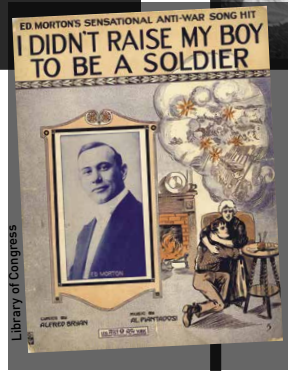


Film comedian Fatty Arbuckle pastes a government poster in Times Square, New York, in 1917.



Minnesota Historical Society



When the United States entered World War I in 1917, not many Americans were interested in joining the fight. The government called upon the fast-growing advertising industry to turn public opposition into enthusiastic support.

SELLING THE WAR

"The Committee on Public Information... was a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world's greatest adventure in advertising."
 —George Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 1920

Posters were plastered everywhere. They provoked fear, outrage, sympathy, and patriotism—even guilt—in order to spur Americans to enlist in the armed forces, buy war bonds, donate to refugee relief efforts, conserve resources, and volunteer for private social and religious organizations supporting troops at home and abroad. The success of the wartime media blitz confirmed the power of the advertising industry.

Courtesy of David M. Rubenstein, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University



More than 300 advertising artists and copywriters volunteered their services. They created a campaign based on the same psychological strategies they used for selling consumer goods—one that played on people's emotions, then told them what to do.



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WORLD WAR I: LESSONS AND LEGACIES

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