What you should demand from your print-on-demand site

An online order site makes it easy to select and personalize brochures, mail campaigns and other marketing materials. But is your site as flexible as it should be?

• **Sourcing freedom.** A system that can accommodate multiple vendors gives you the ability to optimize performance and cost. A closed system may be free, but it’s no bargain.

• **Ability to customize.** A custom feature requested by the field or by management could make you more efficient, but only if the site provider will work with you. Look for a provider who supports your business goals.

• **Onboarding process.** Programmatic help with transitioning from your existing order process assures field acceptance and long-term success. Print on demand is flexible technology to sharpen marketing results. The technology behind your POD order site should be flexible so you make the most of print on demand.

Relevance rules with consumers

Relevant, personalized offers get better results with consumers, and irrelevant messages may cause them to say “goodbye,” according to a recent survey conducted by the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council and InfoPrint Solutions Company. Thirty percent of respondents say personalized offers, in both print and e-mail, inspire them to do business with a company, while 48 percent “sometimes” do so. On the other hand, 46 percent of consumers who opt out or unsubscribe to e-mails cite irrelevant messages as the reason. Four out of 10 say they would consider ending a brand relationship due to irrelevant promotions — whether print or e-mail. An additional 22 percent would definitely defect.

‘You’ve got mail’ x 9,000

Think your inbox is full now? Give it a few years. A new report from Forrester Research predicts that consumers will receive more than 9,000 marketing e-mails a year by 2014, when spending on e-mail marketing is forecast to reach $2 billion. The report also projects marketers will waste $144 million on e-mail messages that never reach their primary targets because of spam filters, poor list management and inefficient mailing practices. In addition, increased inbox clutter will discourage consumers from viewing marketing e-mails. Increased relevance and personalization will be critical for e-mail marketing messages to break through.

Green still growing

While some dismissed green marketing as a fad that would go the way of the pet rock, a new survey of marketing executives shows green marketing messages are proliferating as consumers reward companies that use them. Among survey respondents, 28 percent say green marketing is more effective than other marketing messages, and 82 percent plan to increase their spending on green marketing. Green is also getting buy-in from management: 46 percent of decision makers believe that green marketing is more effective. Consumer support for green products and companies continues to grow as well, according to a separate 2009 survey conducted by marketing consultant BBMG. The results showed that 67 percent of Americans believe “even in tough economic times, it is important to purchase products with social and environmental benefits” and 51 percent are “willing to pay more” for them.
Are birds flapping more efficiently this spring?

Brian,

As the pace of business accelerates this spring, marketers are looking for ways to reach customers, reduce cost per contact and keep up with front-running technologies. You might wonder, on some sunny day with an outdoor lunch, if even the birds are flying easier, faster, with a more aggressive sense of purpose.

To get more from marketing communications, consider new possibilities in some age-old formats, like the news release. Our first story has tips on how to scoop traditional media and get your news out to customers.

Welcome kits are another marketing mainstream with something extra to offer today — rich personalization. Check our story for metrics on the value of this very basic relationship tool. Relax and test your knowledge of classic taglines in “Tag, you’re it!” In “4 steps to 10% more newsletter participation.”

In essentials, our goal is to help you execute more effectively on marketing plans. Call me if you see a strategy here you’d like to know more about. Here’s wishing you a highly productive spring season!

Sincerely,

Ron Dreening
Vice President, Sales and Marketing
800.883.1156
rdreening@whateverittakes.com

Let’s talk essentials …

Marketing requires more than product knowledge. It requires insight. It’s essential that you understand exactly where in the market your opportunities are and utilize the most effective communications to keep your company “top of mind” for customers and prospects alike.

Let us show you how our targeted customer marketing programs achieve maximum results through:

■ Education and cross-sell/upsell opportunities
■ Loyalty rewards programs
■ Channel marketing solutions

Let’s discuss what we can do for you.

800.883.1156

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About the Publisher

Since 1992, Progressive Impressions International (Pii) has worked with corporate marketers to develop programs with personalization to support sales representatives working from local offices and stores. Pii has the resources to design, implement and update complete marketing solutions to keep pace with your changing needs. Pii specializes in maximizing customer relationships through education, cross-sell/upsell and channel marketing solutions to capture the full lifetime value of your customers.

WhatsoeverItTakes.com

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Segmented Campaigns to Increase Participation in Newsletter Programs

Target Segment | Total in Segment | Orders | Success Rate
--- | --- | --- | ---
Q1 | 878 | 46 | 5.2%
Q2 | 161 | 11 | 6.8%
Q3 | 817 | 63 | 7.7%
O4 | 824 | 33 | 4.0%

Rebecca Manning is an Insurance Unit Director at Pii. As a Certified Direct Marketer, her professional focus is on helping clients maximize their return on customer-retention programs. Reach her at rmanning@whateverittakes.com or 954-956-3349.

Year-end findings

The Q4 telephone campaign lasted only seven weeks, shortened due to year-end holidays. Even so, 824 calls to agents licensed to sell investment products yielded 33 orders and a success rate of 4 percent.

The calls were preceded by an e-mail blast as in Q3, but there was no gift card or other incentive. Instead, the e-mail promoted the business benefit of participating in the newsletter’s spring issue — reaching customers at the height of tax season with articles about IRAs. Orders from the Q4 campaign nudged participation totals for all newsletters up to 10 percent increase for the year.

The Pii project achieved its success with a modest investment of resources. This was possible because of strategic targeting in each campaign, and carrying out the campaigns in a series (rather than in a single, complex campaign). The success of the gift card in Q3 draws attention to the power of a monetary incentive, especially when cost is a pain point. Notably, e-mail delivers the incentive at a low cost, though the cost of the gift card drives up the total for the campaign.

Segmenting and message relevance can obtain strong results at a lower overall cost, as seen in the Q1 and Q4 campaigns to lapsed subscribers and registered agents. Whichever methodology you choose, a strategic approach to participation can drive higher performance from your ongoing marketing programs.
Newsletters and retention programs in general often receive little promotional support from corporate marketing departments. The assumption is that enrollment will find its level and stay there indefinitely. If Isaac Newton had been a marketer instead of a scientist, he might have set forth a Marketing Law of Inertia: Ongoing programs tend to keep on going.

A yearlong project at Pii shows enrollment can improve with a modest push. In this project, for a major property and casualty insurer, we used a series of telephone and e-mail campaigns to increase agent participation in newsletter programs by 10 percent.

Targeting was key in getting cost-effective results. We carried out four campaigns, one per quarter and each directed to a strategic subset of insurance agents. By reaching out to segments, rather than the entire agent force, we were able to keep staffing

By Rebecca Manning
Long, long ago — back before about 1996, when “Internet” started to become a household word — businesses and organizations used news releases to release news. Even more astonishing, a news release was one of the fastest ways to spread the word about everything from new products to earnings statements.

Today, a traditional news release is one of the slowest ways to get the word out. You still might send announcements to newspapers and industry publications. But your news won’t appear in old-fashioned ink until after making a splash via various Web sites, blogs and tweets.

Thanks to the Internet, you can now communicate directly to your audience. Instead of the media deciding how your news is published — or if it is published at all — you call the shots. Participating in a trade show? Expanding into a new market? Taking part in a community service project? From now on, you dictate when and by whom your message gets heard.

Some of the old rules remain: To generate interest, your news releases must be relevant, timely and well-written. Because they are often disseminated without a media filter, your news releases also need to maintain:

[Reader focus] Readers don’t care what your product does; they want to know how it can help them.

[Concise, jargon-free language] If you’re writing exclusively for a specialized audience, technical language may be appropriate. Otherwise, keep it simple and clear.

[Strong call to action] State the desired action clearly and place it prominently: buy this product, watch a free demo, mark your calendar.

Once you’ve put together the perfect news release, what’s the best way to get it out there? Start with your corporate Web site. It’s your news and you deserve the “scoop.” To drive interest and traffic, put exclusive details on your site and use links to give readers a path to more information. Or send each recipient a personalized URL (PURL) that offers a one-to-one greeting and messaging.

Coming up with a great tagline is a struggle many companies face. More often than not, they get it wrong by focusing on what their product or service is rather than what it offers.

The intangible offering
Service corporations, such as banks, brokerage firms or insurance companies, are challenged by the intangibility of their offerings. This can make it difficult for consumers to connect emotionally, so developing strategies to overcome the intangibility is critical to acceptance in the marketplace.

One way to accomplish this is to create a brand logo that serves as a tangible symbol of service or benefit, such as the Allstate® “good hands” or the Travelers’ “umbrella.” These symbols convey the benefit of protection, just as the Prudential’s “rock” represents solid financial advice and security. Effective taglines can also communicate brand benefits or attributes and help service marketers overcome the intangibility of their offerings.

What’s in a comparison?
When it comes to advertising campaigns, trouble and potential liability lurk if you’re not careful. Taglines don’t stand alone — they are one part of a brand cluster or advertising/marketing campaign. Many national advertising campaigns — and particularly comparative campaigns — seem contentious. Burger King’s® mocking Wendy’s® for serving baked potatoes, and PCs are standing up to Macs in the latest “I’m a PC” ads. Don’t let such spirited campaigns convince you that this is a no-holds-barred arena. Far from it. Advertisers face scrutiny from federal and state governments, competitors, consumers and the marketing industry itself. Depending on who challenges the ad and how it’s challenged, the advertiser’s burden and legal exposure will vary.

Tackling the powerline
What is your company’s tagline? Does it work for only you? Is it relevant to who you are, what you do, the services and benefits you offer? Is it simple, positive, benefit-driven, original, memorable and meaningful? Is it short and powerful, evocative and inspiring? If so, you have struck gold. Because when it comes to marketing, nothing can have more impact than a powerful tagline.

Ellen Schneider, Esquire, is a Chartered Life Underwriter and a Senior Copywriter at Pi specializing in insurance and financial. She is a frequent contributor to issentials and can be reached at eschneider@whatevertakes.com or 954-956-3201.

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Answers:
Tag... you're it. Or are you?

By Ellen Schneider, Esq.

Quick! Which companies wielded these famous taglines?

- Fly the friendly skies
- Have it your way
- Where’s the beef?
- Give the gift of life
- Don’t leave home without it

You can find the answers below, but our guess is that you already know. Why? Because these are great taglines that enhance the companies’ advertising and make their business more memorable in the minds of consumers. A bad tagline — well, it can be detrimental to a company’s brand health.

So should you or shouldn’t you tag?

Take it from an experienced researcher, marketing professional, copywriter and lawyer — it depends. Sometimes called tags, straplines or powerlines, taglines distill your corporate brand or identity to a few simple but memorable words. At its best, a tagline should be your unique selling proposition — the core benefit that comes from using your company’s product or service. And it should reflect how your company positions itself vis-a-vis your competitors: You want your target audience to remember what you stand for. Tag … you’re it.

What makes a good tagline?

The best taglines are short, powerful summations that companies use alongside their logos to drive brand messages home to consumers. Think: “Just do it” and “We try harder.” These are powerful, breakthrough taglines because they are inextricably linked to their brand. These phrases evoke an image of the product so that without even hearing or seeing the company’s name, the consumer recognizes the brand.

How’d they come up with that?

Not quickly and often not easily. A well-crafted tagline should evolve from your company’s branding strategy to ensure that the key tag phrase identifies your business by capturing mission, promise and brand.

Tags typically take on one of the following eight forms:

1. An imperative call to action: Just do it. (Nike)
2. An emotive call to action: When you care enough to send the very best. (Hallmark)
3. A product feature linked with an abstract need: A diamond is forever. (De Beers)
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8. A clever tie to the name: Every kiss begins with Kay. (Kay Jewelers)

Tags are not a branding requirement but rather a differentiator. If your logo and other branding elements allow you to communicate benefits and stand out in your niche, you may not need a tagline.

News release distribution services are in the business of getting your information before the eyes of major online outlets and industry-specific sites. The right service will also optimize your visibility in search engines, putting you nearer the top tier of results and garnering more hits. However, cost and quality vary, so shop for services that will provide the best value and fit.

Keep in mind that news release distributors, online news providers and search engine optimization services rely on keywords to drive traffic. Use words closely identified with your business in the headline, lead, title tag and text of your news release, as well as in the keyword fields of your search engine optimization tool.

SOCIAL STUDIES

If you know your industry well, you know its most-read bloggers. Send your release to as many of them as possible. If necessary, tweak the headline and body copy to fit a particular blogger’s area of specialty.

News releases on social media sites are sometimes called “social media releases,” and you will find many free Web sites that can drive traffic to your information. Popular options include Docstoc.com for document hosting, YouTube.com for video hosting and Delicious.com for sharing “bookmarks” or online resources.

For most social media outlets, you need to create a corporate account before uploading your news release and other materials. (Use your company’s logo as your profile image.) You may also want to post a condensed release on Twitter, with a link to the Web for details.

Provide direct links from your corporate site to your social media pages, and update social media information often to keep the content fresh for your network of “friends.”

STUDY, LEARN AND REFINE

As with any aspect of your communications plan, you need to continually refine the effectiveness of your news releases.

Track click-through and usage rates to determine which releases and offers are generating excitement. Meet with your sales force and marketing team to share frontline insight into how news releases can help achieve organizational goals. Ruthlessly examine copy, graphic elements and delivery methods.

News releases have been around for generations. With the right tools and a fresh approach, they can still be a vital part of a cutting-edge marketing strategy in the world of instant communications.

Quick!

- Fly the friendly skies
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Rich personalization creates a powerful — and cost-effective — welcome experience for university students

Who says an old dog can’t learn new tricks? How about a Welcome Kit that inspires around 30 percent of recipients to refer a friend or family member or is saved for future reference by close to 90 percent? The venerable Welcome Kit has long been useful to universities and colleges and cost-effective — welcome experience messaging reinforced over multiple channels to create a more powerful, budget-friendly welcome experience.

A major online university recently learned how cost-effective personalization can be with a redesign of its New Student Welcome Kit.

A unique university has a unique challenge

The university primarily serves a nontraditional student population and takes a unique approach that meets the needs of students who often have little or no post-secondary educational experience. One challenge was the high number of students who were admitted but never started classes. University officials felt that a personalized Welcome Kit could be key in the new student’s transition from acceptance to actual coursework.

A more personal solution

To meet the challenge, Pii created a Welcome Kit with personalized content. The kit includes a letter from the student’s dean with a message that outlines the university’s commitment to academic success. The letter references the student’s degree program and includes an identification card with the individual’s student number, degree program and a commitment statement for the student to sign.

Rather than including information about all the university’s programs, the new kit includes only the individual student’s courses and degree track, as well as tuition and fee information. Nonpersonalized items in the kit include a CD version of the university catalog and a window decal.

Step-by-step individual guidance

The most important component of the Welcome Kit is a personalized Quick Start Guide with 10 easy steps to help students prepare for class. The cover image is a replica of a university diploma personalized with the student’s name and degree. Inside, the guide offers further personalized content, including the student’s name, ID number, degree program, start date, and academic advisor’s name and contact information.

Multichannel reinforcement

Pii also created a personalized welcome e-mail, which students receive as soon as they are admitted. The e-mail alerts students to watch for the printed Welcome Kit in their mail and offers the opportunity to access an online version of the Quick Start Guide.

Survey says …

Pii surveyed students after the first kits were mailed. Among the nearly 70 percent who recalled receiving the kit:

- 86% found the content helpful
- 92% found the Welcome Kit visually appealing
- 89% saved it for future reference
- 63% completed the steps in the guidebook
- 71% read and signed the commitment statement on the back of the student ID card
- 30% referred a friend or family member to the university
- 36% called their academic advisor

Increased impact without increased spending

Because the new kits are personalized and focused on relevant information for each student, the size is smaller — only four pages instead of nine. The savings on printing and postage make it possible to produce the smaller personalized kits at the same per-unit cost as the previous generic kit. As the survey results show, the new personalized version produced an exceptional response and greater value for the university.

A lesson for all marketers

A personalized Welcome Kit can offer the same advantages in just about any industry. In addition to enhancing relevance, a digital print on demand solution means kits can be updated with new information easily, so you don’t pay for storage of preprinted inventory that can become outdated. Above all, a well-designed, well-targeted kit delivers a powerful welcome for your new customers.

Erinn Sentz is Vice President of e-Marketing at Pii, leading a team of copywriters, designers and Web strategists who specialize in developing highly effective, personalized multimedia campaigns. Reach her at esentz@whateverittakes.com or 954-956-3304.
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By Rebecca Manning

Low-cost initiative lifts participation in newsletter programs

Make a symphony of your marketing with Conductor

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For a tour of Conductor features, click Find out more at WhatEverItTakes.com.
Brian,

As the pace of business accelerates this spring, marketers are looking for ways to reach customers, reduce cost per contact and keep up with front-running technologies. You might wonder, on some sunny day as the pace of business accelerates this spring, marketers are looking more about. Here’s wishing you a highly productive spring season!

Let us show you how our targeted customer marketing programs achieve “top of mind” for customers and prospects alike.

A low-cost strategy drives up activity in customer relationships through education, cross-sell/upsell and channel marketing solutions to capture the full lifetime value of your customers.

Since 1992, Progressive Impressions International (Pii) has worked with corporate marketers to develop programs with personalization to support sales representatives working from local offices and stores. Pii has the resources to design, implement and update complete marketing solutions to keep pace with your changing needs. Pii specializes in maximizing customer relationships through education, cross-sell/upsell and channel marketing solutions to capture the full lifetime value of your customers.

Let’s talk iessentials... Marketing requires more than product knowledge. It requires insight. It’s essential that you understand exactly where in the market you opportunities are and utilizes the most effective communications to keep your company “top of mind” for customers and prospects alike. Let us show you how our targeted customer marketing programs achieve maximum results through:

- Education and cross-sell/upsell opportunities
- Loyalty rewards programs
- Channel marketing solutions

Let’s discuss what we can do for you.

800.883.1156

Peter Drenning
Vice President, Sales and Marketing
800.883.1156
rdrenning@whateverittakes.com

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About the Publisher

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News with impact for marketers today.

Year-end findings

The Q4 telephone campaign lasted only seven weeks, shortened due to year-end holidays. Even so, 834 calls to agents licensed to sell investment products yielded 55 orders and a success rate of 6.4 percent.

The calls were preceded by an e-mail blast as in Q3, but there was no gift card or other incentive. Instead, the e-mail promoted the business benefit of participating in the newsletter’s spring issue — reaching customers at the height of tax season with articles about IRAs. Orders from the Q4 campaign nudged participation totals for all newsletters up to our 10 percent increase for the year.

The Pi project achieved its success with a modest investment of resources. This was possible because of strategic targeting in each campaign, and carrying out the campaigns in a series (rather than in a single, complex campaign). The success of the gift card in Q3 draws attention to the power of a monetary incentive, especially when cost is a pain point. Notably, e-mail delivers the incentive at a low cost, though the cost of the gift card drives up the total for the campaign.

Segmenting and message relevance can obtain strong results at a lower overall cost, as seen in the Q2 and Q4 campaigns to lapsed subscribers and registered agents. Whichever methodology you choose, a strategic approach to participation can drive higher performance from your ongoing marketing programs.

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Segmented Campaigns to Increase Participation in Newsletter Programs

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<th>Total in Segment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Lapsed subscribers</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2 Elite sales group</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>11</td>
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Relevance rules with consumers

Relevant, personalized offers get better results with consumers, and irrelevant messages may cause them to say “goodbye,” according to a recent survey conducted by the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council and InfoPrint Solutions Company. Thirty percent of respondents say personalized offers, in both print and e-mail, inspire them to do business with a company, while 48 percent “sometimes” do so. On the other hand, 46 percent of consumers who opt out or unsubscribe to e-mails cite irrelevant messages as the reason. Four out of 10 say they would consider ending a brand relationship due to irrelevant promotions — whether print or e-mail. An additional 22 percent would definitely defect.

‘You’ve got mail’ x 9,000

Think your inbox is full now? Give it a few years. A new report from Forrester Research predicts that consumers will receive more than 9,000 marketing e-mails a year by 2014, when spending on e-mail marketing is forecast to reach $2 billion. The report also projects marketers will waste $144 million on e-mail messages that never reach their primary targets because of spam filters, poor list management and inefficient mailing practices. In addition, increased inbox clutter will discourage consumers from viewing marketing e-mails. Increased relevance and personalization will be critical for e-mail marketing messages to break through.

Green still growing

While some dismissed green marketing as a fad that would go the way of the pet rock, a new survey of marketing executives shows green marketing messages are proliferating as consumers reward companies that use them. Among survey respondents, 28 percent say green marketing is more effective than other marketing messages, and 82 percent plan to increase their spending on green marketing. Green is also getting buy-in from management: 46 percent of decision makers believe that green marketing is more effective. Consumer support for green products and companies continues to grow as well, according to a separate 2009 survey conducted by marketing consultant BBMG. The results showed that 67 percent of Americans believe “even in tough economic times, it is important to purchase products with social and environmental benefits” and 51 percent are “willing to pay more” for them.