

Brown & Martin's

newsletter

Chip Martin Says

Marketing and Delivering on Promises Induces Some to Cheerfully Check Their Rights at the Door



Chip Martin

While many marketers and employers bend to overly sensitive political correctness, one highly successful entity not only disregards it ... it blatantly and effectively moves in the opposite direction. Now

I'm not saying that this is a good idea. I'm just saying that if it's marketed right and delivers on its promises, it can work.

I'm speaking of course about Las Vegas where casinos legislate and enforce their own rules. In fact, when you walk into a casino you willingly give up many of the rights you normally enjoy.

Security personnel and pit bosses are trained to look for "potential problems" and take action before any problems arise. Some may call it "profiling." A pit boss walks up to a player and says, "Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to leave."

"What's the problem?"

"I don't like your face."

"My face?"

"Correct. Do I need to call security?"

The player is gone. No problem. That suits me. And apparently it suits millions of other casino visitors.

While some groups claim surveillance cameras in public places infringe on privacy, Vegas is known as "surveillance city," with cameras covering almost every square mile of the metro area and capable of following you from any one point to another. Do we care? No. We feel safe. In fact, Homeland Security has looked to Vegas as a model of security. So if you take a whiz on a dumpster, don't be surprised if Bubba the security guard is waiting for you around the corner.

Many highly promoted poker tournaments are held in Vegas. During these tournaments only one language is allowed to be spoken in the poker rooms ... English. If you start speaking anything else you get a 20-minute time out. Try it a second time and you'll get kicked out. Guess what happens. People respect the rule.

If you want to work in the casinos but don't speak English, the casinos will teach you through language immersion. By the end of 4 months, even a middle-aged guest

room attendant who did not speak English before, should be confident enough to converse in the language with strangers. If employees don't learn to speak English, they're gone. Last year Vegas was the fastest growing city in the world. Apparently employees are willing to work under the "English speaking" tenet. I wish the guys who cut my grass had previously worked in Vegas.

In Vegas casinos, everyone is assimilated, everyone is expected to work and play by one set of rules and almost everyone agrees that the system works.

Do visitors complain? No. Why? Because they feel safe in Vegas and they want to be in Vegas. So they work and play by Vegas rules.

What does this have to do with marketing? A lot. Vegas is marketing. It positions itself as being so spectacular, so welcoming and so enticing that we allow it to set its own rules ... rules that we wouldn't accept anywhere else. We've been convinced that Vegas is a great one-of-a-kind destination. And in fact, it is.

Can you hear me now?

Most press releases end up in the circular file unread ... because they stink. An editor friend of mine said, "The majority of press releases I receive are painfully dull, uncreative, self-promotional and without value to my readers. They also lack news."

If you want your press release used, here's what you need to ask yourself.

- What's in it for the publication's audience?
- Do I have a great hook? Do I have any interesting angle of value to readers?
- Is this release part of a well-balanced, integrated marketing/PR program?
- Is my announcement newsworthy? In other words, "Where's the beef?"

Dare to do something different and you'll stand out. B&M can help to get your releases noticed and used in trades and mainstream media. Call us.

This is No Joke

Humor communicates more effectively than you may think it does.

Business professionals are people, too ... at least most of them are. And nearly all people enjoy a good laugh ... even the grumps who insist they're all business all the time.

So how do you transform business-as-usual communications into effective funny business without turning your message into a joke?

1. Don't knock-knock it until you've tried it. At its best, humor inspires people, brings people together and gets talked about later. How often do your company's marketing communications tools have employees and customers quoting from them for weeks, months,

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This is No Joke ... continued from front

even years after they first appear? (Four months ago I wrote a column about body parts used in marketing that still generates email to our firm, is frequently brought up by clients in meetings and has been quoted in the media. People remember it.)

2. Play to the room. Customers, prospects or employees should feel that you're on their side. They should feel that "you get it." That's the power of humor. It creates a sense of community by openly dividing the world into groups and showing your targeted group that you're one of them.

Humor should be targeted and smart. The best humor plumbs the audience's common experiences. "Play to the room" simply means articulate to your audience that you understand what's important and common to them. B&M uses different types of humor in a newsletter aimed at truck drivers than we use in a newsletter aimed at insurance agents. Different means to the same results.

3. Wear a watch. Every humorist will tell you that "timing is everything," when it comes to humor. How does timing translate to print or to interactive applications? It can be how punctuation paces a sentence or how different type styles are used. Little unnoticed details can lead to the biggest most memorable laughs.

4. Leave them wanting more. Humor should serve your message, not overwhelm it. It should help to gain attention. It should entertain your audience. It should point the audience to what's important. And to be most effective, it should be used in moderation.

In the most engaging manner possible, tell people only what they need to know to understand your key messages. It works. Seriously.

Any sized company can benefit from Web Site press sections

Reporters are web surfers. They're also often overloaded with assignments. That means anything they find on the internet that they can use and helps them to save time is appreciated.

Here's 4 tips for attracting journalists to your web site.

- Put everything a journalist may want in one place on your web site even if a lot of what's in the press center are links to information located in other sections of your site. Journalists won't waste precious minutes navigating through your site to find the information they're looking for.
- Make it easy for reporters to request to be added to your news distribution list.
- The press isn't interested in glossy brochures and cute graphics. They want facts. They want access to articles about your products/services and basic educational information. If they're looking for data about specific products and can lift one or two sentences from your fact sheet or a case history, they'll remember your site and will be back.
- Fact sheets, contact information, high res photos, awards, press releases, white papers, case histories and a list of trade shows that you attend should all be identified and included in your press center.

Regardless of the size of your company it's to your benefit to build an easy to find press center on your site that is simple to use and provides useful information.

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Issue: Who You Gonna Call!?!?

If it weren't for muscle spasms, I wouldn't get any exercise at all.

Editor: Chip Martin

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Chip solves eNewsletter deliverability problems.

Distributor Promotions

If a distributor has your product in his showroom or on his shelves, he's more likely to put some effort into selling it. So a manufacturer's challenge is to get distributors to stock products.

Many manufactures allow distributors to earn "points" for purchases. Points can be used towards additional products, promotional clothing, trips or other prizes.

And here's a frequency program that can be effective and inexpensive ... Bingo cards. Game cards list different products and a few "free spaces." When a distributor can fill a line across, down or diagonally they get a free item to sell.

B&M can help you to build sales through effective promotions.