A Star-Gazing, 3D Branding Campaign Delights Clients

By Marilynn Deane Mendel

Branding campaigns need to keep their momentum. They need to be consistent and for Hickok Cole Architects, they need to be fun. We have kept a “LOOK” campaign as a constant throughout the last three years of branding the firm using simple ads with tag lines like “Look Up” set over an image of a class A office building. Words like “vision, visionary designers, looking forward,” have all played a central part of the brand message. (see “Through the Looking Glass: A Brand New Vision,” *A/E Rainmaker*, May 2006). It was imperative to fold the LOOK campaign into our 2008 marketing plan.

Few things catch Washingtonians’ eyes, so I knew the firm’s 20th anniversary had to start with a splash, and be jazzy throughout the year to draw people to our web site. And, I wanted to bring in a new element. Out-of-town “star” architects have steadily moved into the local scene, so I wanted to show that Hickok Cole Architects are STAR architects as well.

I like a play on words when approaching clients. It has always paid off with an overwhelmingly positive response. It worked with the “Big Brand Ranch” party invitation the previous year. (see “Rebranding Continues,” *A/E Rainmaker*, June 2006). In this case, I thought that calling attention to ‘local’ star architects for an entire year might put a subliminal buzz in the local developers’ ears.

I started with a concept of 3D glasses to view 3D images of our buildings on our web site. In addition, I laid out the social marketing component that would go with the plan, the ways to draw people to the web site, and the gift that would tie everything together and make a big splash right from the start — electronic telescopes that worked from computer-generated disks.

All 35,000 glasses would have to be consecutively numbered, for tracking the prize drawings, (that’s five mailings over the year). The winning numbers would be posted on the web site, along with a “star chart” for each month, 3D images of the firm’s buildings, prizes of designer eyeglass frames, a link to the NASA space satellite, and a “star gallery” for photos of people seen around town wearing their 3D glasses. In my mind, I could see these glasses everywhere.

I wanted to foreshadow the campaign with a holder for the first glasses to keep them on people’s desk for the year, as well as build enthusiasm for what was to come. I envisioned a magnetic holder with five pairs of wild and crazy glasses hanging on people’s filing cabinets, and my passion and belief became electric — total buy-in from the start. After that it became a total team effort.

The graphic designer at Hickok Cole, Sarah Barr, has produced complicated campaigns that won national awards, and are fun, yet sophisticated. Yolanda Cole came up with “20/20 vision,” and a special type of star chart to go with the telescope. Sarah researched how to produce 3D glasses and developed a budget that made us all take a deep breath. Michael Hickok laughed as he said that “three years ago he never would have approved a 3D glasses campaign.”

The final version has Hickok Cole’s best projects inside a star-shaped image, with a holder for the glasses, and a holiday card inside a clear red envelop with stars printed on it, and a postage stamp with an image from “Star Wars.” While Sarah worked out the printing solutions, Noel Carson and Jennifer Afflerbach coordinated the delivery, wrapping, and the personalized gift card signing for the 250 telescopes. It took more time figuring out how to wrap the (31"x10"x15") object than it did to organize most everything else.

Sarah found red nylon laundry bags for $3 each. We had a fulfillment house remove the outside box and price tag, then insert the inner box. We picked them up with a van and hand delivered the telescopes to Hickok Cole’s clients and prized contacts. The team tied a silver ribbon, star chart, and signed card to each package as they drove throughout the city.

Two days later the phones rang off the hook. E-mails poured in from all over the city. (It was the first time we ever had people call us and ask us for a gift). Our clients were delighted as revealed by the following comments.

“You have all lost your minds! I just got back to my office and found a

(Cont. next page)

A Star-Gazing, 3D Branding Campaign Delights Clients (cont.)

telescope in it. WOW! I took astronomy in college and as a sailor the stars at night have saved my bacon offshore many times. I am blown away with your generosity and I am extremely touched."

"Yolanda and Mike: what an over-the-top and wonderful gift. Wow. I can't thank you enough...although I'm across from Verizon Center, I promise to use the telescope to look skyward only."

"Thank you both so much for the wonderful, unnecessary but very much appreciated telescope! My children and I assembled it and stargazed over the weekend in the mountains. The bitter cold brought with it a beautifully clear night sky which we enjoyed in shifts due to the one-degree temperature! Thank you very much. It is a very thoughtful gift and one which we will use often."

"Thank you so much for the telescope. My 5 ½ year old is so excited, he was actually asking for one for his birthday. He loves science and the stars. Please thank your other associates as well, we really appreciate it. This was a refreshing change from a lot of the other things you receive in this business."

"Many thanks!!! for the ultra cool gift! There is no end to your creativity and we can't wait to use our telescope."

"Great marketing idea! Splashy, fun, clever. And congratulations on your anniversary!"

Don't take our word for it - go to the Hickok Cole web site and take a look at some of the people who have sent in their pictures. www.hickokcole.com.

Marilynn Deane Mendel, President , Win*Spin*, CIC, Inc., Creative Intelligence Consulting. Call her at 540-207-4045, or
e-mail: mmend125@aol.com.

Rainmaker Resource:

Tracking Down a Contact

By Ford Harding

Tracking down and talking to people you went to school with or worked with earlier in your life can be great fun and generate leads for lots of new business.

This is even truer of old clients. One person I know had consulted to a financial services mega-corporation for years, when a sudden change in the CEO put most of his contacts at the company on the street looking for work. He stayed in touch with about ten of the most senior ones who quickly found jobs in other organizations. Three of these brought his firm in with them.

Three years later he took a look at a list of other people he had known at the mega-corporation who were no longer there and with whom he had lost touch. He tracked down fifteen more. One of them bought $1,000,000 worth of services this year. The ballot is out on many of the others.

Finding old contacts is easier that it has ever been, because of the power of the Internet. Lifehacker.com has just posted an article entitled, *How to Track Down Anyone on Line*. This is a valuable source for finding people whom you have misplaced over the years.

But, before we give in and do it the easy way, let's be sure it is the best way. In the old days (just yesterday, if you are my age), finding a lost contact often meant calling mutual friends who might know where he/she had gone. You might have to contact three people before finding someone who knew where the contact could be found.

Not as efficient as a Google search, it provided a wonderful excuse to call other people with whom you wanted to reconnect. You can call up someone you haven't talked with for years and say, "Remember me. I know it's been too long since we last talked. I was trying to track down Bev Binder and thought you might know how to reach her. But first, how have things been going for you since we last talked?"

Having an adequate reason for calling is a challenge for most professionals just starting out to develop new business. Tracking down a contact is a ready-made reason for calling lots of dormant prospects. Don't let new technology seduce you away from taking advantage of it.

Ford Harding is the author of *Rain Making: Attract New Clients No Matter What Your Field,* the newly released and updated edition of his well-known book. This article is adapted from his blog, which can be accessed at www.HardingCo.com/blog/. He can be reached at 973-763-9284 or by e-mail at fharding@HardingCo.com

April, 2008
Volume 4, Number 4

A/E Rainmaker

A Publication of
PSMJ Resources, Inc.

The Guide to Attracting and Keeping Great Clients

In This Issue

Public Relations Programs Offer Third-Party Credibility

By Kimberly Kayler, CPSM

Public relations are the formal way in which organizations communicate with their greater audience. It is planned or managed communication – a means to influence and sometimes even sell your services. The PR medium provides the necessary third-party credibility you cannot achieve with advertising and can be a cost-effective means to build a brand. In an advertisement, you control completely the message that you create and purchase. In public relations, you lose much of your control but in exchange you get the opportunity to influence greater communities. Public relations requires a consistent and concerted effort – it is not as simple as sending one press release. True public relations success is achieved by developing a program that carefully delivers a key consistent message to target audiences.

Assembling Your Plan and Media List

A public relations program requires the same planning effort as any other marketing or sales effort. Start by figuring out what stories you have to tell and then determine who would have an interest in your message. When you develop your target media lists, be sure to go beyond the obvious business and daily papers and include association newsletters, industry trades, as well as market-specific publications. What publications are sitting in your office? More important, what publications are sitting in the office of your current and prospective clients?

Your media list should contain each publication name, complete editorial contact information, website address, key information on topics found on the editorial calendar, style and editorial theme information, circulation, as well as how editors like to receive information. Don't mail a release to an editor that prefers fax, and don't call an editor that prefers e-mail. Learn their preferences, likes and dislikes, just like you would with any other business prospect.

Developing Your Message

Some of the best stories can be found through conversations with your staff. What is unique about the project they are working on? Have you done more of something than anyone else? Can you tie a project to a larger trend in the industry? Will a new building you are involved in constructing have an impact on the local economy? Be sure you have a good read on whether or not the publication audience and the editorial contacts will have any interest in a story before you send them your idea. Your job is to sell your story idea and your company's role, and the secret to successfully landing coverage lies in understanding your target audience and how your story meets their needs.

(cont. on page 2)

Public Relations Programs Offer Third-Party Credibility (Cont from Page 1)

Launching your program
First identify your motivation for wanting to see your name in print (e.g., sales tool, create an awareness of your firm/employees as the experts in their field, opportunity to launch a new technology) and then brainstorm a variety of story concepts around this theme. Be sure to go beyond upper management in these discussions as key project team members are likely to be involved in the creation of the story, and their early ideas will make for a stronger concept when presented to editors. After creating five-to-seven story concepts and the necessary media list, begin developing relationships with editors. Be patient. Since public relations offer the big reward of third-party credibility in the marketplace, you must first earn credibility with the media.

Finally, at any step along the way if you get in over your head, hire a freelance writer that specializes in your industry. A well-written press release or story concept by someone that clearly understands the industry will quickly find its way to the top of an editor's inbox.

Without a goal for your public relations program, how will you measure its success? There are a variety of methods to measure the effectiveness of your PR efforts – ranging from comparing space received with the cost of buying equal advertising space, to expensive market research of those reading target publications. But, for a start-up program, simply identifying key stories and key publications/audiences you would like to target is the reasonable means to measure your success. Your goal should not merely be ink and coverage, but rather delivery of your key messages. Think of it this way – your firm does not strive to respond to 100 RFPs and develop proposals. Rather, your goal is to get 25 interviews as a result of your proposal efforts. Develop this same mindset for public relations efforts and set a goal based on the delivery of your firm as a solution.

Working with the Media
Based on countless conversations with editors, it is obvious that many fail in their PR efforts simply because they lack good old-fashioned people skills. Editors are like any other business person – they have deadlines, families, bosses and feelings. Treat them with the same respect you would any other industry colleague or sales prospect. This includes being honest, positive and respectful of deadlines. If you don't have an answer to a question, tell the reporter or editor you will find out. Inquire about their deadline and then follow-through. Also make sure you are reachable. Nothing is worse than sending information to a publication and then being unreachable when an editor has interest in your story. Include cellular phone, e-mail address and a second contact if necessary on all correspondence.

In addition to being reachable, commit to serving as a resource. Most editors and writers today know a little about a lot of things, so educating them is encouraged. Be sure to provide your editorial contacts with background information that will make their job easier. Serving as a resource is a great way to build a relationship.

Finally, don't make the mistake of thinking a purchased ad gives you the right to demand editorial coverage. Most publications keep a strict distinction between purchased advertising and the editorial coverage their readers deserve. However, if you do receive an editorial opportunity as a result of your advertising dollars, recognize that this is an opportunity to clearly educate your target audience about your unique selling proposition in a third-party manner. Contrary to what many experts suggest, I recommend placing your ad on a different page than your editorial coverage so it does not appear as if you "purchased the article."

Kimberly Kayler is President of Constructive Communication, Inc. With a decade of high-level experience serving engineering, architecture and construction firms as a corporate marketing executive, Kimberly started Constructive Communication in 2001 to serve the needs of technical and professional service firms. She is the author of more than 750 published articles. She can be reached at: 614-873-6706 or kkayler@constructivecommunication.com.

The Future Is Yours — BRAND It!

Marketing today for tomorrow's client should start with a BRAND beginning.

Q: When you're up against five equally qualified firms, how do you differentiate yourself from your competition?

A: By knowing & demonstrating your BRAND.

What is a BRAND? Your brand is the sum total of the unique elements and characteristics that differentiate you from your competition. It comprises all the impressions your clients and prospects have of your company — your qualities, character, culture, and vision. It's how you do business. A strong brand pre-qualifies you in your client's mind, and positions you as the only choice for the project. Yet, while every A/E/C firm has a brand — good, bad, or indifferent — few take the time to define it, hone it, and apply it to every aspect of their business.

How to build your BRAND. Brand-building requires that you understand and accept a simple truth: it's not about you. It's about your client. Begin by looking at every aspect of your business through your client's eyes. Where does your true value lie — beyond providing quality work, on time and on budget? To answer this question, gather together your principals, project managers, and marketing staff to define the value and benefits clients receive by working with you. Next, explore where you stand in the marketplace. Conduct perception assessments with your past and present clients, and industry peers.

Integrate the results of these two exercises to define your "story" — the fundamentals of why and how you conduct your business. This is far more than a mission statement. It's the guiding principle for your every business action, from how you answer your telephone to how you deliver a project.

Your brand should answer these questions:

- What do our clients need?
- How can we answer these needs better than anyone else?
- What makes us believe we can do this better than our competition?
- Is our company culture and personality focused on our clients and their needs?
- Does everyone in our company understand and live our culture?
- And most importantly — why should clients choose us?

Once your brand is defined, it must be embraced by everyone in your firm. It should be the foundation and benchmark of your every marketing communication, from stationery, website, qualifications packages, PowerPoint presentations, brochures, advertising, and direct mail. Put the power of your brand to work today, and the future will be yours!

From Crumb Topics: Bligh Graphics. Contact: carolyn@blighgraphics.com, or go to: www.blighgraphics.com.

PR Tips from Editors

- ♦ Understand the publication you are sending information to.
- ♦ Don't be self-serving. A brochure or ad is not a press release.
- ♦ If you don't have a good writer on staff, hire one.
- ♦ Realize that your copy may be edited. An editor does not have to run anything you send them word-for-word.
- ♦ Don't send an editor an e-mail message with a large file attached. In fact, many editors won't even accept attachments unless they know who you are. Be sure to put the copy of your article or news pitch in the e-mail message itself.
- ♦ Do follow-up, but don't simply call to see if they received the release. Call with industry information and details on why the release is a fit for their publication.
- ♦ Persistence is important in getting a message out, but there is a fine-line between persistence and pestering.
- ♦ If you have photographs, send them along. Editors love visuals, and you could even get better coverage.
- ♦ Do date your information and include a variety of ways to contact you.
- ♦ Send only relevant material to an editor, or they end up feeling spammed.

Seminar Marketing Brings In More Than Attendees

A seminar can be a rewarding and ultimately profitable marketing tool for introducing your firm's services and personnel to a wide spectrum of existing and prospective clients in a setting that you orchestrate and control. When planned properly, a seminar program can turn a local firm into a nationally-known one. This is especially true in specialty market areas.

Seminars can range from a few hours to one or two days and can be held in your office, a client's office, hotel or conference center, and in the case of webinars, over the internet by a web-hosting facility. They are a good venue to showcase your expertise in areas such as solar design, hazardous waste, health care, green building, technology or commercial development.

The three basic elements to conducting a seminar include:
1. Planning and preparation.
2. Execution and coordination.
3. Follow-up with participants.

The ingredients for a successful seminar include the following:
- A subject of interest to clients.
- A roster of qualified speakers.
- An adequate facility.
- The credibility to host the subject.
- A list of interested attendees.
- An opportunity for networking.
- A valuable take-home package.

From *Marketing To Win: PSMJ's Guide to Developing and Improving Marketing Materials for A/E/C Firms.* See information and Table of Contents on www.aecadvisors.com/publications
.

Use Non-Profits to Spark your Networking Efforts

By Bruce Lynch

We've devoted space on several occasions in *A/E Rainmaker* telling you to start your own networking group. For many of us, this directive is as fantastic as starting our own religion – yet my friend and colleague Justin Roy, Principal at SullivanKreiss, an executive search firm in Chicago – has come up with a breakthrough idea that should help de-mystify the process.

Non-profit organizations are always looking for new board members and people to serve on committees within boards. On the other side, many professionals see board membership as an essential element for career development – both for rounding out their *curriculum vitae* and for meeting prospective clients. Justin was approached by a large non-profit organization to be on their communications committee. This experience prompted Justin to realize that he himself could provide the link between the board member-seeking non-profits and the professionals looking to be on boards. In the process, he would become recognized as a well-connected professional in his community.

Justin got together with two friends – a sales training entrepreneur and an entertainment professional – and set to the task of creating a non-profits/local professionals connection. They contacted as many local non-profits and professionals as possible in their existing networks via e-mail and phone calls, and told them when and where they were holding the event.

On a snowy Chicago evening, Justin and his friends got 115 people to show up to a first-time event and the feedback they got from attendees was amazing – the non-profits made some good connections for potential board members (both they and the young professional were excited about this) and they identified people interested in volunteering for them. The event was scheduled for 6pm-8pm – people started showing up at 5:30 and the group died down at about 10. By the following day, Justin was getting e-mails from people asking to get on their invite/mailing list, and from a couple of non-profits who said they heard about how great it was and wanted to sign up for the next one.

To find out more, contact Justin Roy at 312-893-5058 or JRoy@sullivankreiss.com.

Bruce Lynch is VP, Publishing, PSMJ Resources, Inc.
e-mail: blynch@psmj.com, or 800-537-7765.

Looking for Top-Notch Employees? Pointers on How To Find Them

By Brandon Gutman

Many of us are still complaining about how difficult it was to hire in 2007. This year might not be any easier, so let's kick it off right by working a lot smarter and only a little bit harder.

There are several tactics your company can implement immediately that will improve its recruiting efforts. Putting in place the right leadership, marketing more effectively to candidates and some tweaks in HR will increase the flow and quality of your candidate pool. Allow me to explain.

Land a talent magnet

Great people are drawn to other great people. Hiring the right company leader or manager can make other positions much easier to fill. Remember that true "A" players go to new opportunities for learning and to step up their game. If you have a mogul who is highly regarded in the industry, top talent will want to follow for an opportunity to work with him or her.

Last year an on-line publisher wanted to retain our firm to search for several directors of sales. We soon learned that the company was planning to eventually hire a VP of sales. Instead of taking the multiple director searches, we recommended to the client for the company to retain us for the VP role. Once we filled the position, the new sales leader was able to quickly hire a team. In the end, the company saved time and money.

Do more than post

If job posting is working for your recruiting efforts, that's great. However, if it's not and you want to catch the eyes of people who aren't actively looking, try other forms of career advertising. For example, DoubleClick just did a very cool campaign right here on iMedia. They featured on-line videos of their employees promoting the company.

Viewers could get a strong sense of the culture and even see people eating lunch and having fun together in the office. Beyond this technique, there are many other creative ways to market to potential employees. Call your favorite trade associations to learn how your company can effectively engage with their audiences.

Beef up HR

It's not just their brand names that make Google and Fox Interactive Media extremely successful at recruiting. True, they get inundated with resumes, but they're extremely picky on who they hire. Companies like Google and FIM have very strong HR functions; they don't often use search firms because they have in-house recruiters who are highly capable.

Your company doesn't have to be one of the big boys to utilize this system. Look at hiring just one person who comes directly from executive search in the interactive industry. A credible headhunter should be able to immediately take your HR efforts to the next level.

Partner up

If your company isn't consistently hiring, then you might not need to build a beefy HR machine just yet. Instead, start developing a relationship with an executive search firm.

There are some key criteria to consider when choosing your search partner. First of all, make sure they are specialists or have "sweet spots" in your industry.

Second, get a full understanding of their process (how they engage candidates, interview to determine cultural fit, etc.).

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, be sure you have a good connection with the recruiter. You probably want to hire a candidate you actually like. The same should go for your search consultant.

Practicing any one of these tips should greatly improve your company's recruiting function. If your company is very small or just starting up, it might not be able to afford some of these recommendations. That's totally fine. As long as it practices methods that break the clutter, it can be successful.

Brandon Gutman is Director of Marketing & Business Development at Stephen-Bradford Partners who recruit top sales, marketing and business development professionals. Brandon spent his earlier years with RSL Communications, a marketing consultancy that helps salespeople reach brand marketers (www.stephenbradford.com) 212-221-6333 or e-mail: brandong@stephenbradford.com.

A Star-Gazing, 3D Branding Campaign Delights Clients

By Marilynn Deane Mendel

Branding campaigns need to keep their momentum. They need to be consistent and for Hickok Cole Architects, they need to be fun. We have kept a "LOOK" campaign as a constant throughout the last three years of branding the firm using simple ads with tag lines like "Look Up" set over an image of a class A office building. Words like "vision, visionary designers, looking forward," have all played a central part of the brand message. (see "Through the Looking Glass: A Brand New Vision," *A/E Rainmaker*, May 2006). It was imperative to fold the LOOK campaign into our 2008 marketing plan.

Few things catch Washingtonians' eyes, so I knew the firm's 20th anniversary had to start with a splash, and be jazzy throughout the year to draw people to our web site. And, I wanted to bring in a new element. Out-of-town "star" architects have steadily moved into the local scene, so I wanted to show that Hickok Cole Architects are STAR architects as well.

I like a play on words when approaching clients. It has always paid off with an overwhelmingly positive response. It worked with the "Big Brand Ranch" party invitation the previous year. (see "Rebranding Continues," *A/E Rainmaker*, June 2006). In this case, I thought that calling attention to 'local' star architects for an entire year might put a subliminal buzz in the local developers' ears.

I started with a concept of 3D glasses to view 3D images of our buildings on our web site. In addition, I laid out the social marketing component that would go with the plan, the ways to draw people to the web site, and the gift that would tie everything together and make a big splash right from the start — electronic telescopes that worked from computer-generated disks.

All 35,000 glasses would have to be consecutively numbered, for tracking the prize drawings, (that's five mailings over the year). The winning numbers would be posted on the web site, along with a "star chart" for each month, 3D images of the firm's buildings, prizes of designer eyeglass frames, a link to the NASA space satellite, and a "star gallery" for photos of people seen around town wearing their 3D glasses. In my mind, I could see these glasses everywhere.

I wanted to foreshadow the campaign with a holder for the first glasses to keep them on people's desk for the year, as well as build enthusiasm for what was to come. I envisioned a magnetic holder with five pairs of wild and crazy glasses hanging on people's filing cabinets, and my passion and belief became electric — total buy-in from the start. After that it became a total team effort.

The graphic designer at Hickok Cole, Sarah Barr, has produced complicated campaigns that won national awards, and are fun, yet sophisticated. Yolanda Cole came up with "20/20 vision," and a special type of star chart to go with the telescope. Sarah researched how to produce 3D glasses and developed a budget that made us all take a deep breath. Michael Hickok laughed as he said that "three years ago he never would have approved a 3D glasses campaign."

The final version has Hickok Cole's best projects inside a star-shaped image, with a holder for the glasses, and a holiday card inside a clear red envelop with stars printed on it, and a postage stamp with an image from "Star Wars." While Sarah worked out the printing solutions, Noel Carson and Jennifer Afflerbach coordinated the delivery, wrapping, and the personalized gift card signing for the 250 telescopes. It took more time figuring out how to wrap the (31"x10"x15") object than it did to organize most everything else.

Sarah found red nylon laundry bags for $3 each. We had a fulfillment house remove the outside box and price tag, then insert the inner box. We picked them up with a van and hand delivered the telescopes to Hickok Cole's clients and prized contacts. The team tied a silver ribbon, star chart, and signed card to each package as they drove throughout the city.

Two days later the phones rang off the hook. E-mails poured in from all over the city. (It was the first time we ever had people call us and ask us for a gift). Our clients were delighted as revealed by the following comments.

"You have all lost your minds! I just got back to my office and found a

(Cont. next page)

A Star-Gazing, 3D Branding Campaign Delights Clients (cont.)

telescope in it. WOW! I took astronomy in college and as a sailor the stars at night have saved my bacon offshore many times. I am blown away with your generosity and I am extremely touched."

"Yolanda and Mike: what an over-the-top and wonderful gift. Wow. I can't thank you enough...although I'm across from Verizon Center, I promise to use the telescope to look skyward only."

"Thank you both so much for the wonderful, unnecessary but very much appreciated telescope! My children and I assembled it and stargazed over the weekend in the mountains. The bitter cold brought with it a beautifully clear night sky which we enjoyed in shifts due to the one-degree temperature! Thank you very much. It is a very thoughtful gift and one which we will use often."

"Thank you so much for the telescope. My 5 ½ year old is so excited, he was actually asking for one for his birthday. He loves science and the stars. Please thank your other associates as well, we really appreciate it. This was a refreshing change from a lot of the other things you receive in this business."

"Many thanks!!! for the ultra cool gift! There is no end to your creativity and we can't wait to use our telescope."

"Great marketing idea! Splashy, fun, clever. And congratulations on your anniversary!"

Don't take our word for it - go to the Hickok Cole web site and take a look at some of the people who have sent in their pictures. www.hickokcole.com.

Marilynn Deane Mendel, President , Win*Spin*, CIC, Inc., Creative Intelligence Consulting. Call her at 540-207-4045, or
e-mail: mmend125@aol.com.

Rainmaker Resource:

Tracking Down a Contact

By Ford Harding

Tracking down and talking to people you went to school with or worked with earlier in your life can be great fun and generate leads for lots of new business.

This is even truer of old clients. One person I know had consulted to a financial services mega-corporation for years, when a sudden change in the CEO put most of his contacts at the company on the street looking for work. He stayed in touch with about ten of the most senior ones who quickly found jobs in other organizations. Three of these brought his firm in with them.

Three years later he took a look at a list of other people he had known at the mega-corporation who were no longer there and with whom he had lost touch. He tracked down fifteen more. One of them bought $1,000,000 worth of services this year. The ballot is out on many of the others.

Finding old contacts is easier that it has ever been, because of the power of the Internet. Lifehacker.com has just posted an article entitled, *How to Track Down Anyone on Line*. This is a valuable source for finding people whom you have misplaced over the years.

But, before we give in and do it the easy way, let's be sure it is the best way. In the old days (just yesterday, if you are my age), finding a lost contact often meant calling mutual friends who might know where he/she had gone. You might have to contact three people before finding someone who knew where the contact could be found.

Not as efficient as a Google search, it provided a wonderful excuse to call other people with whom you wanted to reconnect. You can call up someone you haven't talked with for years and say, "Remember me. I know it's been too long since we last talked. I was trying to track down Bev Binder and thought you might know how to reach her. But first, how have things been going for you since we last talked?"

Having an adequate reason for calling is a challenge for most professionals just starting out to develop new business. Tracking down a contact is a ready-made reason for calling lots of dormant prospects. Don't let new technology seduce you away from taking advantage of it.

Ford Harding is the author of *Rain Making: Attract New Clients No Matter What Your Field,* the newly released and updated edition of his well-known book. This article is adapted from his blog, which can be accessed at www.HardingCo.com/blog/. He can be reached at 973-763-9284 or by e-mail at fharding@HardingCo.com

Got Training?, part 5
Benefit from Lessons Observed

By Joanne G. Linowes

In-house training programs or firm-based universities provide excellent ongoing ways to ensure your personnel stay up-to-speed in topics vital to your firm's growth. Yet, at closer look, we can observe common traps that block these initiatives from being the best they can be.

Your firm can benefit from three "lessons" I have observed as I coach in firms across the nation. Watch out for:

1. Overusing technology
Technology is attractive as a way to enliven presentations and close the gap in distance learning. Webinars, electronic white boards, distance chat rooms, video streaming, and even plain-old onsite PowerPoint have terrific advantages and enrich the training process. It is easy, however, to get swept away by the "cool animations" and internet capabilities. The key to remember is that technology needs to be coupled with good instructional design, applied appropriately, and used for a specific purpose. Plan carefully how you will use each format and ask yourself how this format will enhance the process of information explanation and retention.

When technology is placed suitably in the learning experience it serves as a valuable tool. Otherwise, it becomes just another gizmo.

2. Providing undirected content
The content of each seminar, course, lunch 'n learn, and the like is provided, of course, by your in-house expert or an outside consultant. The pitfall is that experts are thinking about just one thing – their subject matter. Most often the content drives the design of the class or seminar, with the expert showcasing his/her expertise.

Since we know that learning does not happen automatically, it is important to step back before determining the content to step one – establishing learning objectives. Learning objectives focus the development of the content. At the outset create three statements that are learner-oriented. State exactly what you expect learners to grasp at the conclusion of your session. Use action verbs to describe how they will indicate they have acquired the new information so you can observe your success.

3. Developing curriculum from the top down.
The curriculum for your training center must be established by specialists familiar with the needs of your firm and your personnel. Principals, department heads, associates and other senior level professionals are best positioned to recommend courses, content areas, and requirements for junior staff to move ahead. This is one perspective. To gain a new perspective, seek input from a different level. Ask younger staff and new employees for their viewpoints. You will discover that they will readily volunteer information about what their supervisors need to know in order to be better supervisors, what skills the mentors need to be better mentors, what techniques the project managers need to polish to be better leaders. New courses, a broader range of seminars, and series of one-shot expert-builder sessions will be valuable to those who are in leadership positions. And the junior staff will benefit!

Keep your in-house training programs stimulating and dynamic. Keep your eye on your procedures so you can benefit from lessons observed.

Joanne G. Linowes, Linowes Executive Development International (LXDi), is nationally recognized for coaching winning presentations and providing in-house training in communications, train-the-trainer, and marketing skills for design and construction firms since 1986. Contact Joanne to learn how training programs can be of value to your firm. www.lxdi.com jlinowes@lxdi.com, or call 508-359-1011.

This issue marks the end of our second year as your editors of *A/E Rainmaker.* During this period we have brought you a wide variety of subjects, opinions, and commentary. But it is your newsletter, not ours, and we welcome your comments and suggestions for article subjects. Please take a quick moment and e-mail us with a list of 3-6 of your "most wanted" subjects for future articles. Also, as a subscriber, you can call or e-mail us with any BD questions you may have.
Ernie and Joy
AECadvisors@earthlink.net

Telecommuting: Just Another Way of Doing Business - Part 1

By Barbara D. Shuck, CPSM

Telecommute, e-commuting, e-work, telework, working at home (WAH) and working from home (WFH). Employees' daily commutes are replaced by telecommunications links and they become nomad workers and web commuters.

Teleworker Coalition studies show that 45 million people telecommute at least once a week. In 2005, 44 percent of U.S. companies offered at least some telecommuting options, according to Mercer Human Resources Consulting. That figure is up from 32 percent in 2001. Wikipedia and on-line resources abound with definitions, examples, studies and analyses.

Whatever the scenario, e-work has the potential to change practices and attitudes of marketers and business development professionals in the A/E/C industry because the ability to work anywhere is a growing trend.

Employer Benefits

Employers are seeing reduced occupancy rates when employees can work wherever their appropriate skills are needed. It also reduces attrition and turnover rates, and reflects an environment of "total working strategy." In addition:

- Some reports indicate that employees are up to 40% more productive by avoiding travel time and office environment interruptions.
- E-working employees reduce the cost of underutilized real estate, which allows firms to utilize space more profitably.
- Improved motivation is another benefit as employees respond positively to the trust and confidence indicated by their employer.
- Employers keep valuable employees from leaving when a spouse relocates.
- Employers have a larger pool of qualified applicants and may experience fewer layoffs.
- Employees take career breaks and remain current with business practices and methods. They require less training when returning back to the previous position.
- Organizations are more flexible. Management can select project work teams based on the best skills and experience, which can be created regardless of geography and time zone, and with minimal travel.
- Companies gain from flexible staffing when employees can work limited hours. Some companies pay e-workers retainer rates for standby times and higher rates for active work.
- Companies provide enhanced customer service when hours extend beyond the standard working day or time. There is reduced overtime pay or need for staff to work at unsocial hours.
- Companies are more resilient to external interruptions, such as weather, natural disasters, terrorism, etc.

Individual Benefits

E-workers gain from reduced travel time and costs and tend to use part of the new-found time to get more work done, and employees recognize more work opportunities, and are not confined to jobs within a reasonable commuting distance. In addition:

- There is less disruption to family life, and reduced need to relocate or take career moves when a spouse changes jobs. E-working provides individuals with greater flexibility to relocate and maintain business continuity.
- Employees see a better balance of work and family life, even with more hours of effective work. Teleworkers see more of their families and participate in home responsibilities, such as chauffeuring children, shopping and cooking.
- Employees are then able to participate in the local community activities at times when many workers are still enroute from their jobs. Flexible hours suit individual daily rhythms. Typical commuting and office hours force the same timetable, and teleworking provides a personal flexible work style benefit. Research notes that there are times when the e-worker should be available at a specific time.

Barbara Shuck, CPSM, is Marketing Director at Emc2 Group Architects Planners, PC in Mesa, Arizona, where she has worked since 2005. She has personal insight and experience in e-work, having moved to Omaha, Nebraska in 2008. She can be reached at bshuck@emc2architects.com or 602-390-4581 and welcomes e-questions and e-dialogue.

Information taken from Wikipedia/tele commuting (February 15, 2008); www.eto.org.uk/faq; www.telecoa.org; "Crabby Revisits Her Telecommuting Tips,"

Use Expected Value (EV) to Maximize Your Marketing Investment - Part I

By Scott Mickle

Does your company view marketing as an expense or an investment? If you see marketing as an expense, then you will manage your marketing budget like any other expense — and minimize it. However, the successful marketers are the ones who realize marketing is an investment in the firm's long-term success and they will budget for, track and measure the return on their investment in marketing.

If your organization is among those that do not budget, track and measure, you are not alone. In a study by Suzanne Lowe of Expertise Marketing, only 23% of respondents said they calculated the return on investment (ROI) of their promotional vehicles. And, while one of the simplest ways to find out how well marketing works is to ask new clients how they found you. Of the firms surveyed by Society for Marketing Professionals Services' (SMPS) Sally Handley, only half asked prospects and potential clients how they learned about their firms.

Why Market Anyway?

There are a number of reasons why marketing is vital to any organization. Primary among them are:

- To increase revenues.
- To maintain existing clients.
- To create brand awareness.
- To provide a return for share holders or owners.

Increasing revenues is the prime reason driving most corporate projects, so why not for marketing programs too? If you view your marketing programs as an expense that you or someone else simply "thinks" is worthy, you may miss an opportunity and waste your budget. Instead, view your marketing programs as investments that grow in value and importance over time, like your other corporate initiatives.

As marketers, we must be good stewards of the company monies in our budgets. It is our fiduciary responsibility to make sound business decisions on how to best use them. It takes a commitment in time, money and energy to build a marketing program. So, it is surprising that for those firms that develop them, less than 25% typically track their results and measure the cost of the investment.

Some of the common roadblocks to measurement are:

- Ease of making excuses, or rationalizing that we lack time, people, money.
- A staff of young and/or inexperienced marketers.
- Lack of budget controls.
- Fear of failure.

The firms that would benefit most from measuring results of their limited marketing dollars are small and medium-sized organizations. These are also the firms where we most often find young marketers who have not been exposed to measurement metrics. It is not that these professionals don't value measurement; they have more than likely never been taught why it's so important or how to use metric information to make business decisions.

As we grow in our roles, we may lack the desire to undertake complicated measurement programs that are not required by our superiors, or we may not have the opportunity to take the training. It also may be easier or safer not to measure because perhaps we cannot get permission to undertake a specific marketing project, or permission is granted but then we cannot prove that we increased our investment with that money. And, to some, the risk of failing equates to the risk of being fired, whether a real — or perceived — possibility.

Conversely, successful marketers provide strong leadership and have systems in place to develop basic tracking methods and assign clear accountability. They make marketing results part of the annual review of the staff responsible for their design and execution. In addition, those marketing initiatives and results are included in their annual corporate budget reviews. The process utilizes a simple tool called "Expected Value" (EV) and will be described in detail in Part 2, next month.

Scott E. Mickle is President of AEC Marketing Solutions. The firm specializes in working with A/E/C firms to maximize the effectiveness of their marketing and business development activities. Mr. Mickle was named by *Building Design & Construction Magazine* as one of the '40 under 40' rising stars in the design and construction industry in their inaugural list in 2006.
You can learn more about AEC Marketing Solutions on the web at www.aecmarketingsolutions.com or reach Scott at: 704.560.7079 or smickle@aecmkt.com

Adapting a Childrens' Storybook Pulled a Stalled Project "Over the Hill"

Winning presentations are all about being on the right track with the client. This is made all the more difficult when the client is a diverse group composed of many city agencies; planning and development, parks and recreation, area transportation authorities and regional and local stakeholders. The firm's objectives were to communicate to these selection committee members, and non-voting observers who could influence the vote, their team's understanding of the transit project at hand, and their strong desire to work with the committee and diverse stakeholders throughout the community on the proposed project. They wanted to show their strong determination to bring about consensus on the development of a transit system for Kansas City, Missouri's central business corridor — an effort that had stalled after 20 years of planning by another firm who was also competing for the project.

Although their research efforts were informal, planning for the project went on for a year. Strategy sessions with key marketing and technical professionals regarding development of the proposal and interview were aimed at differentiating their team from the competition. The competing firm had been working with selection committee members and other stakeholders for 20 years to develop a transit plan. The passage of time and the expenditure of significant public funds had failed to forge a consensus. Opposition from community leaders, including the Mayor who publicly declared the plan "touristy frou-frou," was growing and the idea of transit in Kansas City was almost dead. The city scrapped that plan and the firm, and re-issued a Request for Proposals for a team to develop a new transit plan.

The three leaders of their team, through professional work and civic activities, had been working with members of the audience on other important planning initiatives underway in the community. They saw the city struggling and believed that together they could make the new plan happen.

Brainstorming by the team led to the idea that the city was much like *"The Little Engine That Could,"* the best-known children's book by Watty Piper. The team believed wholeheartedly that they offered the right skills, determination and commitment to get the city "over the hill" and set it on a course for the development of a fixed-guideway transit system.

The idea of *"The Little City That Could"* emerged and energized the team. A copy of the "*The Little Engine That Could,*" was purchased and reviewed for application to this project. Text and illustrations following the literary and artistic style of "*The Little Engine That Could*" were then developed. The storyline and illustrations came together to express the team's belief in the heart-felt convictions of the city. The book was read aloud to the audience at the end of the interview, and copies presented to each member as a keepsake.

Following notice of award from the city, the team learned that the deciding factor in selecting them for the project was *"The Little City That Could"* and the message it sent to the audience: this team understands the project and its problems; this team wants to realize the city's vision; and this team is determined to bring transit to Kansas City.

Gould Evans Associates, Kansas City, MO

A/E Rainmaker

The Guide to Attracting and Keeping Great Clients

April, 2008
Volume 4, Number 4

If you are not currently a subscriber....you can get A/E Rainmaker at the charter rate of $267—AND enjoy the electronic version FREE for a full year!

❍ Combo (paper and electronic) $267US/$307Foreign
❍ Check enclosed payable to PSMJ Resources, Inc.
❍ Bill me
Charge my: ❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard ❑ AMEX

Card #

Exp Date

Cardholder Name

Signature

Name

Title

Firm Name

Firm Type

Firm Size

Address

City State

Zip Country

Phone

Fax

E-mail Brochure Code 140169

PUBLISHER - Frank A. Stasiowski, FAIA
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR - Bruce Lynch
EDITOR - Ernest Burden
ASSOCIATE EDITOR - Joy Arnold Burden

Published by PSMJ Resources, Inc.®
HEADQUARTERS/BOSTON
10 Midland Avenue
Newton, MA 02458 USA
P: 800.537.PSMJ (7765) or 617.965.0055
F: 617.965.5152
E: info@psmj.com

Our Byline Contributors - (In This Issue)

□ Ethan Becker, The Speech Improvement Company □ Gina Bedoya, Bedoya Business Strategies □ **Carolyn Bligh, Bligh Graphics** □ Robert Bly, Center for Technical Communications □ Timothy Crader, EYP Mission Critical Facilities □ John Doerr, Wellesley Hills Group □ Michelle Fitzpatrick, Marketivity □ Richard Friedman, Friedman and Partners □ Rolf Fuessler, Fuessler Group □ Amy Gesenhue, Amy Wrote It □ Kay Godwin, Marketing Avenues □ David Golab, Superstructures □ Andrea Goodwin, Communications Plus □ John Graham, Graham Communications □ Frances Gretes, Gretes Research Services □ **Brandon Gutman, Stephan-Bradford Search** □ Sally Handley, Sally Handley □ **Ford Harding, Harding & Company** □ Stephen Hom, AMI Institute □ Cheryl May, AMI Institute □ Jack Jolls, John D. Jolls and Company □ Michelle Jones, Carter & Burgess □ **Kimberly Kayler, Constructive Communication, Inc.** □ Judy Kienle, Kienle Communications □ Pete Kienle, McKim & Creed □ **Joanne Linowes, Linowes Executive Development International** □ Susan Lowe, Expertise Marketing, LLC □ Peter Ashton Lyon □ **Marilyn Mendell, Win Spin CIC** □ **Scott Mickle, AEC Marketing Solutions** □ Susan Murphy, Murphy Motivation □ Anthony Musemuci, Emtec Engineers □ Jeff Posey, Carter & Burgess □ Katy Potts, Marketivity □ Kim Niedzielski, HGA Architects and Engineers □ Michael Reilly, Reilly Communications □ Rein Nomm, Rein Nomm Associates □ Laura Ricci, 1Ricci □ Tom Sargent, PSMJ Resources, Inc. □ Anne Scarlett, Scarlett Consulting □ Dennis Schrag, The Longview Group □ David Searns, Haley Marketing Group □ **Barbara Shuck, Emc2 Architects** □ Bernie Siben, The Siben Consult □ Joseph Sommerville, Peak Communication Performance □ Marcy Steinberg, Cynosure Communications □ Frank Stasiowski, FAIA, PSMJ Resources, Inc. □ Karen Susman, Remarkable Associations □ Wendy Ward, Constructive Communication □ Andrew Weinberg, The LiRo Group □ Steve White, Graham Communications □ Karen Winters, Marketing Insights

5 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

T: 800-537-PSMJ 617-965-0055
F: 617-965-5152
W: www.psmj.com
E: customerservice@psmj.com
M: PSMJ Resources, Inc.
10 Midland Avenue
Newton, MA 02458

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

One year (12 issues) $267 (U.S.), $307 (foreign); Electronic $320; Print and Electronic $375 (U.S.) $415 (foreign). Allow four to six weeks for a change of address, and provide both present and former addresses.