

## **Where the Beef Is: A Brief Response to Gieryn's Reply**

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Scientists sometimes advertise. No one denies that. In his original piece (1987), but not in his reply (this issue), Gieryn argues for much more than that. Look again at the passage from Gieryn that I quote in my comment (this issue). Gieryn argues there that Coke sells well, not because it is good, but because it has been successfully advertised. In that passage, but not in his reply, he argues that advertising persuades, but does not inform. Now, he says that it does both. Now he is right. But by weakening his strong, albeit wrong, view that advertising only persuades, he can no longer reach the bottom line of his original argument, that "the spectacular financial success of scientists cannot be explained by the immanent qualities of the procedures or products of scientific research nor by an innate human 'need to know' " (1987, p. 21).

If, as Gieryn now admits, advertising can inform, then he has no grounds for denying that scientific advertising can inform about the genuine achievements of science in space, medicine, computers, and, yes, in satisfying our "innate human 'need to know.' " To the extent that scientists have achieved the "spectacular financial success" that Gieryn claims, the success is not due to deceptively slick advertising. It is due to public understanding of the genuine achievements of science. Informative advertising may have contributed to that understanding, but probably the main sources are science education in the schools combined with direct observation of the spectacular successes of the scientific enterprise.

### **Reference**

Gieryn, Thomas F. 1987. "Science and Coca-Cola." *Science & Technology Studies* 5 (Spring):12-21, 31.