

## **Procedure – The Missing Link**

The past few months I have focused on models for the development and implementation of solid marketing plans. I have contended that the development of a successful plan requires a commitment to process and I have described the steps and components to be incorporated.

The core of a successful marketing plan is the distinction between strategy and tactics and the equal commitment to the development and execution of each. This month I would like to introduce what Tudog refers to as the missing link, the key element in the successful implementation of a well conceived marketing plan - procedure. It should be clear that structurally sound plans, even when sufficient resources and innovative talent support them, are reliant completely on execution. We view procedure as a key to execution.

The initial task is defining execution. In Tudog's book, execution is an enterprise-wide undertaking involving all aspects of the company's operations. Just as we have argued that marketing is an inside-outside proposition, so too must the execution of the plan capture the commitment of the entire organization. A marketing plan cannot work if the processes of the company – the procedures followed – are not supportive of the efforts being made through exposure, branding and positioning.

Procedure requires that acts of support for the marketing effort be institutionalized into the daily behavior of all employees. It calls for changes in workflow for many employees, as currently act of support for marketing are incidental, or worse, non-existent. Yet if a company accepts the notion that fulfillment of its sales objectives are dependent on the success of its marketing campaign, then it makes sense that it would institute the steps required to provide the consistency and support needed to fulfill the promise of the marketing claims.

The entire organization exists to generate profit. This is the sole purpose of the corporate enterprise. It is not unreasonable for employees in all departments to engage in detail oriented processes to create profit. This is true even if the employee operates in a division that is seemingly not related to the sale of the company's product. Every employee is related, directly or indirectly, to the fulfillment of the company's mission, and how he or she perform in their mandate influences the success of the enterprise.

Tudog insists on the evaluation of company procedure as a key element in strengthening the sales and marketing effort. It works like this:

### **Step1: Procedure in the Planning**

The first step in instituting procedure is in the planning stages. The strength of a plan is in its coordination, integration of tactics, and uniformity of message. There are many small details that can get lost in the process of developing the plan. The way to ensure that everything goes smoothly is to create procedures that, when followed, eliminate the risk of small details being overlooked. So, for example, copy and graphics would be procedurally reviewed to insure that they were relevant one to the other and consistent with and loyal to the overall strategy and message.

## **Step 2: What is the Promise?**

There is the need to understand what marketing pledge the company is striving to fulfill. Internal operations have to be geared toward sponsoring the goal, including in-house marketing to encourage loyalty and commitment.

## **Step 3: How is the Promise Communicated?**

The way the message is communicated will help determine the procedures that need to be set into place to insure fulfillment. This would include any special offers, time sensitive promotions, and similar marketing tactics.

## **Step 4: How is the Promise Fulfilled?**

Putting procedures into place is a function of what tasks need to be performed. In this sense, it is important to evaluate how the promise is fulfilled, taking the time to analyze each department in the company and creating tasks that will incorporate quality control and customer service processes while tending to the small details that make for a completely satisfied customer.

A good strategy and the smart tactics to drive implementation are essential for business activity to create, sustain and grow sales. Yet, without creating the procedural structure to insure top-notch implementation, the marketing promises being made and not fulfilled could cause more damage than good. Therefore, Tudog views procedure as the missing link, the step in the implementation process that is overlooked or taken for granted. It shouldn't be. Procedure is the core of your implementation capacity.