

Brown & Martin's

newsletter

Chip Martin Says

Know What to Expect and You Won't Be Disappointed



Chip Martin

Around a fast-paced office like ours I try to ride the wave, stay ahead of the curve and push the envelope. But I usually find myself behind the eight ball, dodging the bullet and spinning out of control.

Our staff wants me to be on point, on task, on message, and in the moment. Instead I'm usually over the top, out of touch and in denial.

The point is *expectations* don't always reflect reality. And that's certainly true when it comes to Valentine's Day.

A 2007 Valentine's Day survey revealed that an overwhelming 70% percent of men who give gifts, do not *expect* gifts in return on Valentine's Day. (*Whaaaaaaat?!*)

Adding further insult to injury, the survey found 52% of women say men are correct in not expecting a Valentine.

To provide an even more intriguing perspective on Valentine's Day, a Unilever survey found that the average woman between the ages of 18 and 54 has hung on to her favorite article of clothing for 12 1/2 years. That's one year longer than she's held on to her longest relationship. (*Hey, I'm just reporting what the survey said.*)

Now for the interesting part. On average, the women surveyed would be willing to give

up sex for 15 months for a closet full of new clothes. And two percent of women in this group would give up sex for three years for a new wardrobe.

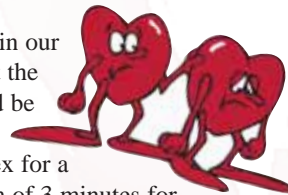
A survey taken in our office revealed that the average man would be willing to give up sex for a maximum of 3 minutes for a new sports car.

While there is an old adage that says, "To get more you have to give more," I'm not sure that applies to Valentine's Day. A survey by the Retailers Association revealed that the average male

plans to spend \$135.67 on Valentine gifts, while the average female plans on spending only \$68.64.

Approximately 180 million cards are exchanged on Valentine's Day and 110 million roses are sold. According to yet another survey, 15% of women actually send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day. No data on how many men send flowers to themselves, but I'm willing to guess that the percentage is smaller.

So while I attempt to be a hands on, foot loose type of person, all of these surveys have made me a knee jerk, head case. So to prove I'm above average, I'm going to spend \$136 on Valentine gifts and send them all to myself. Then I'll know exactly what to expect.



Chip Shot

People who don't have dreams, don't have much.

Don't Sabotage Your Own Marketing Efforts

Occasionally I bump into a few "self proclaimed" communication experts. For instance, a few years ago a prospect asked us to help him place a news release that he had written.

The release broke multiple AP style rules, contained no "news," and included numerous "corporate speak" quotes that made those being quoted look clueless. The release would quickly be circular-filed by any reputable reporter. We politely took a pass on this golden opportunity to ruin our reputation with our media contacts.

Our clients are not the types who believe that conceiving and executing marketing/pr strategies is simply common sense. But I've talked to peers who complain that some of their clients believe marketing/pr firms are only hired because no one within their company has the time to deal with communication tasks. In short, anyone can do it.

I assume these clients deal with other key business issues the same way. Like, "My Aunt Betsy is good at math. She can do our quarterly reports." Or, "Our production manager went to school ... let's put him in charge of training." Or my favorite, "Bill has a pencil, scissors and some paste. Let him write and design our next direct mail piece."

Still, even B&M clients sometimes

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Print Versus Electronic

When prospects want to learn more about your company, your products and/or your services, their first move is probably to your web site. That's why the "first impression" or "image" of your web site is important ... as is the content.

And while web banners, web buttons, webcasts, podcasts and other electronic tools have a place in the marketing mix, don't ignore the sustained effectiveness of print.

In 1970 more than 9 million periodicals were processed by the postal service. In 2005, 35 years later, the number of periodicals

processed by the postal service was 9 million.

Print media continues to be a popular resource. Magazines are saved, carried home, taken on airplanes, read at leisure and often re-read. Editorial pieces are cut out, ads are circled and information is passed on to others. Articles that appear in print typically carry more weight and more credibility than their electronic counterparts.

The lesson is that print and electronic marketing should work in support of each other ... not at the expense of one or the other.

Call us. We do both.

Brown & Martin

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Sabotage...continued from front

propose classic layperson faux pas that cause us to laugh nervously while trying to figure out how to quickly impart years of study and decades of experience that suggest their ideas will diminish the effectiveness of a design or some copy.

As a public service, I offer these suggestions to keep laypeople from sabotaging the success of their own marketing/pr efforts:

- **I won't say "Make the logo bigger."** You like to see your logo, but unless you're IBM, it's not important to prospects. Your logo should be the tasteful last point of a well-crafted appeal.
- **I will give my marketing campaign a chance to work.** You may get tired of your marketing message, but resist the urge to change. Take inspiration from Absolut vodka which launched its famous "Bottle" campaign more than two decades ago.
- **I won't try to make my marketing materials be all things to all people.** The more broadly you try to spread

your appeal, the less appeal you create.

- **I will be open to taking risks.** It's easy to copy. That's why laypeople who want to dabble in marketing just duplicate what's already been done. But your only chance to generate big returns is to risk being different.
- **I will resist the urge to make small changes in marketing materials just to feel like I've contributed to the process.** I'm just trying to save you money with this one.
- **I will listen to marketing/pr professionals when creating/revising a web site.** Yes, some of your internal team members may "know a little bit about the internet." But they probably know far less than professionals who are dedicated to staying on top of the most recent high-tech options and the most effective communication strategies.

Coincidentally B&M is recognized as the first agency in WI to add an IT division so that computer geeks could work side-by-side with marketing/pr professionals and enable clients to rely on a single source for electronic marketing tools.

Sales Letter Secrets

March, 2007

Brown & Martin Clients
1234 Main St.
Anywhere, US 54321

Dear Clients,

Words are the heart and soul of a sales letter.

But you have to do everything you can to make sure prospects read those words. So appearance is often as important as content.

From choosing the right type face and type size to starting with a short sentence and using effective "call out" devices in the body, format can significantly attract more readers and generate more leads.

Contact us for samples of effective sales letters.

Sincerely,

Chip Martin

Brown & Martin's Newsletter

Issue: It's not funny!

Sorry this newsletter isn't as entertaining as usual. Send complaints to my publisher at dale.l.brown@bmpr.com.

Editor: Chip Martin

This newsletter is produced for clients of Brown & Martin, Inc., a marketing and public relations firm serving companies across the country. If you're not a client, quit reading! Or, call us and become one.

Sales Meeting Success



For 50% of participants, the thought of attending a sales meeting is that it will be a waste of time. So what can you do to transform this apathy into enthusiasm?

1. Set the tone early to ignite anticipation. There's more to a theme than a few catchy words. Use a theme to set the tone of the event. Build expectations through pre-meeting mailings and teasers.
2. Keep things active. Sales people are active. Plan events that involve interaction and create excitement. Prevent boredom by engaging participants. You can't maintain attention if all you do is talk at your attendees. Skits, humor, contests, give-and-take exchanges, all help to keep things lively and fresh. Keep them guessing. People are much less likely to "zone out" if they're eager to see what's coming next.
3. Recognize achievements throughout the meeting. Peer recognition is highly valued.
4. Creative post-meeting follow-up will let attendees know that "key" elements brought up at the meeting remain "key" after the meeting.

B&M can help you plan and carry out an effective, memorable sales meeting. Give us a call.