

Brown & Martin's

newsletter



Chip Martin

Most companies seldom-- if ever--question invoices from attorneys or accountants. They have much less trepidation when it comes to questioning the cost of a logo, or a direct mail piece, a newsletter or

other marketing tool.

Why is that?

Attorneys, accountants and marketing professionals all bill using the same basic method ... guess work ... I mean "time." People fill out times sheets, enter them into a computer and voila ... an invoice is created.

Personally I'm embarrassed to be grouped with attorneys for any reason. Especially anything that has to do with money. But I digress.

If I sit at my computer all day and crank out a lot of articles and columns for B&M clients, our firm probably does pretty well financially. But yesterday, I sat at my computer for about 3 hours trying over and over to write a decent newsletter column for a client. Nothing I wrote satisfied me. It may have satisfied the client, but I knew that I could do better. I tried to find something to kick start my creativity. I leafed through some reference materials. I surfed the net. I

Chip Martin Says

Why does it cost so much?

looked out the window. I got some coffee. I got yelled at for not being productive.

Finally, I got the germ of an idea and spent three more hours honing an informative and entertaining column. I emailed it to my client. He loved it. He even called me to tell me that he loved it. But would he have loved it if billed him for the entire

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time I was involved in trying to write that column? Probably not. And there's the rub.

If I worked in New York or Chicago, my supervisor would demand that I bill all of my time. Heck, I once worked for an agency that told me (and this is true) that I should "think about a client's project" while I was in the bathroom so that the time would be billable.

But now I'm the "M" in B&M, Inc. My name is on the door. I have a conscience. I have ethics. And our clients deserve fairness. If those things don't prove that I have absolutely nothing in common with attorneys or accountants, nothing will.

So what happened? B&M ate some of my time which impacts profits. And my productivity went down ... which impacts my bonus. But our client received quality work at a fair price which will have a long-term positive impact on their business.

The point is creative, effective "ideas" often don't come easily or quickly ... even to professionals such as myself. Clients don't pay for the end product as much as they pay for the time and experience it took to get to the end product. *(For effect, please read that sentence again.)*

The reason I bring this up is that at lunch, I heard the story of how one guy spent part of his morning defending why a letter he wrote for a client cost \$225.

"The outline I created for the letter was based on a very effective piece our firm did for another client last year," he said. "But after my first draft it took five revisions to meet all of the objectives the client and I had discussed in our meeting. That took a lot of time. But the client acted as if he could have written the thing in a half hour."

I told him that we didn't have any clients like that and that I could have written his letter for \$125. He threw his soup at me. I ducked and it hit an attorney at the next table. If that's not Karma I don't know what is.

Never Ending Marketing

Marketing isn't just a mailer here and there. It's not just the occasional news release or networking event. It's all those, but done on a systematic, consistent basis and on a regular schedule.

Beyond this, marketing is everything you do. Every touch point forms your image ... your brand ... in the minds of your audience. It's how your marketing materials look and what they say. It's how you answer the phone. It's your office interior design and even how you dress. Every point of contact with your audience builds on the next.

Take the time needed to craft your marketing to send a clear, consistent message that's flawlessly implemented. That's what will help ensure the phone's always ringing and you'll get to the place where you're able to work with the customers you want and do the work you love, while getting paid what you're worth.

Addicted to Email

Email use on portable devices has doubled since 2004 and as a result people are checking email around the clock.

According to AOL's annual Email addiction survey, the average email user checks email about five times a day and 59% of those with portable devices check email every time a new message arrives.

Forty three percent of those people keep the device nearby when they are sleeping to listen for incoming mail.

Fifty-three percent say they've emailed while in the bathroom, 37% have checked email while driving and 12% admit to checking while in church.

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Chip's Web Site Watch

As we surf the web to keep up on the latest in marketing concepts, new product introductions and general information for our clients, we run across some pretty unique sites.

www.trunkmonkeyad.com - View the Suburban Auto Group's ground-breaking and hilarious TV ads that use a "trunk monkey." They load slowly but they're worth it because it's marketing humor at its best.

www.shaveeverywhere.com - Norelco won a prestigious Webby Award for its interactive web site dedicated to personal grooming and men who shave everywhere. It's like watching a traffic accident ... you can't take your eyes off of it. Plus, it dares to use humor to get its delicate points across. The women in our office laughed out loud.

www.menofmortuaries.com - See the Men of Mortuaries calendar, proceeds of which go to charity. They're buff, but it's still a little creepy.

www.mimimaternity.com This site sells maternity wedding gowns. (The whirring sound you hear is my grandmother turning over in her grave.)

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Issue: Happy Holidays

Death is not the end. There remains the litigation over the estate.

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.

Good Leaders Produce Laughs

Most working professionals think it's important to purposely use a sense of humor around the office according to a recent survey.

Among office workers, 97% said they preferred managers who could make them laugh.

"Managers who can laugh at themselves or during difficult situations are often viewed as more approachable and in touch with the challenges their teams face," said Max Messner of Robert Half International, a CA-based staffing services firm.

He said a good sense of humor helps to build rapport among staff and eases stressful situations.

They didn't have to do a study. They could have just asked us and we would have told them the same thing.

Chip Shot

Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.

How not to write a press release

A press release sent from TexereSilk.com included the following: "The current paradigm of globalization has too many dimensions that are clearly harmful to human society.

Human and ecological mistreatment, unfair trade practices, and product standardization driven by commercial imperatives of consumerism are but a few examples. TexereSilk intends to be a positive driver of globalization, promoting economic activity that does justice to our long-term societal interests."

Uuuuh, *Wha'd they say?* Do you know what they sell? Women's silk nightgowns ... for \$338!

Apparently ripping people off is good for the environment.

B-to-B Coupons

The first retail coupon was issued in 1894 by a druggist who wrote on slips of paper to offer customers a free glass of Coca-Cola when they came into his apothecary. A year later, C.W. Post became the first company to issue a grocery coupon: one cent off a box of Grape Nuts. Today, coupon use saves American consumers an estimated \$3 billion a year.

Surprisingly, coupons can work for B-to-B as well as consumer products. For instance, including coupons with direct mail or newsletters aimed at customers and prospects can bring in additional business. And because people tend to save coupons, (even if they don't use them) your company name is kept in front of recipients for a longer period.

In addition to offering discounts on product or services, coupons can be used to:

- Offer premiums ... for additional accessories, a presentation/demonstration, for a subscription or for special service offers.
- Free information ... free booklet, free samples, free trial, free consultation.
- Up-sell ... offer discounts on extras with purchase of your product or service.
- Additional benefits ... instead of discounting your primary product or service, make product support offers, installation offers or training offers.

Including coupons is a great way to help get your company's B-to-B marketing materials noticed, read and kept.