

CREATIVE COMPOST

Where Great Marketing Ideas Grow

Vol. VI, No. 14

Introducing... (Your Name Here)!

Did you know that many people rank their fear of public speaking higher than fear of their own death?

For the strong of heart — especially sole practitioners and service providers — hitting the lecture circuit can be one of the most effective business-builders out there. What better way to showcase your expertise than by getting up in front of an audience that's chock-full of prospects?

Before taking your show on the road, here are a few tips to maximize your results:

Content is king. Walk on stage not as a pitchman, but rather as an expert who is sharing valuable, actionable wisdom. Consider the needs, interests, and level of sophistication of your intended audience, and plan your presentation accordingly. What to talk about? Try industry trends, the latest research findings, or problems commonly faced by your customers.

Customize, customize, customize. Take your basic content and sprinkle in some local flavor whenever possible. Successful speakers wander the audience before they take the stage, chatting with as many attendees as possible and incorporating their names, comments, or industries into the presentation.

Be prepared to invest. Groups such as local chambers of commerce often don't have the resources to provide the ideal

equipment and/or venue. If your presentation requires slides, be prepared to supply not only the laptop, but in many cases an LCD projector and screen as well.

Practice makes perfect. Great speakers make presenting seem almost effortless, thanks to vast amounts of hard work behind the scenes. Don't blow your credibility with haphazard preparation. Trust us...it will show. Know your subject matter well enough to avoid the obvious use of notes.

Avoid painful PowerPoints. On-screen presentations work best with a few key words as your visual — not your entire discourse on the subject. Avoid the temptation to read each slide to the audience...the kiss of death for novices.

Maximize your exposure. Don't count on the event coordinator to handle PR for

(cont'd on p. 2)

Creative PR Tactics

Stop! Before you issue yet another boilerplate press release, consider a few guerrilla tactics for putting the power of the press to work for your business:

Make an insightful comment. When was the last time you wrote a letter to the editor? Chances are, it was on a personal

issue — thanking this season's Little League volunteers, or blasting local politicians for the latest property tax hike. But what about for your business? Don't overlook the power of a well-crafted letter or op-ed commentary as a component of your marketing strategy. Comment on an industry trend, recent news event, or upcoming legislation that is likely to have an impact on your business.

Tie in to the news of the day. When “runaway bride” Jennifer Wilbanks finally came clean, here was a golden opportunity for myriad observers to share the spotlight. Mental health practitioners issued releases on the effects of stress; relationship gurus offered guidance on the importance of communication, and so on. By tying in with breaking news, these “experts” showcased their skills in a highly memorable way.

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WITH MANY CONSUMERS revealing their most intimate preferences online under the guide of blogging, *Trendwatching.com* has coined the phrase “counter-googling” for the newest tool in your marketing arsenal — researching customers early in the buying cycle for the ultimate in 1:1 marketing. For example, the Bel Air Hotel googles first-time guests upon arrival, leading to personalized services like a room with morning sun if the guest enjoys an early-morning run.

By 2008, CHILDREN ages 4-12 will be responsible for more than \$50 billion of total overall spending, according to market research firm Mintel. That includes food, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by food marketers, who spent about \$13 billion last year marketing to kids.

MORE THAN HALF of last year's 70,000+ Army enlistees signed up online...many by first clicking on a job site like Monster.com. To help meet its goals, the Army plans to spend \$17.8 million on web recruiting this year — about 10% of its total advertising budget.

Introducing... you! (from p. 1)

your talk. Send a short press release to local outlets, as well as to the media where the event is being held. Ask a colleague to snap a photo of you in action, and distribute it to those same outlets captioned with a brief post-event recap.

Extend personal invitations. Don't underestimate current customers' interest in your lecture. Post a notice on your website with a registration link, and send a description of the event to key customers. If the event is fee-based, ask the hosting organization if you can invite a client or two on the house.

Dangle an offer. Encourage audience members to visit your website or follow up with you for an article or white paper that offers more detailed information.

Assemble a panel. If your talk is a hit, offer to return with a colleague or two for a future panel discussion on the subject.

Need help getting started on your speaking career? Try these resources:

Toastmasters International — One of the best public speaking bargains around. For less than \$100 per year, you'll receive a host of training materials, a monthly magazine, and opportunities to meet and mingle with some of the world's best

speaking professionals. Local clubs abound, and offer a supportive environment for building your skills in areas ranging from more powerful hand gestures to vocal variety. Locate a club near you at toastmasters.org/find.

Speakernetnews.com — A free weekly e-newsletter published by Rebecca Morgan and Ken Braly. Filled with interesting insights on the speaking biz, including marketing yourself, travel tips, and effective use of technology. The site also offers low-cost training teleseminars.

2chambers.com — Find local Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations in your area that may be in need of a speaker.

Now, go out there and knock 'em dead!

Creative PR (from p. 1)

Create a wacky award. The Michigan Lawsuit Abuse Watch group uses the lighter side of liability to make its point about the dangers of frivolous lawsuits in an attention-getting fashion. The Wacky Warning Label contest, now in its eighth year, asks consumers to nominate ridiculous warning labels that are a sign of our litigious society. First prize in 2005? A toilet brush label that reads: “Do not use for personal hygiene.” The story was picked up by the Associated Press and ran in newspapers throughout the U.S.

Distribute a tip sheet. According to Publicity Hound Joan Stewart, editors love quick reads like “9 tips for choosing an employee benefit advisor.” What information can you turn into a checklist or Top 10 for the media — as well as for your customers?



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Steal This Idea: Online Savvy

THINK ALL THE GOOD domain names are taken? Maybe not for long. Check deleteddomains.com for recently expired names and those due to expire within 24 hours. Searching is free, but paid registration gets you the complete list at costs starting at less than \$10 for the week.

HOW CAN YOU DRIVE as much traffic as cheaply and effortlessly as possible to your site? Don't overlook common domain name misspellings that relate to your topic. Presentation pro Fred Gleek grabbed speeking.com and pointed it to his main e-commerce site for professional speakers. A \$10 investment has yielded thousands of dollars in sales, according to Gleek.

TURN COMMON SEARCH TERMS relating to your products and services into domain names. Rather than spending big bucks on keywords, Gleek registers domains such as CertifiedSpeakingProfessional.com and points them to his site.

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Customer Contact's a Snap with Complete Ezine

It's 2 am and you're frantically pulling together content for your next email newsletter. You've promoted it as a monthly publication, but between writing the copy and formatting the layout, customers are lucky if they hear from you once every six months.

For many marketers, this scenario is way too familiar. But regular distribution of an online newsletter is one of the best ways to build — and maintain — business. That's why Fahoury Ink and Jane Tabachnick e-Marketing have partnered to launch *The Complete Ezine*, a one-stop service for companies that recognize the benefits of an online newsletter but simply can't take the time to create one from scratch.

Though the intention is good, most businesses fall short on execution — finding the time to develop useful, interesting newsletter content that a customer would actually want to read, then distributing it on a consistent schedule. *The Complete Ezine* removes this major hurdle for communicating with customers on a regular basis. Subscribers to *The Complete Ezine* service receive a professionally written, designed and formatted e-newsletter to send out to their customers and prospects each month. Subscribers simply insert their logo and hit "send," using their established Constant Contact or other email account.

Currently, *The Complete Ezine* offers "SmallBizBuzz," which includes content of interest to small business owners, managers, and staff. Now in development are additional newsletters for markets such as consumer healthcare, accounting, and the bridal industry.

Complete Ezine products are compatible with major mailing services such as Constant Contact and MailerMailer, as well as most email service providers. For details: www.completeezine.com.

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"Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will
take you everywhere." Albert Einstein (1879-1955)
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Four Tips for Better DM Results

Get a jump on your next direct response campaign with these easy tactics for boosting ROI:

Improve your offer. In classic direct mail, the offer is still king. Is yours as powerful as it could be? Play with various terms, premiums, and benefits to see what pulls best. Whatever you do, be sure to include an expiration date.

Include a P.S. Still the most widely read real estate when using a letter format. Use this hot spot to reinforce a major selling

point or reiterate a response deadline.

Test a postage-paid reply card. Even if the bulk of your orders are via phone or online, the lowly BRC is still shown to improve response rates — its very presence commands a response.

Make it members only. Instead of customers, refer to your mailing audience as club members. Distribute membership cards and promote private sale days to engender undying loyalty and a warm feeling of exclusivity.



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Need a better way to
keep in touch with
customers? Meet *The
Complete Ezine*...see
page 3!



Off the Bookshelf

Briefs for Building Better Brands

Allan Gorman

An AGCD BrandSpa Book ©2004

Over the past two decades, the concept of branding has become all the rage. Why? Because marketers have come to appreciate the tremendous power of a familiar identity in selling tons of product, often at premium prices.

But what exactly IS your brand? Not your company name, or a snazzy logo, or a terrific tagline, regardless of how clever or evocative those things might be. All are mere articulations of your brand, according to Allan Gorman, author of *Briefs for Building Better Brands*.

Instead, your brand is something much more enticing and intangible. It's your company's "story" — or, rather, the story that people tell when someone asks them about your product or service.

Gorman himself tells a powerful story in *Briefs*, a collection of essays drawn from his online musings that fellow author and marketing auteur Jay Conrad Levinson calls "mandatory reading."

Using mostly first-person experiences, Gorman builds a compelling case for what he terms "brand delight" — the positive perceptions and experiences that your customers have, and hopefully will share with other like-minded individuals.

From the importance of your company's visual message to the high price of procrastination, this little handbook packs a powerhouse punch. Through engaging stories and telling examples, each stand-alone chapter reminds us that brand

delight means indeed sweating the small stuff...every day.

Book bonus: *Briefs for Building Better Brands* also includes a copy of Gorman's popular Brand IQ test. This eye-opening self-assessment tool is also available online at the author's website, agcd.com.

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