General Motors is currently spending over \$2 billion to promote their cars. As traditional retail distribution becomes too costly, direct response becomes a more rational alternative.

We've experienced the amazing sales of exercise equipment on television using infomercials. There is currently a catalog for every product category, hobby and fantasy imaginable. Escalating media costs have removed magazines and newspapers from most direct response media budgets, but I'm predicting a change in that.

We're going to see publishers coming out with meaningful direct response rates in order to attract these advertising budgets back to their media.

The government is investigating many of the multi-level marketing companies. You're going to see many of them switch their sales practices to direct response.

**Cato :** What about the internet?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Many people feel the internet will revolutionize the way in which we do business. The internet is just beginning to make its impact on the way we obtain information, goods and services. Companies such as Dell Computers and Amazon Books are selling millions of dollars worth of merchandise directly to the consumer. By the end of this year just about everyone with measurable discretionary income will be online.

**Cato :** What about credit, especially on the internet?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Although there are some risks using credit cards on the internet this has been highly exaggerated in the media. The truth is that we don't think twice giving a 17-year old kid who pumps

our gasoline our credit card information. Or, we will leave our credit card number on a table in a restaurant. No one is concerned about this. The internet has all sorts of controls and they will get better. Within a short period of time that myth will explode and people will transmit their credit card information with impunity.

**Cato :** What, if anything, do you see holding back the growth of direct response?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** If anything is going to hold back direct response it is a lack of talent. The old mail-order companies were highly entrepreneurial. The employees started in the mail room and worked their way up in the organization. Each successful mail-order company launched a half dozen competitors. The new 'corporate' mail-order company is not a training ground. There is no systematic method for teaching the principles of mail-order.



*Avrick has five cats, all Persians. Kimba, is shown above with the direct marketing consultant. The other cats are Morgan, Fog, Heaven and Duchess.*

## Renaissance Man Says, "For Me Success Is Getting Results For Clients!"



*Avrick said, "I take a risk with my clients. My job is to successfully bring the client's product or service to the marketplace using direct response techniques."*

**Cato :** Are there any specific areas where you do see growth?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** The first thing we're seeing is an explosion in the international marketplace. American corporations are now marketing all over the world. They are doing this either on their own, or as joint ventures with local companies. So the first major area will be an expansion from a strictly domestic to an international marketplace.

The second major growth area will be the shift to non-traditional merchandise. Computer software is an excellent example of this. Similarly we've experienced an explosion in the selling of information. Newsletters are a huge direct response product. People are seeking help with their spiritual and emotional needs, and direct response is going to fill that void with books, audio and video tapes.

**Cato :** How did you get started in this business?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** It was an evolution. When I was born my dad was in the paper and envelope business. Our family continued in that business, and some of them are still involved in that field today. One day about 25 years ago I asked a major client: "what do you do with all these envelopes I sell to you". He explained that they were in the co-op marketing business. They distributed coupons for package goods companies, and brochures for mail-order companies. It didn't take me long to figure out that there was more money to be made selling space 'in' the co-op envelope than there was in selling the

envelope. That was an important day in my life; because it shifted the direction of my career. I started selling inserts into co-ops and branched out into selling non-competitive insert space in outgoing mail-order shipments. Before I knew it I was consulting to mail-order companies, and creating my own mail-order offers and marketing them to the consumer.

I remember when I first started distributing mail-order literature, there was obviously a tremendous need, I filled a huge void. I was getting orders for tens of millions of inserts. One day a client asked me to distribute 100,000,000 inserts. I had never believed there was that much sales volume around. The quantities were truly staggering. I was driven to constantly come up with more and more brochure distribution vehicles. It was my clients' insatiable need for more and more responses that led to the creation of the infomercial.

It didn't take long for me to become established as 'the source' if you needed vast quantities of responses. Whether that was subscriptions, or starters for your continuity program, or leads for your sales force. Sooner or later, virtually every major direct response company did business with me.

**Cato :** What would you do differently, if you had to do it all over again?

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I've always enjoyed launching new projects. Which means I've abandoned a great many programs well before they matured. Considering my personality, I don't know what choice I truly had. But if I had it to do over again, I'd recognize that trait and make arrangements to build a larger staff to carry on the various projects that I created. A good example of that would be in the area of list rental. I started a list brokerage firm 25 years ago and lost interest in it shortly



**Renaissance Man In Japan**

*The respected American marketing talent, David Bancroft Avrick, above, is also a world traveler. Here he attends the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.*

## Renaissance Man Is World's Lead Generating Champion

thereafter. But by having a strong support team and people to take over the operation, I was able to generate billions of dollars in sales after I stopped any active involvement.

**Cato : What's in your future?**

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I never know. Right now I'm marketing several different unique coins. I'm in the mail offering an investment course on an unusual investment concept. I'm consulting to a firm which is selling a superlative computer software product that identifies cashiers that are stealing from their company. I've been asked to get involved with the purchase of, and marketing for a fast-food franchise. Several companies who run seminars have asked me to assist them in building a larger seminar organization for them. It's really a matter of

seeing who calls tomorrow, and how challenging the opportunity is. I'm also deeply involved in marketing various mailing lists. I've found various niche areas where there is a need for mailing lists. I currently have several dozen lists in the marketplace and hope to expand this area significantly.

**Cato : Are there any specific areas where you have an interest right now?**

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Yes. I'd like to get more involved with international marketing. I was one of the first people to set up a mail-order operation in Japan. I was too early, and the effort was a disaster. Over the years I've probably done more mailings into Canada than anyone else. Each of these opportunities has a series of challenges. Many people, afraid of failing, avoid these conflicts.

As I stated before, I do not fear failure, so I thrive on these kinds of challenges. Obviously the joy is when I win.

**Cato : You mentioned working with Jay Abraham. What was that all about? David Bancroft Avrick :** Jay and I have been associated for over 20 years. He started out as a client, then he became an employee. Then we did a series of joint-ventures together.

### Lead Generating Champ

*Avrick generated over 23,000,000 leads for one of his clients. This DM record represents over a million a year for almost two decades, and represents a marketing investment of hundreds of millions of dollars.*

Finally we were equal partners in Abraham Training Centre. The company basically had two profit centers. The first was selling seats to our \$5,000 - 3-day MasterMind Marketing Seminar and our \$15,000 - 5-day War College. The second area was selling books and tapes. Although it was a very difficult marketing challenge, we were very successful. I created a 24-page full color advertisement that I ran in Success, Entrepreneur and the Delta Airlines in-flight magazine. I also created a massive direct mail campaign which was sent to customers and subscribers of companies with whom I formed strategic alliances. These endorsements were critical to the success of the operation, and that was one of the principles that we taught in our seminars.

**Cato : Of all the projects you've been involved with, what was the most challenging?**

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Providing the sales force of Craftmatic Adjustable Beds with a constant flow of leads, month after month - year after year. This started out as a relatively easy project. I printed and mailed a few million pieces a month and kept the sales force supplied with leads. But after generating 5 or 10 million responses it gets progressively more difficult to find 'new' prospect names, especially since these responses need to be generated within a specific budget. Over a period of 15 years I created several hundred different direct mail packages. It was a never ending challenge to come up with new approaches, new offers, new strategies, and new media. Our goal was 100,000 responses a month. The first several million are easy. Then it gets harder and harder and harder. When you have a house list of over 20,000,000 people who have already responded, the challenge becomes enormous, and exciting.





## Avrick Says, "Respect Each Person As Unique And Special."

**Cato :** *You've worked with quite a few stars. Have they been effective?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Absolutely. The right endorser will do wonders for your offer. I hired Art Linkletter for Contour Chair Lounge. Within a year or two Art and Contour were inseparable. He has a wonderful reputation and people hold him in the highest regard. Those feelings were transferred from Art to Contour. Similarly I used Ed McMahon for Craftmatic Adjustable Beds. Between Art Linkletter and Ed McMahon I probably generated 10,000,000 responses using their endorsements. However, not all endorsers worked. I tested Donald O'Connor and Redd Foxx and several others. They added nothing to the appeal of our advertising, and their contracts were not renewed. But the right endorser, coupled with the right product, can be a very powerful asset to your marketing program.

**Cato :** *I understand you're known for gimmicks. What's that all about?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I love gimmicks. I have mailed tens of millions of snap-apart forms. These are the kind of mailings that your local library sends to you when your book is overdue. Or your college sends to you with your grades. I've found these are very well received by the consumer. I've mailed dozens of different packages that have an 'official' look. I've mailed to Americans from out of the country, using foreign stamps. And, I've mailed to people out of the country using American stamps. I think it's very important to examine unique

formats and to make your mail appear different and interesting.

Some people criticize me for this, saying the consumer 'isn't fooled' by these mailings. I'm not trying to fool anyone. I'm simply trying to get the attention of the consumer. I've mailed with plastic envelopes and paper bags. I have found, consistently, that unique mailing packages work.

**Cato :** *What's your biggest industry gripe?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Whenever you read the trade press or listen to

testing. I think it's caused by a combination of lack of real knowledge coupled with an unwillingness to take a stand. But, I'd never hire a specialist who answered my questions: "I don't know, let's test it".

**Cato :** *Who, if anyone, influenced you the most?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I was lucky. I broke into this industry when there were hundreds of mail-order companies run by smart entrepreneurs. These were people who sat behind wooden desks with paper containers of coffee. There was no corporate structure, and when they made a mistake they paid for it personally. There were no committees and they weren't surrounded by a staff of people all afraid to make a decision. These extraordinary people did it all. They taught me to simply 'do it'.

**Cato :** *Who should hire you?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Anyone who has a great product or service and hasn't figured out



*Avrick acknowledges, "The area where I have the greatest reputation is lead generation. I've developed original techniques and strategies for generating massive quantities of qualified sales leads."*

'experts' speak they constantly say: "test, test, test". That's nonsense. A robot could figure out the dozens of things to test, and you wouldn't need any high priced experts. My clients don't pay me to tell them to test, they pay me to know what's going to work. This is not to suggest that I will always know exactly what's going to work. But based on my experience I'm supposed to know the impact that price changes will have on response, the difference a sweepstakes or premium will make, how offering credit will alter the responses and a host of other variables. Anyone can tell a client to spend money needlessly

a profitable way to make the marketplace aware of what he has to offer. The cliché about building a better mousetrap and they'll beat a path to your door is simply not true. In today's society you have to be able to educate your prospect about the existence of your better mousetrap and explain, in detail, the benefits they will derive by owning your mousetrap. Without that, you have a warehouse filled with better mousetraps. Traditionally I am not interested in being hired. I'm almost always looking for some kind of joint venture or equity position.

## Great Talent Made Renaissance Man

**Cato :** *Why do people hire you?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I'm hired by business owners who want results, and want to get the job done. Most of my clients had internal advertising departments that bled their companies dry. Or, they had ad agencies whom they felt ran up huge bills without any real direct response knowledge. As business owners, who intimately know every aspect of their business, they're frustrated by not having a marketing person who knows marketing the way they know their product. At some point my name comes up in a conversation with a respected associate, and they call me. One of the things they always like is that I won't accept a fee. I will only accept payment based on performance. These entrepreneurs typically find that refreshing. They also find that I'm the opposite of the people they've worked with in the past. I don't hesitate to express my opinions, and I have very strong opinions about everything. If they are thrilled. I will almost always recommend they fire their internal and external advertising departments. After they get over the shock of that, they like the additional revenue to their bottom line.

Please understand that I'm not cheap, and many clients have paid me many millions of dollars. But, all of my payments are performance based. And, in many instances I receive no fee, but equity in the company.

**Cato :** *What do people hire you for?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Typically my clients feel they have reached a plateau and can't seem to find the key to launch their companies to the next level. Almost without exception these companies are successful. But the owners know they haven't come close to reaching their potential. If they're marketing in 6 cities, they

want to market in 100. When I first started working with Craftmatic I promised them I would reduce their lead cost by 75%, which I did within 90 days. When I launched the Silver Mint I created an ad that was profitable in newspapers, which almost no one has been able to do for a decade. Every other mail-order company, advertising in newspapers is looking to their back-end sales to show a profit. I figured out there must be a way of writing a dynamic ad that would be profitable on the front end, and then any additional sales would be a bonanza.

The Jay Abraham seminar program was stagnant until I got involved and launched a massive direct mail and magazine marketing campaign. In both The Silver Mint and the Jay Abraham seminar company, I became a 50% equity partner.

**Cato :** *Where were you born? Where did you grow up?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I was born and raised in New York City. I've found that a great many successful people were raised in New York. It seems to have been a great learning center. The city gave us a great deal of freedom. There was no such thing as a soccer mom. We all took care of ourselves and got where we needed to go by ourselves. We also had hundreds of kids and tremendous competition.

**Cato :** *What is your educational background?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I went to New York City public schools. I received a BS in Marketing from New York University, which I attended at night. I finished my Army service at 18 and immediately started my own business. The night school students were serious and devoted. It wasn't a time of fraternities and pranks. I envy the people who have

an Ivy League education, but there were clearly many advantages to building my business while attending night school.

**Cato :** *How does it feel to be a Renaissance Man? A role model?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I'm not sure I am one. I know that a great many people who have worked for me have gone on to launch very successful careers, and that pleases me a great deal. I seem to have a knack of attracting people who have an entrepreneurial spirit. They make great employees; but sooner or later I've lost them. In terms of my consulting and joint ventures I really don't know anyone else who does what I do. There are lots of consultants and a plethora of direct marketing advertising agencies. But none of them will say: "I'll work 100 hours a week to create the marketing program for this product, and I want X percent of the business in exchange for my efforts".

**Cato :** *When did you realize you had a great talent?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** When I launched Uni-Mail and discovered a huge void in the marketplace. I couldn't believe that there were companies just looking for someone who could guide them in distributing hundreds of millions of brochures. My initial thought was: "why hasn't anyone thought of this before?" I shortly realized there are lots of concepts that no one else had ever thought of before. I also found out that one ingredient that most people lacked was courage. You cannot succeed if you're afraid to fail.

**Cato :** *Do you believe in volunteerism?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** All my life I've believed you have to give back something to society. For a decade I volunteered at Bellevue Hospital's emergency room in New York City.



## Avrick Never Accepts Routine Results!

I've participated with a group in Santa Barbara that flies down to Mexico one weekend a month to staff a medical clinic. Every month I spend a half a day at the local blood bank donating platelets. I don't have much respect for people who do not give of their time and energy. It's easy to put a check in the mail. But I feel I have to give more than that.

**Cato :** *How are you able to make instantaneous emotional contact with people?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** There are certain 'hot buttons' that everyone reacts to. When you're asking someone to buy insurance, you're offering them a sense of security. It is an emotion we all share; but it's a very weak emotion. That is why it's such a difficult product to sell. It's easier to create a fear approach (how will your wife and children survive if you are not here to take care of them?) Because fear is much more powerful emotion than security. When you're asking someone to donate \$100 to the local opera, you can appeal to their sense of well-being. But it's a lot more effective to tell them that a brass plate, with their name, will be placed on the back of one of the chairs in the theater. Now you're appealing to their ego, and appealing to their need for power. Ultimately the most successful marketing campaigns appeal to the emotions of money, sex and power. It's not surprising that the beer commercials all show beach parties with muscular guys and shapely women. The smart marketer is associating their product, beer, with sex. When I created the marketing campaign for the Contour Chair Lounge, it became very successful. I told the prospect that the chair would be custom made, exactly to their

specifications, and that they wouldn't let anyone else sit in their chair. I took a simple chair and turned it into a power trip. My skill, as a marketer, is to identify what emotional hot buttons a product or service will fulfill for the prospect. This is the area where I am constantly astonished by the lack of understanding on the part of copywriters and supposed marketing gurus. They get into lengthy discussions about the benefits of a product; but never touch the emotional issues. I'm not interested in knowing I can go from 0 to 60 in 9 seconds in a car. I'm very interested in the power trip of leaving everyone at the stop light when I roar across the intersection in my new car.

**Cato :** *Are you emotional, and is that important to understanding how to reach people on an emotional level?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I'm very emotional. I always cry at weddings. I've seen Madame Butterfly a dozen times and cry every time I see it. But I don't think this has anything to do with knowing how to reach people on an emotional level. I think that awareness is much more intellectual. I've studied what makes people follow a leader and analyzed the core emotional appeals that motivate people to action. When you visit a religious revival meeting and watch the dynamics between the evangelist and the congregation you're typically witnessing a master at work, leading the congregation to go exactly where he wants them to move. A talented marketer understands these same principles.

**Cato :** *What do you consider some of your major liabilities?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I've been told I drive too hard a bargain. Some-

one once told me that he has to check his wallet after spending time negotiating with me. I'd like to believe that I'm fair, and cautious. But I certainly have to admit that this has been told to me by more than one person, so I assume it's true.

**Cato :** *Anything else you don't like about the way you do things?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** I abandon projects much too quickly. I know that successful people work hard at trying different twists on things that didn't work out the first time they tried marketing them. Some people, truly committed to a concept, will devote years of time, money and energy until they get the results they seek. I can't constantly work at trying to improve the marketing approach. You can be sure I'll abandon it, rather than work at trying to improve the marketing approach. I know that I've walked away from dozens of programs that could probably have worked out if I just would have stuck with them. It's not impatience, it's something different. I'm excited as can be about the new project, and don't sleep during the test phase. If the test doesn't work, I lose all enthusiasm and walk away. I'm not happy about this part of my personality; but that's just the way it is.

**Cato :** *Do you have any final words for our readers, any summary advice about achieving greater success?*

**David Bancroft Avrick :** Success is measured differently by various people. Each person is unique, special, and precious. For me success is getting the results my clients need. Get results in whatever you do and you will become successful. Solve problems better than your peers. Don't pass problems on. Never settle for routine results. Get results which are above average and success is yours. **TIT**





Steve Allen, creator of TV's *Tonight Show*, author of 57 books, composer of more than 5,000 songs, jazz pianist with over 40 record albums released, Broadway and movie star, symphony conductor, brilliant comedic wit, and professional speaker, plus additional extraordinary artistic and intellectual achievements, said, "That the world owes a tremendous debt to its inventors is obvious enough. Indeed the better parts of the modern world are the direct result of the creative thinking of those who have first dreamed, and imagined, devices or procedures, that provide a needed service and then convert their dreams to concrete reality."

Steve Allen concluded, "But there is another sort of service that men like David Bancroft Avrick do for the rest of us and that is in their standing as examples of what the free-floating imagination itself can accomplish."



Coach Lou Holtz, former head coach of Notre Dame's Fighting Irish, is American's 'most-winning' football coach. Coach Holtz says, "David is a unique individual. He combines talent, love for people, and a unique ability to inspire other people. This combination is rarely found in one person. David always gets up when he falls!"



**Howard Penn Hudson** is Editor-In-Chief of *Public Relations Quarterly* and America's foremost authority on newsletters. Hudson states, "Just two of Avrick's inventions have become effective beyond

belief in advertising and promotion. I refer to the postcard deck, which I see every day of the week over many years, and the informercial which demonstrates that successful selling requires talking to your prospect in depth. This has long been recognized, but Avrick was the first to get the prospect to sit still for a long period of time and actually enjoy the sales process."



Avrick says, "TV personality and writer Art Linkletter is a very effective in advertising across our globe."



**T. R. Shantha, M.D., Ph. D.**, author and famous American medical scientific researcher in Atlanta, GA, says, "David Bancroft Avrick is truly the ultimate Renaissance Man. The renaissance brought new importance to individual expression and worldly experience. Culturally it was a time of new concepts and brilliant accomplishments. The Renaissance was a time of exploration and discoveries."

Dr. Shantha stresses, "Avrick's life is an example of individualism and world travels. He has a second home in Singapore. Avrick is both a super-talent and a multi-talent. Because he is a true Renaissance Man, Avrick is now a legend among marketing professionals. All of Avrick's accomplishments were made by sharing his unique gifts."



**Rev. Robert Schuller of The Crystal Cathedral** believes, "David Bancroft Avrick is truly the ultimate possibility thinker! Many times and in many ways Avrick's life fulfills my favorite saying, 'Find a need and fill it, find a hurt and heal it!'"

"Avrick's life is an example of this. He has started dozens of business enterprises. While creating innovative marketing concepts, he volunteered Saturday evenings at the emergency room of New York City's Bellevue Hospital. After moving to the West Coast, he flew down to Mexico to work in a free clinic. Every month he spends hours donating platelets at the local blood bank."

Rev. Schuller adds, "Indeed through his quality of character he has touched the world through his legendary and record-breaking marketing innovations. But his compassion for humanity is obvious. David Bancroft Avrick has been blessed with many gifts and he so generously shares those blessings with others."