

Transition to management

To groom their marketing managers, firms need to teach them the management tools needed for the position as well as how to set clear guidelines and how-tos.

As a company grows— so grows its marketing department. If a firm is fortunate enough to keep a marketing manager through its major growth spurt without burning out such a star, then the next stage becomes the ultimate challenge— elevation to a management position. There are two distinct elements of this process: the teacher and

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the student. Each participant has a learning curve associated with their respective new roles. And, interestingly enough, new managers often find themselves in the precarious position of being both the student and the teacher.

The guiding force (often the principal of a small firm) has to somehow lead the new manager, a support vehicle-type and bean counter of sorts, towards a management position. That means big-picture ideas, ownership, and leader-

ship of people. Delegating becomes the new manager's primary focus rather than burning the midnight oil on elementary tasks.

The new marketing manager must learn the tools necessary for management as well as develop talents for mentoring. While it may seem obvious that every marketing coordinator should just naturally take to becoming a manager and leader, the age-old concept of the "Peter Principle" may be worth looking into— not everyone is suited to manage.

Rather, it's about competence and, often, it's a personality type and one that's sometimes hard to flesh out until an actual opportunity arises, unfortunately, or hopefully fortunately. In order to transition into a position of leadership, a major transformation must occur in an employees' psyche— or perhaps for a true leader, the concept of ownership is innate, in which case this article should be on how to interview in order to cull an entrepreneurial personality out of the herd of those applying for a management position.

Clearly, there are those who appear to have just been born into leadership while the great majority of employee's need to be mentored and shown the route.

Writing a clear job description for the new manager and the marketing coordinator will set the parameters of the positions and offer basic paths. Before hiring a coordinator, organizing the department and developing a broad scope of tasks with "how-tos" can save time and provide a safety net for that "What if I get run over by a bus?" or "can't-remember-all-of-the-details-I-have-just-taught-or-learned" syndrome.

Every time there's a glitch or a thought of, "I can see a need for a written guideline," a marketing manager should develop a new "how-to" document. For example, "How to write a press release," which would include things like who to send it to, how to track/plan proposed releases, where to find mailing lists, etc. The list/folder can be endless: "How to hire a marketing manager," "How to hire a photographer, produce a photo shoot, work with a print broker and fulfillment house, make additions to →

Inside

Features

Transition to management. **Page 1**

Assessing search engine marketing.

Page 2

Responding to negative press.

Page 3

Portfolios

Little goes beyond green.

Page 4

Where was Rand in 1987?

Page 6

Guest Speaker

Keep your resumes healthy.

Page 7

What's Working

Short takes on actual A/E marketing tactics that are producing results. **Page 8**



Firm Index

BartonPartners.
Norristown, PA.
Page 2.

Breckenridge Group Inc.
Tucson, AZ. **Page 8.**

DiGiorgio Associates Inc.

Boston, MA. **Page 8.**

Jones Edmunds &

Associates, Inc.

Gainesville, FL. **Page 3.**

Little, Charlotte, NC.

Page 4.

Payette & Associates,

Inc. Boston, MA.

Page 8.

Rand Engineering &

Architecture, PC. New

York, NY. **Page 6.**

SEO 1 Services. Dallas,
TX. **Page 2.**

Shaw Environmental &

Infrastructure, Inc.

Baton Rouge, LA.

Page 7.

The Beck Group. Dallas,

TX. **Page 3.**

Thomas P. Cox

Architects, Inc. (TCA).

Irvine, CA. **Page 3.**

WinSpin CIC, Inc.

Fredericksburg, VA.

Page 2.

Next issue:

Read about the emergence of the Chief Marketing Officer position.



the web site.” Charts with specific tasks associated with annual events like office parties and trade shows or conference show booths help the new coordinator so that few details fall through the cracks of what may have been learned or missed during training.

Know the differences

Up until this point, there is little distinction between manager and coordinator—both produce task charts. However, a clear difference in the job expectations can be illuminated through the example of the marketing budget. The marketing coordinator enters daily details such as the cost of flowers for a party. The manager thinks about the budget from a bird’s perspective high above. The thinking for the latter entails a general grasp of overall costs, the idea of anticipating market downturns that may require nimble and quick adjustments to the marketing plan and budget in order to cut costs, or a need to advertise more frequently if a marketing sector shows a decline. The manager will be responsible for the “what’s missing” component.

For instance, a 300-person party, with a full bar, and a meal with all of the trimmings, will not cost \$10K in Washington, D.C. The manager should be looking for numbers like \$40K or higher. So when a budget lands on the manager’s desk with a figure of \$10K, the error should be immediately noticed and adjusted accordingly. A marketing coordinator focused on the details could easily miss one major item not entered. They are busy checking for minutia, verifying invoices against a current budget, or entering costs associated with individuals’ networking events. A manager works with the principals to develop a strategic yearly marketing plan that parallels the budget. The principals will rely on this person to stay within the budget, keep the plan on course, and target and continue in a consistent and productive pace. A great manager shows the marketing coordinator how to eyeball a budget and gain that conceptual expertise.

A good manager exercises, takes vacations, and goes to conferences that can

expand his or her outlook. It should be in a job description, but these important personal care items can often be overlooked by even the most well-intentioned principals. A relaxed and informed manager puts out fires fast—and with imaginative solutions—and has the energy to be proactive instead of reactive and the ability to act like an owner with vigor, kindness, and tolerance.

The process from marketing coordinator to manager can be painful or fun. The transition requires a well-thought-out plan and mentors who understand that exceptional training for the position will garner the best results. Simply elevating a person to the position without proper guidance will most likely produce a poor manager or, worse, a newly disgruntled employee. Making it fun, giving them permission to fail, and showing empathy and encouragement will produce a wonderful leader with ownership qualities. ■

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Assessing search engine marketing

Learn why many A/E firms are shying away from paying to market themselves via search engines, yet still monitor their placement on Google and Yahoo!

Just as the Internet has changed the way in which we find a restaurant for dinner, shop for birthday presents, and communicate with far-away friends and clients, it also has the potential to revolutionize the way A/E firms advertise themselves. More and more, A/E firms are turning their web sites into marketing tools, drawing potential clients and prospective employees.

But what about the impact of Google, Yahoo!, and other search engines? Are A/E firms tapping into their potential in web advertising for turning a profit? Not according to some marketing

professionals, who are cautious about spending money as a “sponsored” advertiser on these well-traveled sites.

However, marketing professionals warn, don’t ignore the text that appears when your firm’s name turns up as a search result; the brief bit of text beneath your firm’s name could either pull in a job seeker or a client interested in your services, or push them to look for a more search-engine savvy A/E firm.

Relying on tried-and-true methods

Nicole Benner, marketing manager at **BartonPartners** (Norristown, PA), a 60-person full-service architecture and land planning firm, says her company does not advertise as a “sponsored link” on search engines for a variety of reasons, and believes that very few of her competitors are advertising via search engines.

“We’re a traditional firm, and it is hard to justify the outlay of advertising dollars—which are tight as it is—on ‘new’ methods that are untried as yet in our industry,” she says. “We’ve just begun utilizing our web site (www.bartonpartners.com) as a sales tool and, because we are just beginning to plumb the depths of our ‘natural’ search abilities, we’re hesitant to invest money into sponsored links without fully exploring our free options first.”

Choosing words carefully

But that doesn’t mean the firm has ignored its web identity. In July 2007, BartonPartners connected with search engine optimization firm **SEO 1 Services** (Dallas, TX).

“Before we went forward with the expense of buying sponsored links, we decided to first utilize search engine optimization (SEO) techniques and improve our ‘natural’ rankings,” Benner says.

BartonPartners is already seeing results of this partnership: in a web search of the firm name, the company has jumped from page three to page one, and often comes up as the first or second listing.

The firm selects the text that appears on the search engine page under the

