

15.1: In the Spotlight

Leo Burnett was a journalist for the *Peoria Times* in Illinois when he decided to start his own advertising firm with the same name in 1935 (Leo Burnett Inc., 2022). His strategies were fairly simple: to use models who looked like ordinary people instead of Hollywood stars. His motto: “What helps people, helps business.” That strategy paid off big for Philip Morris with the introduction of the iconic—albeit now considered unethical—Marlboro Man. In 1952, the ageless Tony the Tiger cartoon icon for Kellogg’s Frosted Flakes was also born from the Leo Burnett ad agency. Other notable companies that have utilized the Leo Burnett ad agency include Procter & Gamble, McDonald’s, and Fiat, to name just a few.



Figure 15.1 Advertising is a form of promotion and can be presented in many channels; one example is the billboards in Times Square in New York City. (credit: modification of work “Times Square, NYC” by MK Feeney/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Today, the company has offices around the globe, and it still prides itself on aligning brands with human values. According to the company, “Leo Burnett was built on a simple belief. That the most creative, most effective and most powerful work has people at its core—their needs, wants, dreams and hopes. It’s a belief that can be seen in action in everything we make” (Leo Burnett Inc., 2022).

In July of 2021, Leo Burnett London released a new advertisement for McDonald’s—“Fancy a McDonald’s?”—that showcases one of life’s simpler pleasures: laughter. It featured a television advertisement with no dialogue, just friends and family enjoying time together (Long, 2021). The advertisements, a big success, ultimately highlight Leo Burnett’s ability to reach myriad audiences across cultures and generations (Leo Burnett Inc., 2022).

📌 Link to Learning: Leo Burnett

There is a lot to learn from the Leo Burnett advertising agency. [Check out the agency’s website](#) to see the various campaigns the company has worked on. Be sure to check out the News section to read about several campaigns.

Interested in the campaigns mentioned in this section? Check out these websites:

- Fancy a McDonald’s laughter commercial



- Kellogg's discussion about the Tony the Tiger campaign
- Food nonfiction's history of [Tony the Tiger](#)
- Video on the history of Tony the Tiger



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