

Talking U.S. Marketing – Take Two

Last month I used this space to highlight and emphasize some key fundamentals in developing and executing a marketing program in the United States. The idea behind these sort of articles is to provide the reader with insights into cultural nuances of U.S. marketing (such as perception of value), and provide down-to-earth information that can be used by readers immediately.

The concepts and tactics described in these articles are the cornerstones of Tudog's operational methods, and when combined with proper process and business structure, generally serve to create market events that increase value by generating sales. The last sentence may sound like a slogan from our business brochure (and it will be as soon as I finish this article!), but the real world requires that businesses sell, and selling is a function of exposure, positioning, convincing and more. These are the tasks of a marketing campaign.

Marketing can be defined as creating the tools and environment for a company to sell more of its products to more customers so that it can earn more money. That's the sole purpose of it. Sometimes it takes subtle form, like when large companies advertise to improve their corporate image but don't discuss any particular product. And sometimes it is very apparent, such as when companies focus on a particular product and demonstrate benefits or try to create an associated image and sense of emotion. Both of these are legitimate and effective when implemented and targeted properly.

So here are some more marketing hints:

Respect Your Customer's Intelligence - we have all become a bit cynical as we are exposed to more and more advertisements and marketing schemes. As consumers we pride ourselves in being able to identify and neutralize transparent marketing campaigns. Make your campaign intelligent enough so that your target will appreciate you for your effort and reward you by being willing to listen to your message.

Create a Campaign You Can Stay Committed To - nothing blurs your message more than a message that keeps changing. How can you expect customers to remain loyal to a set of benefits you are selling when you are not loyal to the message yourself? Naturally you can (and should) create deviations on the theme to keep things interesting, but if you try to transmit too many different messages you will have wound up saying nothing at all.

Make the Decision Theirs - the most effective way to sell is to let the customer make the buying decision. Your job is to provide the information... to spark the interest. But good marketing allows customers to develop a relationship with your brand, and feel good about having done so. Don't overtly sell. Inform in an intelligent, relevant way. If your products are truly compelling, the customer will do the rest.

Make Your Marketing Personal - the best marketing campaigns are those that are designed to communicate. With this in mind, we know that effective communication has at its core both clarity and personality. You want your marketing materials (the message) to be easy to relate to. Imagine your marketing campaign as a person. Would you want to have dinner with him? Spend time with him? Listen to him in a conversation? If your

answer is no to any of these questions, your marketing plan has a huge challenge you need to address immediately. You want your marketing campaign to be "a person" everyone will like and want to listen to.

Be More than Relevant. Be Important - lots of things are relevant to us that we never get around to. We place priority on the important stuff. You need to graduate from being relevant to your customers to being important for your customers. You achieve this by creating a trusted relationship with your customers, and by focusing on serving added value roles that show how important your customers are to you.

Back up Words with Actions - the true test to your customers will be whether or not the professionally worded materials included in your marketing campaign truly reflect the real world experience they are going to have with your company. The whole idea of an integrated marketing concept (such as Tudog's CIMS - Comprehensive Integrated Marketing System) is that word and deed combine to make a powerful impression and create long lasting relationships.

The central elements of a good marketing plan can be stated in one concise sentence - integrate all aspects of your communication, talk to your target clearly, and maintain the integrity of your message. The rest is all tactics.

This article, like last month's article, was written in the hope of providing some insight into tactics and fundamentals. They are the basics of good marketing. Stick with the fundamentals, innovate your message.