

Innis Maggiore 50th

Honoring the Past. Positioning the Future.



the 1970s

This is the first in a six-part series highlighting Innis Maggiore's 50th anniversary. In 2024, we're "Honoring the Past. Positioning the Future." This piece highlights where it all began, the 1970s, also known as the "Me Decade."



Chuck Innis and Dick Maggiore in 1974 at the kitchen table of their home in Canton, Ohio.

Fifty Years of Positioning: the 1970s

Some things have changed since Dick Maggiore and his stepdad, the late Chuck Innis, founded Innis Maggiore in 1974 at the kitchen table of their home in Canton.

But some things haven't changed one bit.

You won't see Dick wearing bell bottoms, platform shoes, or elongated collars in the agency offices on Whipple Ave. these days (well, except maybe on Halloween). No one smokes cigarettes around the conference room table during client strategy sessions these days, either. And Dee Innis no longer needs to ask her son and husband to please clear the table of advertising stuff because it's time for dinner.

While they weren't exactly familiar with the term positioning in 1974, Chuck and Dick were finding new and unique ways to differentiate clients to help them stand apart. The duo was already making innovative moves to remain on the leading edge of the industry. Chuck often noted that "Nothing happens until a sale is made." This focused the agency on putting clients first, and that remains a mainstay today for the nation's leading agency in the practice of positioning.

How many businesses are so confident that they make future-altering investments just a couple of months into their existence? Innis Maggiore did just that in November 1974.

An Early Example

In the mid-1970s, Innis Maggiore was hired by Harter Bank, Stark County's largest and most prosperous bank at the time. Now part of KeyBank, Harter was the first bank to introduce Diebold's automated teller machines in Stark County and one of the first to launch this exciting new technology in the nation.

Harter Bank needed to get the word out throughout Stark County about its automated teller machines to generate awareness and interest and drive an increase in its customer base. Innis Maggiore came up with a perfect campaign.

The automated teller machines helped make the Harter Bank experience unique. Innis Maggiore not only created a name for that experience — TABBY, which stood for "Total Automatic Banking By You" — but also a persona to represent it — that's right, a young woman by the name of TABBY.

Innis Maggiore cast a model as TABBY and arranged for her to appear in ads and on site at Harter Bank branch locations to demonstrate how the automated teller machines worked. People would read the paper and listen to the radio just to find out where TABBY was going to be next.

Large crowds appeared every time TABBY made an appearance, and Harter Bank's



Harter Bank was one of the first in the nation to introduce the automated teller machine.



Billboard for Custom Auto Body, Innis Maggiore's longest-tenured client.

launch of its automated teller machines achieved rapid adoption. It's one of Innis Maggiore's earliest examples of positioning, as the agency positioned Harter Bank as the leader using its technological advancements as a credential.

Diebold made the agency's TABBY campaign available for banks throughout the country as they introduced the automated teller machines.

A 'Crash' Course for Success

Also in the 1970s, Innis Maggiore started working for its longest-tenured client, North Canton's Custom Auto Body. It's a relationship that's been going strong and generating excellent results for more than 45 years.

In 1979, Dick convinced Custom Auto Body founder Ron Tietze to hire an agency instead of handling advertising on his own. Ron's son, Randy, who's now president of the local body shop, said his dad soon saw the value in his decision. Randy still does.

Custom Auto Body has been in business for 63 years. Ron or Randy never considered working with another agency. Innis Maggiore has provided new and engaging marketing ideas for decades. It's no accident.

"They've always been on the leading edge," said Randy.

Technological Innovation

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Chuck and Dick knew they needed to have a leg up on the competition when it came to preparing artwork for advertisements and printing.

Innis Maggiore invested \$50,000 — or the equivalent of \$300,000 today — on an Addressograph Varytper, a state-of-the-art computerized typesetting machine the size of a refrigerator on its side.

When other agencies couldn't even spell it, Innis Maggiore was using the machine, only the second of its kind in the entire state of Ohio, to set type for client projects.

The agency even figured out a way to sell type to printers and other agencies.

This was a precursor to the thinking and investments made that today continue to keep Innis Maggiore at the forefront of marketing agencies in terms of innovation.



Setting the Tone

Dick is the lone Innis Maggiore associate who remains from the agency's early days in business. Last spring, Mark Vandegrift, who's been at the agency for more than 25 years, took the reins as president. But the culture of putting the client first, set by Chuck and Dick at that kitchen table in August 1974, still drives the agency to this day — and no doubt will for the next 50 years and beyond.

What's Next

In the next installment of *Innis Maggiore 50: Honoring the Past. Positioning the Future.*, we take a close look at the 1980s, when Innis Maggiore officially began to embrace the practice of positioning.



If you need help positioning your company or brand, contact the experts at Innis Maggiore.