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Want Attention? Mangle Mundane When Branding Your Business

By Danny Rosin, Special To LTW

Editor's note: Danny Rosin is president of Morrisville-based Brand Fuel Promotions, a specialty advertising, promotional products and Web services firm. This is the latest in a series of guest columns for LTW from the membership of the Council for Entrepreneurial Development (CED).

MORRISVILLE – Around our offices, we have a saying, “If they have to sit through a two-hour meeting, they darn well better get some free stuff.”

And in our line of business, we are often involved with our clients' tradeshow, conferences, seminars, safety and recognition programs, company's internal events, and their ad campaigns. We are given the privilege and the charge to shake up these opportunities by making certain that the experience for the end-user is not only satisfying, but that the appropriate messaging is recognized and memorable.

In advertising and marketing, it is just too easy to ride the wave of status quo. Branding is a lot like politics. Many companies tend to gravitate towards the middle to hang on to the coattails of the campaigns before them. Familiar is comfortable, but it is also forgettable.

You don't want to be like everyone else, so why take the path most traveled? Instead, take a chance. Create that “Wow Factor” with your next tradeshow, ad campaign, or sales pitch. Create the unforgettable. And when in doubt, go all out.

Here is a short list of ways to mangle the mundane with your next advertising or marketing venture:

Get Guerilla

Think about places you can get your message out interestingly. 1. Consider paying a hotel to place your custom imprinted pillowcases with your message in a prospect's room. 2. On the first day of the new year, before everyone gets to work, place a 6 month countdown clock on each employee's desk with an imprint that reads, “Reach such and such a goal by the end of the 2nd quarter and receive a week's paid vacation”. Get them talking and create buzz.

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Pick a Theme

Stay far away from anything that brushes up against religion or politics, like Easter. Do consider themes that are not overused but interest people, like Mardis Gras. Create your own holiday. Why not?

Add Music

If the boss gives you a directive to strengthen a waning Safety Program, have Men Without Hats perform a live show and sing "Safety Dance" as the encore late one Friday afternoon. Music can be a common denominator for inspiration, motivation, and simply, good memories.

Engage and Involve

Interactivity with prospects in ways that are memorable creates lasting impressions. Consider hands on contests and make sure your high-energy extrovert employees are representing.

Don't Forget the Pets and Kiddies Back Home

You think you've done it all and are being introduced to a brick wall for the giveaway for this show, huh? Drive traffic to your booth by giving away treats for pets and fun stuff for your prospects' children. It might not be perfect for messaging, but I bet you will create some traffic flow at the booth to be able to rope them in for qualifying.

Multilevel Programs

Just giving a prospect something does not get you far. Map out a plan. For example, first, give them a scratch and win card that directs the recipient to your web site where everyone wins something and their contact data is qualified. Second, when you send them the gift you promised, include information about your product or service. Third, FOLLOW UP again and again, with respectful persistence. Last, track sales from leads generated and validate the program.

Insert Humor or Make Them Think

Humor is memorable and everyone likes to laugh. Developing a campaign that is thoughtful makes your company be represented in the same tone.

Tiny Budget?

Focus on just your top tier clients v. hard to find prospects. Consider creative co-branding with a business that is targeting the same customer.

Ultimately, with any clever and daring idea that gets them talking, keep your brand message clear. Shakespeare said, "All the world is a stage." Make sure you take advantage before the competition does.

Danny Rosin is president and co-owner of Brand Fuel Promotions (www.brandfuel.com). Rosin's responsibilities at Brand Fuel include managing the sales team, recruiting and training new employees, and providing strategic and tactical counsel to clients. He brings more than 18 years of specialty advertising and promotional industry expertise to his leadership role at Brand Fuel. Brand Fuel continues its support of CED as the "Promotional Sponsor" of Venture 2005 (www.cednc.org/venture), set for April 26-27 at Pinehurst Resort in Pinehurst, NC.

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