TIPS OF THE MONTH

If a man fools me once, shame on him. If he fools me twice, shame on me.

~ Chinese Proverb

The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness.

~ Dalai Lama

Rudeness is the weak man's imitation of strength

~ Eric Hoffer

DON'T WORRY WHEN YOU ARE NOT RECOGNIZED, BUT STRIVE TO BE WORTHY OF RECOGNITION.

~ Abraham Lincoln

4 Principles
of Marketing Strategy In The
Digital Age

L ife for marketers used to be simpler. We had just a few TV channels, some radio stations, a handful of top magazines and a newspaper or two in each market. Reaching consumers was easy, if you were able craft a compelling message, you could move product.

Ugh! Now we've got a whole slew of TV channels, millions of web sites and hundreds of thousands of "Apps" along with an alphabet soup of DMP's, API's and SDK's. Marketing was never easy, but technology has made it a whole lot tougher.

What used to be a matter of identifying needs and communicating benefits now requires us to build immersive experiences that engage consumers. That means we have to seamlessly integrate a whole new range of skills and capabilities. It's easy to get lost among a sea of buzzwords and false gurus selling snake oil. Here are 4 principles to guide you:

1. Clarify Business Objectives

There's so much going on in the marketing arena today, everybody is struggling to keep up. At the same time, every marketing professional feels pressure to be "progressive" and actively integrate emerging media into their marketing program.

However, the mark of a good marketing strategy is not how many gadgets and neologisms are crammed into it, but how effectively it achieves worthy goals. Therefore, how you define your intent will have a profound impact on whether you succeed or fail.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency for marketers to try to create a "one size fits all" approach for a portfolio of brands or, alternatively, to want to create complicated models to formulate marketing objectives. However, most businesses can be adequately captured by evaluating just three metrics: awareness, sales and advocacy (i.e. customer referral).

Some brands are not widely known, others are have trouble converting awareness to sales and still others need to encourage consumer advocacy. While every business needs all three, it is important to focus on one primary objective or your strategy will degrade into a muddled hodgepodge.

SALES

CONSIDERATION LOYALTY

AWARENESS   ADVOCACY

2. Use Innovation Teams to Identify, Evaluate and Activate Emerging Opportunities

Marketing executives are busy people. They need to actively monitor the marketplace, identify business opportunities, collaborate with product people and run promotional campaigns. It is unreasonable to expect them to keep up with the vast array of emerging technology and tactics, especially since most of it won't pan out anyway.

Therefore, it is essential to have a team dedicated to identifying emerging opportunities, meeting with start-ups and running test-and-learn programs to evaluate their true potential. Of course, most of these will fail, but the few winners will more than make up for the losers.

Once an emerging opportunity has performed successfully in a pilot program, it can then be scaled up and become integrated into the normal strategic process as a viable tactic to achieve an awareness, sales or advocacy objective.

3. Decouple Strategy and Innovation

Unfortunately, in many organizations, strategy and innovation are often grouped together because they are both perceived as things that "smart people" do. Consequently, when firms approach innovation, they tend to put their best people on it, those who have shown a knack for getting results.

That's why, all too often, innovation teams are populated by senior executives. Because innovation is considered crucial to the future of the enterprise (and also due to the institutional clout of the senior executives) they also tend to have ample resources at their disposal. They are set up to succeed. Failure, all too often, isn't an option.

However, strategy is fundamentally different from innovation. As noted above, a good strategy is one that achieves specific objectives. Innovation, however, focuses on creating something completely new and new things, unfortunately, tend to not work as well as standard solutions (at least at first). The truth is that innovation is a messy business.

So failure must be an option, which is why technologically focused venture capital firms expect the vast majority of their investments to fail. However, failure must be done cheaply, so resources (and therefore senior executives) must be kept to a minimum.

4. Build Open Assets in the Marketplace

The primary focus of marketing promotion used to be to create compelling advertising campaigns that would get the consumer's attention and drive awareness. Once potential customers were aware of the product, direct sales and retail promotions could then close the deal.

That model is now broken. Today, effective promotional campaigns are less likely to lead to a sale and more likely to result in an Internet search, where consumers' behavior can be tracked and then retargeted by competitors. Simply building awareness and walking away is more likely to enrich your competition than yourself.

Successful brands are becoming platforms and need to do more than just drive consumers to a purchase, they have to inspire them to participate. That means marketers have to think less in terms of USP's, and GRP's and more in terms of API's and SDK's. Focus groups are giving way to accelerators and creation to co-creation.

In the digital age, brands are no longer mere corporate assets to be leveraged, but communities of belief and purpose.

Grey Scale Screen Printing

By: Lon Winters

As you may, or may not know, we recently spent a week with the first Printwear Shop Makeover winner in Plymouth, Mich. We spent five days with our new friends Nancy, Rose and Gary at Heritage Logo Works. While streamlining the process and dialing in some new techniques, we also worked up a project interesting enough to make it into our Software to Substrate monthly column. (Check out the extensive coverage of the makeover on page 60, this issue.)

In order to get a handle on the entire process, it is important to practice as hard as we play on game day. So, while we ran actual jobs during the week, we would also lay in several practice images. For this project, our plan was to create something that we could use throughout the process where we were adding new software, screen making parameters and printing techniques. We wanted to work with a photo on black garments in a gray scale with a couple twists.

We would need a subject matter and reference. As you might expect, when we use imagery about which the customer is passionate, the knowledge retention is usually very high.

Meet SGT Sara Davis and SPC Jessika Williams. Davis is Heritage co-owner Nancy Davis' daughter. She joined the Army National Guard three years ago and is going to college to be an occupational therapist. She joined the Army National Guard to help with school tuition and because she loves adventure.

Davis and Williams signed up and went to boot camp together. They are both very competitive and scored high in every area. As a parent, Nancy is very proud of Sara's accomplishments. But because of their high scores, both Davis and Williams have become military police and gunners. This was the inspiration for our project.

We chose to print an image of the two of them standing in a Hummer in Afghanistan, where they had been on a mission. They both volunteered to go to Afghanistan with the Taylor unit 1776 MP CO. While in Afghanistan, Davis was promoted to a Sergeant. She was asked to join the 1777 MP unit in Taylor, and has accepted the position. What makes this even more interesting is that she was one of the screen printers at Heritage before she enlisted.

Operation gray scale

We began creating this personal project by opening a color photo into Photoshop. It was simply an emailed jpeg image in fairly low resolution form, which was okay since it was just an exercise and we were changing it up anyway.

For the project, we would run a gray scale or duotone of the photo, so we would need to turn the full-color photo into a black and white. With the image open in Photoshop, we chose Image then Adjustments and Hue/Saturation from the top menu. Adjusting the saturation slider all the way to the left, at 100 percent, and bingo—the color was gone but the tonal values remain. There was the gray-scale image.

We saved the image as a .psd document on the desktop, then reopened the black and white image in raster separation software for a simulated-process separation. The software did its thing and we had eight plates ready for output. Of course, black and white duo tone does not require any info on the colored plates, so we deleted all the unnecessary colors, leaving only the first-down white printer, a gray and a highlight white. We also built a black to reintroduce the detail that would need to go back over the background treatment.

For the background, just to make it interesting, we output the gray as large as possible through the inkjet-to-film printer. We could go almost 17" wide by about 19" tall. Setting our halftone size in the RIP to a big 20 lpi (lines per inch) would result in a really chunky halftone background image. The other three plates were output at only 8" wide at 50 lpi, all at a standard 22.5-degree angle so we could rebuild the black-and-white photo over the background gray.

The ink had so little pigment and the mesh and thin stencil contributed to a thin ink deposit, which resulted in an ultra-soft dark gray treatment in the background. It almost looked like a ghost image of the photo.
The low-res image was opened in Photoshop, where it would be turned into a gray scale/duotone image by adjusting the Hue/Saturation. (Images courtesy GraphicElephants.com)

Production scope

The oversized gray film was exposed on a new, larger static framed screen with 305 mesh stretched to 20 N/cm. The balance of the plates went on 230s all at 20 to 25 Newtons. To help control the whole process, Heritage now insists that all the new static aluminum screens come in the door no lower than 20 N/cm tension on the mesh. The stencils were all built using a good dual cure emulsion and a new coating method at two-over-three, ending on the squeegee side and dried substrate-side down. The inks were pretty straight forward.

The gray background ink would need to be super soft and very thin to print through the 305. We thinned down some standard white with curable reducer about 90 percent. At that point, the ink had so little pigment and the mesh and thin stencil contributed to a thin ink deposit, which resulted in an ultra-soft dark gray treatment in the background. It almost looked like a ghost image of the photo.

We would then print the three-color duotone right on top of the gray background, all wet-on-wet. The print order was an under-base white, then black and finally the highlight white. The white inks had to be thinned about 10 percent to flow through the high screen mesh.

Viola! Nancy loved the prints. Heritage Logo Works learned a pretty simple and very effective technique that showcased the upgrades to their process. Mission accomplished. And, to Davis and Williams, and all the U.S. military, thank you for what you do, from all of us in the decorated-apparel industry.

News from Printex

By the Grace of Allah Almighty, we booked the 1st Sroque Oval Machine in Pakistan for M/s Combined Fabrics, Lahore.

Mr. Ignasi Gomez , Sales Engineer of Print Corex (Cresa) is available in Pakistan from 19th March till 27th March,2015. During his stay he will visit the customers and conduct trials of Textile Finishing Chemicals.

Mr. Nasir Mehmood has left Printex during the month of February, 2015.

Printex participated in EXPO 2015 at Expo center Karachi during 26th February till 1st March,2015.

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