



“Creativity’s Role (and the importance of the idea) in Small Business Marketing” American Advertising Federation – Abilene November 11, 2008

** EXCERPTS AND HIGHLIGHTS **

- No matter the size of one’s budget, creativity plays a vital role in getting the consumer’s attention. More important is the idea, and how best to convey it in a convincing manner.
- There is no one thing you can do that will guarantee results. Results can best be gauged and marketing success can best be measured through a mix of efforts, including advertising, public relations, interactive and digital media, print, and social media.
- Creativity is the spark that ignites what you say and how you say it.
- Creativity occurs when people perceive there are no limits. Creativity can be defined as the ability to see, feel, touch, think and imagine what one has not seen, felt, touched, thought or imagined before. Creativity is “intelligence having fun.”
- No longer is the creative department the sole purveyors of the “creative idea.” Each one of us represents a different perspective, a different creative slant.
- The simplest idea, creatively and smartly executed, can differentiate the bland from the memorable. Think of it as a mix of logic and magic.
- The idea should be media and discipline neutral. Otherwise, you limit yourself.
- Clients only care about how we’re going to make it (the idea) work and be relevant.
- Don’t ever underestimate the power of the mind or your imagination. Don’t ever be afraid to ask, “Why, Why not or What if . . .?”.
- Ye Olde Creativity Survival Kit -- Any sort of container in which you place whatever makes you FEEL creative and THINK creatively. In this industry, silly is sometimes serious business.
- Thinking at Warp Speed – Generating ideas at breakneck speed is a great way to capture ideas on Post-it Notes (one per note) in answering a specific question to solve a problem. Generate 50 ideas in 5 minutes or try 100 ideas in 10 minutes.

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--Continued (told ya)--

- Drill Down Technique – How do you know when you’ve hit THE idea? Choose what you consider to be the best five ideas. ELIMINATE THEM. When you’re down to one, maybe this last idea is the best one, or at least one you may not have paid much attention.
- As ideas are developed, make sure their essence is refined. Make sure your ideas are clear and you can explain their basic value in about 20 seconds. This makes for easier acceptance of the idea.
- Learn what your clients want and discover what they need by asking probing questions beyond what is normally asked. Discover advertising’s new role: Provoking conversation. The more you get the client to converse, the better foundation you lay for idea generation.
- Since today’s environment focuses on more than just advertising, we need to be creative business thinkers as well as storytellers. If you’re just an order taker, you’re selling both your company and yourself short.
- If you have the ability to challenge your own imagination and stimulate thoughts to lead yourself to a new level of solution, you’ll be realizing your own sense of creativity.
- Creativity needs to be synonymous with “FUN!”
- Don’t manage creativity; manage for creativity.
- Trying to satisfy everybody never got anybody anywhere. Focus on what’s important, then do it.
- Make sure your marketing conveys the message and image as straightforward and innovative as possible. The strategy and creative must be clear, concise and on target.
- Your message will be diluted and possibly even confusing if the creative is too cute, too complex or just plain dumb. Don’t let the execution bury or get in the way of the idea.
- Take time to think. There’s always more than one way to do something. That’s creativity!
- Ignoring what seems irrelevant to your immediate needs may be good for mental health but bad for creativity. Studies suggest that a good working memory and the capacity to keep in mind many things at once, can protect creative people from going nuts.
- Harvard’s research shows that, to be creative, you can be bright and crazy, but not stupid.
- Bonus highlight -- Don’t just build failure into the system; honor it. Acknowledge error or failure in a constructive and supportive way. Consider adopting a “suckless mentality” – When critiquing some thing not up to standards, suggest this: “That really sucks! But, if you tried this, it might suck less.”