

# Anatomy of a Shell winner

The inside story of the Shell Make Money promotion. By John Chambers, MD of Don Marketing



*Make Money . . . the game was so successful that Shell had to work hard to maintain supplies to some stations*

The Make Money game, which has started a new promotional war among the oil companies, increased Shell's petrol sales by more than 20 per cent — surpassing all the expectations of the team from Shell, Don Marketing and Ogilvy and Mather which put the promotion together.

Indeed, the game was so successful that Shell had to work hard to maintain supplies to some of its stations. And it was not only the petrol that was in big demand. Such was the clamour for the half-note game pieces, which formed the basis of the promotion, that 150 tons of them were used up.

The original 1966 Make Money promotion was probably the most successful of all time. It became a legend in marketing circles. According to Shell sales development manager Ken Danson: "The increase in sales, after six weeks of

the promotion, was 85 per cent and we ran out of fuel, even though in those days we were still linked with BP and had far more extensive sources of supply than we have now. It almost doubled our market share."

The current campaign, though wildly successful, could never match the 1966 figures. As Danson points out, the previous incarnation was the first of its kind and there were no other petrol promotions running at the time. The 1966 Make Money was immediately followed by Esso's brilliant tiger tail campaign, and the ensuing promotional battle went on for years.

Shell followed up with man in flight and historic cars coin collections. Then came more block buster promotions, including Esso's World Cup and FA Centenary cup collections, Texaco's reg-

imental badge replicas and Cleveland's campaign medals. This spate of promotions ended eventually, not only because the petrol companies ran out of ideas, but also because the campaigns tended to cancel each other out. Stamp trading took over, because it was both easier to handle and more continuous in its effect.

Trading stamps fell out of favour when high rates of inflation meant that, by the time the consumer had collected the required number of stamps to obtain a given product, the number of stamps needed had often doubled. The oil companies, following Tesco's example, threw them out.

After that, came the oil crises of the 70s, with steep increases in the price of oil and the market thrown into disorder. Danson explains that the industry has been into glut and into famine twice over and, in a

situation where supplies were often doubtful, there was little point in trying to promote. In any case, with the severe price competition of recent years, there was no money to spare for either above or below-the-line campaigns.

Happily for the petrol companies, the blood baths of the 1980 to 1982 period have been followed by a period of relative price stability. This was helped by a two per cent volume growth last year, the brighter prospects that stem from the increasing number of cars on the road and an increase in the money people have available for spending.

The more optimistic market outlook coincided with Shell's completion of a multi-million pound refurbishment programme for its filling stations, including rationalisation and conversion to self-service. But, even though the

company had maintained its joint leadership of the market with Esso (both have around 20 per cent, followed by BP National at just under 15 per cent and Texaco at eight per cent) without any activity either above or below the line for a decade, Shell decided a year ago that it ought to re-establish the value of its brand.

After such a long lay off, it was felt that any promotion should be really big. It was decided that collectables would not have the necessary impact and Shell was persuaded by us that the right answer was to produce a 1980s version of Make Money. As Danson explains: "We went back to our most successful promotion. We knew that there was still a residual affection for it among motorists. However, although the magic ingredient—the idea of matching two halves of a note—was the same, ►



# Nice one Don!



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## Leading the World in Promotional Games

Don Marketing Management Ltd. 43/45 Butts Green Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 2JX.



'The game appeals to people's gambling instincts. The technique still has an unbelievable magic'

◀ we recognised that we had to modernise it to match the very different needs of the 80s. We knew we were addressing a much more sophisticated, case hardened motorist. The game Don Marketing devised for us was significantly different in many respects."

In the 1966 version the half note was contained in an envelope, but this would have been far too expensive in 1984. A way had to be devised of making the note integral with the envelope, by printing it on the inside back. To prevent people opening the envelope to see what was inside and then putting it back, if it was not a winner, each one could be opened only by tearing along the perforated lines.

It was security that was the biggest headache. Nothing like this game had been used for many years, and its security had not been tested against the much greater sophistication of today's public with all the technical and electronic gadgetry it has at its disposal. And, compared with the original promotion, the denominations of the top prizes were much higher, even taking inflation into account. The maximum £100 prize in 1966 was replaced by several of £10,000, with others at £1,000, £100, £10, £1 and 50p, to a total of over 1¼ million prizes. The consequences of someone "breaking" the game could therefore have been very serious.

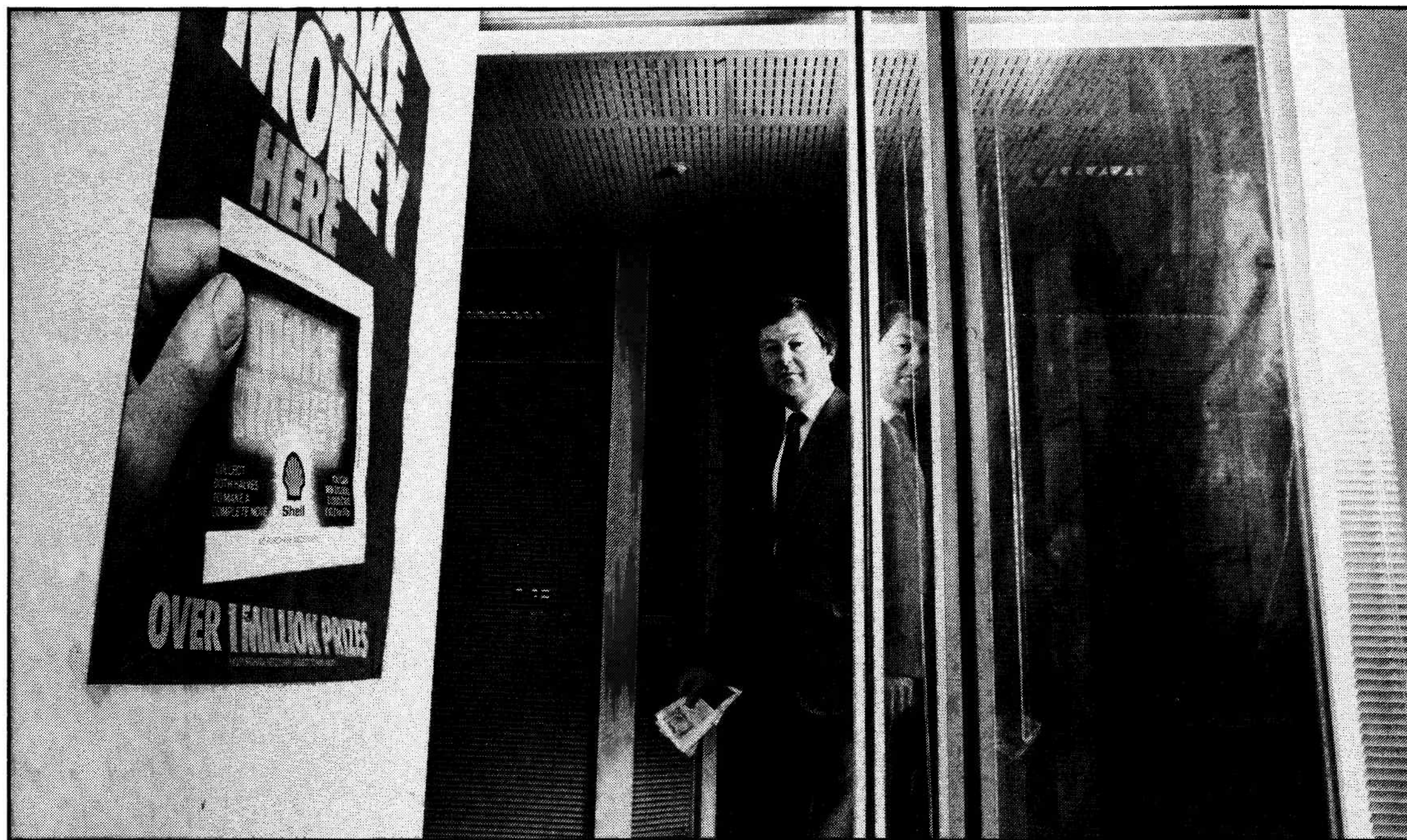
That was why we designed into the notes no fewer than eight different security systems, not all of which can be disclosed. To make it impossible to see through either the front or the back of the envelopes, highly sophisticated printing techniques were used. The inside front carried a special design that prevented see-through, and the outside back of the envelope was printed in silver to give the maximum opacity.

The printing of the half note itself was like a banknote in design, with pastel colours used to make copying more difficult. A special fugitive ink was incorporated which could be activated by forecourt staff to enable them to check the validity of winning notes, and there was a secret code built into the high denomination winners.

Strict precautions were taken to ensure security during the printing operation itself. For instance, the printing plates for the winning halves were held in bank vaults until the time came to use them. Then they never left the sight of one of our directors on their way to the printer and during the printing operation. And, after they had been used, he witnessed them being destroyed.

But security was not the only problem. A complex operation was necessary to ensure that the winning tickets among the millions printed were distributed in such a way that each filling station stood an equal chance of producing winners.

To ensure continuing interest among the public, there had to be sufficient winners at each location.



Danson . . . 'we did not want to be classed with either MFI or Sun bingo'

We therefore ensured that, on average, every fiftieth ticket was a winner and that each forecourt produced about seven winners a day.

One important difference from the original promotion was that this time there were an equal number of winning left and right hand half notes. In 1966, all the winning halves were right handers, and people soon got to know. Thus, people who repeatedly got only left handers tended to lose interest. This was overcome in the new game by making the rare halves different for different denominations, and it is clear that few members of the public were able to work out which was this time, in spite of the massive interest the promotion generated.

As in 1966, members of the public flooded the personal columns of newspapers with advertisements for the rarer half-notes, and the demand for them was such that brokers equipped with computers set themselves up, taking a registration fee and a share of any winnings. This ignored the fact that nobody with a rare half needed help from anyone else, but so great was the volume of misguided advertising that Shell was worried that the public was wasting its money.

One result of all this has been very wide coverage in the press. For instance, the *Guardian* ran a front-page story, the *Sunday Express* advised its readers on how to make money through the promotion and letters appeared in the *Telegraph*.

Danson says: "The game appeals to people's gambling instincts. The technique has never been equalled; it still has an unbelievable magic. When we launched it to the salesmen, they were cheering in the aisles, and most of our site operators participated. They all knew what Make Money was — even after 18 years. And even before we launched, the press got hold of the story without any PR effort on our part."

It was important, nevertheless, to get the advertising right. Timing

was critical, as Mike Murphy, the account supervisor at Ogilvy and Mather, explains: "We had to make people aware of the promotion very quickly, because it was designed to last no more than ten weeks."

That was why the £750,000 campaign was concentrated in the first five weeks of the promotion. It included a national TV blitz, with 40-second and ten-second spots in the first three weeks which were calculated to reach more than 80 per cent of motorists at least five times, on average. In the first week, it was supported by full page ads in all the national dailies. Then in the third week a fortnight's national campaign on radio in rush hours caught motorists while they were on the road. It was reckoned that 55 per cent of motorists would hear the commercial 15 times, on average.

The brief to O and M was quite ▶

## These companies took the Incentive!



1983 was a successful year for a large number of companies, particularly those that took the incentive — to improve productivity, generate good public relations, promote sales, or simply to say "thank you" to important customers and loyal workers.

Personalised U.K. Coin collections from the Royal Mint are original and valuable incentive ideas — unique to each year, they can also be packaged in impressive personalised folders or presentation cases.

The 1984 Proof and Uncirculated collections are the first to include the new Scottish £1 coin, making them even more interesting and unusual.

If you need any further incentive to order any of these personalised packs, read what these company representatives have to say:-

"Coins certainly stimulate interest. The Heinz consumer offer for the uncirculated set of Royal Mint coins was one of our most successful promotions"

**R. I. Fryer**  
**H.J. Heinz Company Ltd.**

"The Martini coin collection promotion played a major role in 1983

below-the-line activity, achieving consumer response well into 6 figures. We obtained maximum co-operation from the Royal Mint from development through to implementation."

**Graham Toone, Director**  
**Marketing Triangle.**

"The Society's Sales promotion has been an outstanding success. Many branches had issued their entire allocation of coin packs within a few days of the promotional launch, and many reported queues forming outside their offices in the morning — something never before experienced."

**C. P. M. Hocking,**  
**Public Relations Manager**  
**Chelsea Building Society.**

For further information  
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*Royal Mint*



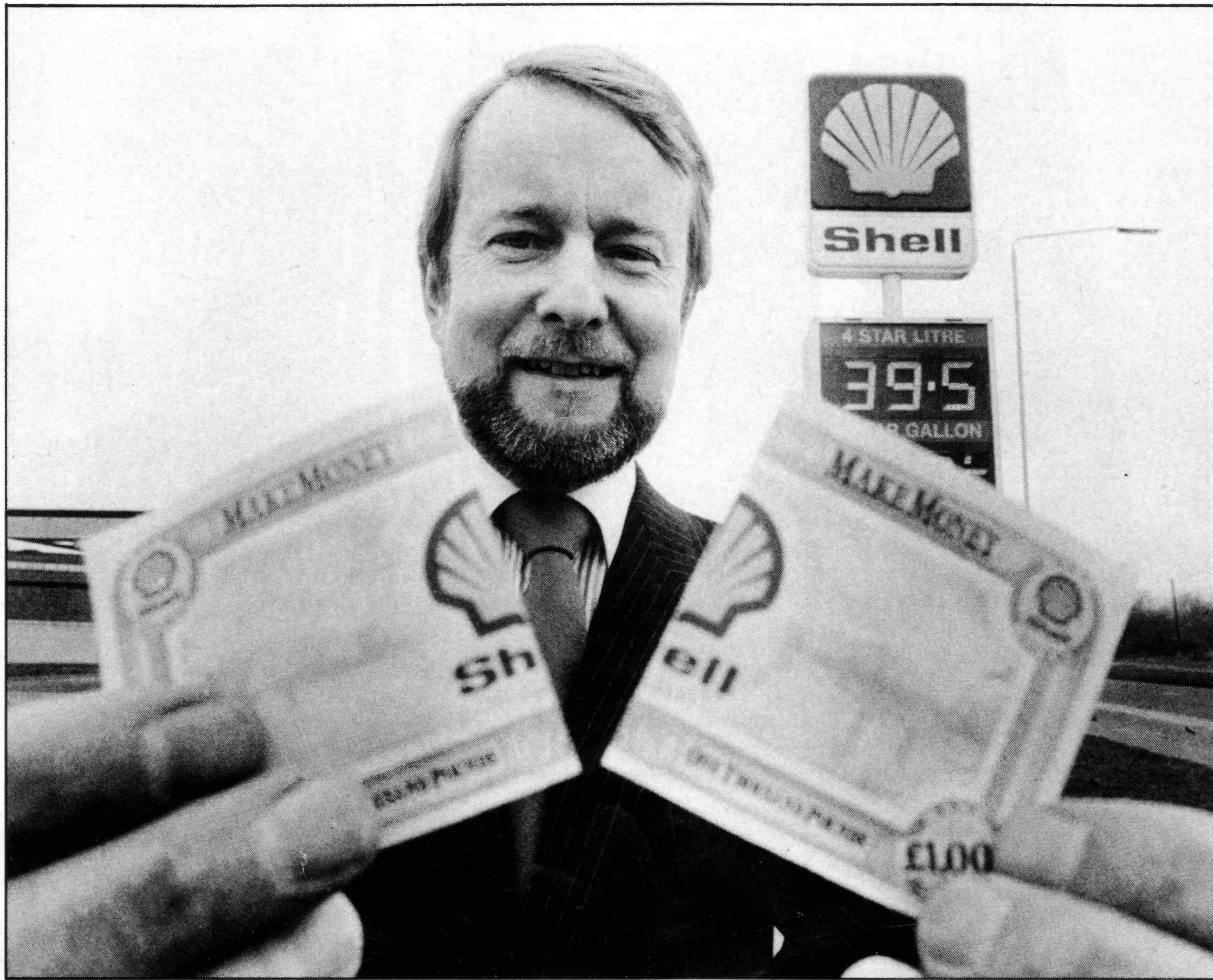
## PREMIUMS & INCENTIVES SPECIAL REPORT

Reaction from competitors was slower than expected, apart from an immediate price cut by Esso

◀ simply to communicate the promotion, but to ensure that the ads were in tune with Shell's image. As Danson says: "We did not want to be classed with either MFI or with *Sun* bingo." The press and radio ads emphasised how to play the game, but the TV ads took advantage of the medium's suitability for adding a touch of humour.

What was surprising, in view of the number of organisations involved in the promotion, was that Shell's competitors did not get wind of it earlier than a few days before the launch. Even then, the reaction was slower than had been expected, apart from an immediate price cut by Esso. As Ken Danson says: "We assumed it would be a race past the post to get promotions into the field. We were surprised the others took four to five weeks to launch."

Shell was not worried by the initial price cut that followed the launch, even though it was condemned as an over-reaction on Esso's part by some industry experts. Danson explains that petrol was a little overpriced at the time — as a result of technical factors in the oil market and because of changes in the pound/dollar ratio. Happily,



Chambers . . . 'it was security that was the biggest headache'

he believes, the cut looks like "a step down" rather than the beginning of a new spiral.

Esso and Texaco launched glass promotions — but these have had far less impact than Make Money and are not liked by some site operators, not least because they have to carry large space-consuming stocks. Later BP came out with Money Match, a game with some similarities to Make Money.

This was shortly after BP chairman Sir Peter Walters had deplored the idea of "silly games" being used by petrol companies.

We and the other members of the team which put the Make Money campaign together are delighted with the result. It has not only achieved a bigger than expected increase in sales but has also met Shell's objective of leading the market away from competing on price alone. But the big pay-off, says Danson, is the increase in site activity. "It has increased the sale of everything from lubrication oil to Mars Bars — even to people who exercised their legal right to ask for Make Money notes without first buying petrol. Good, professional retailers should be able to hang on to some of the new customers." ■

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