

Brown & Martin's

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Bean Counters Put Short-term Gain Ahead of Long-term Survival

An Editorial by Chip Martin



Chip Martin

Words move people. Words move nations. The power of words to educate, inform and inspire is boundless. When companies move boldly forward, it's usually words driving them.

Numbers, on the other hand, are cold in comparison. (Sort of like Dale's hand on my stick.)

You'll find few numbers in the Declaration of Independence or the Gettysburg Address. Men like Jefferson, Paine and Adams believed in the power of values, brought to life by words.

Lincoln had a thing for honesty, compassion and respect. He used words to convey those values and his life to illustrate them. Words bring me to life ... literally ... almost. If it weren't for words, I'd be just a "doll" instead of an

Chip Shot

Whatever hits the fan will not be distributed even-

"editor." But, I digress.

Recently, we've witnessed how the pursuit of numbers can destroy brands. When brands become things to be merged, purged, resold or sold off rather than things to be built, numbers are in charge.

When reducing overhead becomes more important than creating demand, numbers are in charge.

When processing demand at minimal cost is more important than superior customer service, numbers are in charge.

When things are running smoothly ... I'm in charge. But again, I digress.

Number madness is like a slow spreading disease that puts short-term gain ahead of long-term survival.

Words create images and experiences that resonate with people. Words create product demand and loyalty. These things create numbers ... not the reverse.

So use marketing goals to establish your marketing budgets ... not the reverse.

Remember, if numbers were more important than words, I'd be a boring wooden calculator instead of a witty wooden marketing expert.



A Show of Hands Can Reap Fun and Publicity

B&M thought we had an original idea when we suggested that a client hold a ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS tournament during its annual sales meeting. However, after a little research we discovered the World RPS Society (www.worldrps.com), which offers advanced RPS tips, an online trainer and even membership to the World RPS Society. Suddenly, our idea looked even better!

When you put a cash prize at the end of the rainbow, salespeople will get competitive about anything.

All you have to do is choose a good venue, (preferably a local watering hole), determine some basic format rules, (like how many rounds will be played), train some "referees," (slow or hesitant 'throws' mean instant disqualification) and send out some press releases to gain local coverage. Voilà! You've created an inexpensive, fun event with entertaining competition and the potential for media interest.

Spectators will cheer, boo and even wave signs ("Go Paper!") as contestants and teammates go "hand to hand."

For more information on setting up your own RPS contest, contact B&M.

Odd Ball Data

Opinion-poll data can be interesting, fun and scary all at the same time. Here are some of 2002's odder findings.

- 16% of golfers confessed to breaking at least one club in anger (Gold Magazine)
- While 91% of all religious adults believe heaven exists, just 65% believe in hell. (Family Circle)
- 28% of women look into a mirror six or more times a day. (Self Magazine)
- 23% of adults claim to have had sex in the workplace. (Euro RSCG Worldwide)
- 9% of Americans think it'd be a good idea for the U.S. to have a royal family. (Gallup)

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rejection

The Near Affluent

Almost 11 million American households have reached the \$75,000 to \$99,000 income range. Many companies overlook this "almost rich" niche market according to recent studies.

To attract this group, researchers suggest marketers create "snob appeal." Insurance, household items, haircuts, health club memberships, cars and almost anything else can be packaged in a "niche" way that attracts this growing number of economic ladder climbers.

Interestingly, coupons have a surprising appeal to people in this income group. Research shows that higher income consumers are the ones reading newspapers and magazines and that they can effectively be reached through coupons and inserts.

There is No Joy in Hooters-ville

In the spirit of community good will, a Hooters restaurant in Janesville, WI offered a cash donation to a local charity. It was turned down. In fact, it was turned down three times by three different charities. Why? Well, because the charities apparently don't want to be associated with something as despicable (dripping with sarcasm, here), as Hooters.

One of the most celebrated champions in NASCAR history was Alan Kulwicki who drove the Hooters car before his tragic death in an airplane crash. Do you know where the largest display of Kulwicki/Hooters memorabilia is showcased? It's in a McDonalds restaurant in Milwaukee. So, I guess if that

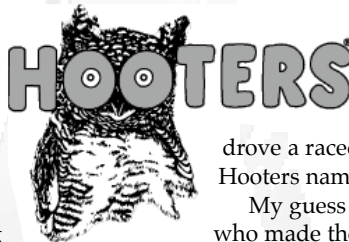
McDonalds offered to make a donation to those same three Janesville charities, they would be obliged to turn it down ... because McDonalds is associated with Kulwicki

who was associated with Hooters because he

drove a racecar with the Hooters name on it.

My guess is that those who made the decision to turn down the donation have never been inside a Hooters. That's called freedom of choice. Turning down a donation that could have a positive impact on those your charity serves, is called dim-witted self-righteousness.

As a side note, who do you think received the most "positive" publicity from this incident; Hooters or the non-profits that Hooters was trying to help.



Funny Sells?

It seems the dumbing down of the media has brought some marketing executives down with it. One agency that is noted for creating humorous and effective ad campaigns received the following feedback from clients and potential clients.

"Sure, VW can afford to be funny. They're cheap cars. We're selling a quality product here." – Matchbox Cars

"Look, we're not a fun company. We're a pretty boring company. Shouldn't our advertising reflect who we are?" – Prudential

"If the product benefits are communicated in an entertaining manner, will it get in the way of the product?" – Polaner Garlic

"I'm not sure you're taking the product seriously enough. This is ice cream, after all." – Häagen-Dazs

"At what price range does humor stop working?" – Subaru

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And for those of you looking for a little direction ... just remember that it may be your sole purpose in life to simply serve as a warning to others.

Editor: Chip Martin

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Brown Delivers

The goals of marketing are to grab attention and then effectively communicate product or service benefits in ways that spur targeted audiences to buy. This is a tough assignment in an era when people flip channels, read less and open their mail over the trash-can.

As a result, customer service and customer experience have

become as important to getting and keeping customers as traditional marketing. UPS gets it. The company has doubled revenues over the past 10 years through clever marketing and by using its delivery experience as a marketing vehicle.

Most of us know our UPS delivery person, and UPS marketing reminds us of that fact. And, by making us sign

for our packages on an electronic PDA, we're reminded that UPS moves quickly and has a process for tracking where our packages are at all times. Everything ties together and is aimed at winning and keeping customers. What a concept.

