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For: "Ideas That Became Big Business"

JUL 30 1959

A book to be published by FOUNDERS, INC., Baltimore, Maryland

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JUL 30 1959

"Some day we are going to manufacture ready-mixed paints of dependable quality."

That promise from Henry Alden Sherwin to his business partner, Edward Porter Williams, was made at a time when nobody had yet achieved that goal. Attempts had been made to produce ready-mixed paints (Sherwin himself had been thinking about the problem since 1866), but the products were lacking in quality and performance.

Hence, Sherwin's statement about manufacturing high quality ready-to-use paints was that of a true pioneer. He was sure he could do what nobody had hitherto accomplished. And it was a prophetic statement, for out of his conviction has come the Sherwin-Williams Co., the world's largest producer and marketer of paints.

Sherwin and Williams, both in their twenties at the time, discussed the subject in 1870, shortly after they had formed the partnership of Sherwin-Williams & Co. in Cleveland. They were engaged in the manufacture of the ingredients of paint. Like others in what might be called the paint business of the day, they offered their customers the "makings" of paint: white lead, zinc oxide, oil colors, turpentine and linseed oil. Painters stirred these together with a paddle in a tub to produce their own paints according to their own ideas of what those paints should be.

From the very start, the business of Sherwin-Williams & Co. flour-

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ished. But the dream of a high quality, dependable, ready-to-use paint haunted young Sherwin. His search for a formula was carried on tirelessly. There was little paint technology to serve as a guide, and the proper equipment to produce such a paint had not even been invented. As a result, Sherwin had to develop his own theories and his own equipment. This he did through meticulous experimentation.

Finally, in 1880, he achieved his aim with "Sherwin-Williams Paint" (later to become familiarly known as "SWP House Paint"), a ready-to-use product of exceptional quality, dependability and long life.

This was an achievement of no small proportions. It set the stage for the modern paint industry, outwitting at almost a single stroke ideas about paint that had been in vogue for centuries.

As far as Sherwin-Williams & Co. was concerned, the new development opened the way for a world-wide expansion program that still continues. In 1884, the partnership was changed to a corporation and the company adopted its present corporate title: The Sherwin-Williams Co.

In developing "Sherwin-Williams Paint," Sherwin laid the groundwork for another type of expansion as well. Through his painstaking experiments he gained a healthy regard for the value of scientific research. This led the company to hire, in 1884, the first professionally trained chemist ever employed in the scientific formulation of paint. Over the years, the scientific staff has increased continuously until today the company employs more than 500 chemists and other scientists. They are engaged in work ranging from pure research to on-the-job quality control in more than 40 laboratories.

The ever-widening range of work in the laboratories reflects the company's increasing diversification. Although it was begun as a paint

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manufacturing and marketing concern, and although paints, varnishes and lacquers are principal products, the organization is now active in a number of fields. It makes and markets metal containers, painting tools and accessories, pigments, dyestuffs, linseed oil, and a variety of chemicals and plastics.

As Arthur W. Steudel, president of Sherwin-Williams points out: "Almost 50 per cent of Sherwin-Williams industrial products--those used to give protection and eye-appeal to refrigerators, automobiles, furniture, and the thousands of other products of industry--were not in existence as recently as four years ago. Among trade sales products--those bought by the home consumer and the professional painter--about a quarter of the items in our present line have been developed since 1955."

Emphasis on research was only part of the legacy the founders of the Sherwin-Williams Co. left to their successors. Equally important was their early recognition of two other essential requirements for continued success. One was the need for vigorous, helpful advertising; the other was a need for men to carry on the enterprise. In both areas, Sherwin-Williams showed unusual insight.

In the realm of advertising, the company was as far ahead of the times as it was in the field of paint manufacture. At a time when most businessmen neither understood nor appreciated the value of informative advertising, Sherwin-Williams insisted that the public must be told about products if the full benefits of mass production were to be realized.

That vision was translated into the first national magazine advertising by a paint manufacturer. It found expression, too, in the helpful instructional booklets, color cards and other printed material the company early made available to the public.

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A keen appreciation of the value of advertising is still a hallmark of the Sherwin-Williams Co., and the examples of the kind of constructive service the concern offers its customers are legion. Typical is the well-known "Color Harmony Guide."

This is an unusual book of full-page color samples. Through each page may be seen harmonizing colors that suggest interesting and pleasing decorative schemes. All told, the volume presents some 1500 color harmonies designed to help people find exactly those color combinations that will give their homes individual attractiveness. The book may be borrowed at no charge from Sherwin-Williams dealers so color selection may be made in the very rooms to be painted.

No less striking is the "Home Decorator and Painting Economy Guide." The company has been publishing this attractive full-color magazine for more than 45 years, giving a new edition to homemakers each spring. In recent years, some 11,000,000 copies have been distributed annually. There are special editions for foreign lands. Purpose of the booklet is to inspire the urge to redecorate; and to acquaint readers with the paints to use and how to apply them for best results.

In the highly technical field of industrial plant maintenance and product finishing, the company is equally concerned about making the latest information available to customers. Many thousands of technically-oriented brochures are printed each year (many in Sherwin-Williams' own printing plant) to the end that the company's quality products may better serve the user.

This type of advertising was nurtured by the founders of Sherwin-Williams and has been vigorously pursued throughout the years. Importantly, it was from the beginning backed up by management policies insuring

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that men of character as well as ability would carry on after the founders' deaths.

Sherwin and Williams saw to it that they built men as well as paint. From the start of their partnership they followed a policy of encouraging employees to learn as much as possible about the business and the ideals to which it was dedicated. They believed, too, that employee interest and loyalty should be rewarded and set a pattern of promotion from within the organization which is followed to this day.

All of the present top executives of the Sherwin-Williams Co. have come up through the ranks. They have learned the many facets of the business through experience. They have absorbed the principles of high business ethics through close association with either the founders themselves or with men who worked side-by-side with them.

In the years that have elapsed since Henry Sherwin made his prophetic promise, the company has evolved from a small operation into one that now employs 17,000 people in its globe-girdling activities. It is significant that during that span, close to 3500 persons have served the concern for 25 years or more.

This human record of dedicated service is a peculiarly apt commentary on Henry Sherwin's vision.

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