Measuring Marketing Success (Cont.)

items can be measured for trade shows, websites and customer events.

Measuring sales also is crucial to assessing marketing ROI tools. One of the simplest ROI tactics to implement is asking prospects "How did you find out about us?" This enables you to learn from prospects what efforts are working and reaching them. Be sure to record your sales information.

How to Measure Marketing ROI

There are five steps to measuring marketing ROI that you can begin implementing immediately. First, set measurable marketing goals that include quantification, deadlines, purpose and an action plan. Second, use multiple measurement tools. Third, agree on what is being counted such as identifying what you are trying to measure, what data you are collecting and what data will look like in the final report. Fourth, use existing measures before creating new ones. Finally and arguably most important, effectively communicate and present ROI findings. It is important for your team to understand how marketing efforts impact the bottom-line positively. While tracking marketing efforts to show ROI takes some time and money to implement, the results will mostly definitely be realized when you sit down to make your next year's marketing plan.

Wendy Ward is Vice President of Constructive Communication. With degrees in English and marketing, Ward is the author of a variety of articles in the design, construction and facilities management industries. She can be reached at 614-529-6551 or wward@constructivecommunication.com.

Branding for the Small Firm: Part I

By Marilynn Mendell

Branding to me means building an awareness of your company. Most people think that in order to accomplish this, one simply advertises more and sends out more press releases. Quite the contrary, in fact, a great deal of planning needs to occur long before any implementation can begin. You must apply these three distinct necessary phases in order to get results: gathering, assessing and implementation. I will briefly elaborate on these in three articles. All of them can be helpful to small firms, and incur little expense.

1.GATHERING

Database

My observations over the past thirty years of consulting are that few firms have a database commensurate to, or in proportion to, the wants and needs of the firm. For a small firm an average sized database should be around 4,000 entries. I like the software ACT!. It will accomplish all of the tasks required and is relatively inexpensive. Groups should be established such as; sub-consultants, clients, media (a minimum of 150 press contacts). Each group is then subdivided into specialty areas. For instance, a client main group would have developers, brokers, and architects as sub-groups. There should be groups for party invites and holiday cards. It goes without saying that the program should interface with PDAs, produce reports, letters, labels and a myriad of other administrative tasks.
The WHY: A database is your lifeline to possible new clients, your peer groups, your media contacts, and your lost memory. This will be used to track your contacts, support your direct marketing efforts, and act as the key organizing mechanism for your entire effort.

Budget

Every single aspect of the marketing dollars spent must be compiled in one place. Start with these categories: memberships, advertising, sponsorships, photo shoots, awards, employee and client gifts, and parties. For this phase, just get the data entered. Use Excel and learn how to do hyper-links and pivot tables to link all of your charts.
The WHY: Budgets track marketing expenses and they act as the skeleton to the marketing plan. Without one, you will often cut marketing back when you need to be expanding your identity outreach the most.

Tracking

Set up more Excel charts. Here are a few: proposals (submitted, won and lost, 'thank you' sent), articles & publications, speaking engagements, and press releases. Part 2 will address "assessment."

With over 30 years of experience, Ms. Mendell, president of Win Spin CIC, Inc., a creative intelligence consulting re-branding, re-imaging and public relations corporation, is known for her award-winning campaigns. She has written hundreds of articles and speaks at national conferences. In 2006 she was nominated as Woman of the Year for the Washington Women in Public Relations. She can be reached at: mmend125@aol.com.

November, 2007
Volume 3, Number 11

A Publication of
PSMJ Resources, Inc.

A/E Rainmaker

The Guide to Attracting and Keeping Great Clients

In This Issue

Gazing into the Crystal Ball: Mixing Tech with Touch

By Michelle Fitzpartick

A summary report based on interviews with 43 SMPS Fellows regarding their insights and predictions was done on behalf of the SMPS Foundation (www.smpsfoundation.org). It was created to find out about the future of marketing professional services, the potential impacts of changing market forces on our industry, and how marketers and their firms can best prepare for the future.

Given the comprehensive long-range view of this group — the Fellows are all senior leaders in their firms who average over 30 years of experience — the responses were not confined to marketing alone. The respondents contemplated the future holistically, assessing its impact on all aspects of the A/E/C sector and A/E/C firms.

The report, titled ***A/E/C Visionaries Foresee the Future*** brings up a number of issues that you and your firm may be grappling with or will face in the near future.

Technology and Transformation

The transformational impact of technology on the A/E/C business was a dominant theme throughout the Fellow's responses. Ron Garikes, Executive Vice President/COO of Karlsberger Laboratory & Technology Group, succinctly summed up the increasing impact of technology upon our industry: "Technology will continue to advance at an accelerated rate and will radically change not only the A/E/C industry but industry across the board."

In the view of the Fellows, technology will force fundamental changes in how A/E/C firms do business and how they market, including:

- Offices will become virtually paperless.
- Qualifications and proposals will all be transmitted electronically.
- Negotiations and contracts will be handled primarily online.
- Printed brochures and marketing materials will become dinosaurs, everything will be in digital form.
- Face-to-face contact will be minimized.
- Teams will increasingly become virtual since work can be accomplished almost anywhere.
- The expectation for rapid responses will escalate exponentially.

The greatest impact will be on how we communicate among ourselves, within our teams, and particularly with our clients. The risk is that 'tech' will replace 'touch,' an essential component of our business, which is based on relationships and face-to-face interaction with clients, potential clients and colleagues.

(cont. page 3)

Finding and Keeping Qualified A/E/C Professionals: Part I
Recruiting From Educational Institutions and Industry

By Peter Ashton Lyon

Finding and keeping qualified professionals is a major concern of business leaders in the A/E/C industry. Recruiting qualified, skilled personnel has become so critical to the life of a firm that filling key positions has become an integral part of many A/E/C firm's business plans and strategic marketing plans.

The reasons for this phenomenon are two-fold. There are fewer young people entering careers in the built environment, and existing, experienced professionals are retiring and leaving the industry. Enrollments in architectural schools is decreasing and even though there is an increase in young people seeking engineering degrees, they are moving away from the built-environment into other more lucrative technical fields. Architecture and engineering in the built-environment is simply not paying the starting salaries of other industries.

To combat this trend, A/E/C industry leaders are thinking outside-the-box to find, hire, train and keep qualified professionals. Creative and innovative approaches are being developed, which center on the following key company initiatives.

Building a recruitment culture within the firm

The leadership and commitment to building a recruiting culture within a firm must come directly from the top. The firm's leadership must create the environment that promotes education and advancement not only for the firm's existing and new staff members, but also for young people who are considering entering the industry. Several strategies to use include:

♦ Allowing senior technical staff with paid leave to teach at local colleges and technical schools.

♦ Forming partnerships with college/ technical school deans by sponsoring academic events, competitions, and providing mentoring opportunities for students, and promoting staff involvement in these programs.

♦ Making recruitment activities a part of every employee's performance review.

♦ Integrating marketing and human resources into a team effort to secure skilled, qualified personnel.

This positive recruitment culture works to secure skilled staff members for the firm. It also serves to keep valued professional staff members with the firm.

Recruiting at colleges, universities, and technical schools

Identifying and securing qualified professionals requires a planned, proactive approach. The company culture and top-leadership support and encouragement give creditability to this planned approach.

Approaches used for universities, and technical schools include:

♦ Participating in school sponsored job fairs.

♦ Creating design and/or engineering design competitions.

♦ Creating internship opportunities for rising 3rd and 4th year students.

♦ Sponsoring lunch-and-learn technical events at the office for student organizations and the classes.

♦ Allowing university/technical school alumni organizations to use the company's facilities for meetings.

♦ Offering significant scholarships ($10,000 plus) to deserving 3rd year students in the disciplines needed.

♦ Collecting permanent phone numbers of graduating seniors and following up with a phone call to the family home after 5 years to inquire about their success in the industry. (Strategy, the student, after 5 years, is trained and may be ready to move up.)

♦ Creating a monthly newsletter outlining the staff resources needed and distribute the newsletter internally and externally to local college/technical school professors and industry organizations.

To effectively work industry/ trade organizations, several ideas include:

Finding and Keeping Qualified A/E/C Professionals: Part I

(Cont. from page 2)

♦ Allowing technical staff members to present technical papers and/or make presentations at organization meetings.

♦ Sponsoring events that allow firm leaders to distribute company literature and/or profile the firm during organization meetings.

♦ Placing classified or display page advertising in professional organization's publications.

♦ Incorporating internet/website recruiting through search engines as well as through the company website.

Part 2 will address finding qualified professionals among business partners, clients and competitors, and the strategies and ethical considerations involved. Part 3 looks at initiatives firms use to keep their skilled workforce and sustain their firm's growth.

Peter Ashton Lyon, Assoc. AIA, FSMPS is Chief Marketing Officer with U.S. COST, Inc. which is headquartered in Atlanta and provides world recognized construction cost estimating, value management, construction scheduling and a well established portfolio of software projects including SUCCESS-Estimator and SUCCESS-Design Exchange. Peter is also serves on the Board of Trustees of the Society for Marketing Professional Services Foundation. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Professional Services Management Association and is the AIA Representative and Chairman of the QBS *Georgia* Steering Committee. He can be reached at plyon@uscost.com, or 770-481-1631.

Gazing into the Crystal Ball: Mixing Tech with Touch

(cont. from cover)

As the use of technology increases, marketers and their firms will have to work harder to really connect with their clients. But the good news is that the clever use of technology may actually enhance the interaction with clients colleagues and staff.

To assure that your tech does not overwhelm your touch as you plan your firm's future, start thinking about technology in new ways. Do not think solely in terms of what you need or how much it costs, but how a particular technology can enhance your relationships, communications and collaborations with clients, colleagues and staff.

The first barrier that many firms throw up is 'This will cost too much,' or 'How will we manage more technologies?' However, there are many Web 2.0 tools available today that will enhance and possibly even improve your communications if handled correctly. Most of these tools are either inexpensive or free and require little more expertise than being able to use a Web browser. Some of the tech tools your firm should consider during your annual and/or strategic planning are:

♦ Web-based virtual meetings that can bring clients and teams together at a much lower cost than travel.

♦ 'Webinars' or webcasts that can be used for project presentations — including to the public — and for in-house training as well as many other situations where you need to communicate to a broad or spread-out audience.

♦ Podcasts and on-line video that allow the recipient to view the content when and where they choose.

♦ Blogs, which can be used for projects, for team collaboration or for groups — such as community stakeholders — who are interested in a particular subject.

As you enhance your 'tech' to increase your 'touch,' consider doing surveys or interviews with your early adopters to assure that the new tool is achieving the desired results and identify areas for improvement. Once you get the bugs and processes worked out, roll out the new tool throughout your firm with support for the new users and endorsements from your testers. This approach will help to assure widespread and effective use of the Web 2.0 tools that are the best fit for your firm's communications needs and style.

(*For copies of the Executive Summary and the full report, go to info@smps.org or call 703-549-6117.*

Michelle Fitzpatrick, CPSM, is a Principal with Marketivity Inc., a strategic planning and marketing consulting firm based in Portland, Oregon and Portland, Maine. (www.marketivity.com). She can be reached at 503-224-1655 or michelle@marketivity.com.

Measuring Marketing Success

By Wendy Ward

One of the most touted terms in the business world is ROI (return-on-investment). This term is used to track a variety of different initiatives but many fail to properly measure the ROI of their marketing efforts. Often, people find it difficult to track these efforts; however, measurement is critical to gaining support from upper management and ensuring your efforts are providing results. Measuring marketing ROI will help guide those efforts and allow for proper planning in future years.

Why Measure?

ROI measurement helps to determine your clients' and prospects' perceptions of your brand image and overall performance, especially compared to your competitors. By quantifying achievement of specific goals and targets, ROI can help ensure that your strategy is effective. Many companies fail to evaluate activities such as advertising, public relations, and trade shows, and continue to do the same items each year because they have always done them.

For example, consider a construction firm that exhibits every year at a major trade show. This activity accounts for 20 percent of their marketing budget each year and they continue to go despite the fact that they have never received a qualified lead from the event. A clear evaluation of the tactics in place will help ensure that your efforts are producing results.

Finally, sales leads generated through individual marketing tactics should be quantified and qualified in order to prioritize marketing investments. This cannot occur if ROI is not being measured.

Roadblocks to Measurement

Often, marketing and sales professionals don't know how to measure marketing ROI. One of the reasons for this is that there are few successful examples that can be easily followed. Internal tracking systems can hinder ROI measurement as well. If a marketing plan does not exist or contains unclear objectives tracking efforts can be very difficult.

Finally, firms often do not properly budget for ROI measurement, because they incorrectly assume that it should be free. While there are many cost-effective ways to track efforts, some will require money and time. Even when efforts are measured, firms fail to track every project and only sporadically evaluate marketing efforts.

What Can Be Measured?

Marketing can be measured either quantitatively or qualitatively. The first item that can be measured is marketing output activity, which quantifies the output of the efforts. Placements quantitatively measure the outcome while awareness qualitatively measures customer recall of the output. Attitude qualitatively measures the influence that the output had on a customer's behavior. Contacts quantify the initial behavioral response. Finally, you should examine sales with the overall marketing investment against the results.
For example, measuring placements includes evaluating impressions of how many people received a direct mail piece or saw an advertisement. To evaluate this, you multiply the circulation number by 2.5. For measuring ad dollar value for public relations efforts, multiply the length of the article by the ad rates. Since media coverage is earned, many experts argue that it is more credible than advertising, so it should include an additional multiplier of 10.

The content analysis for public relations includes examining the content for prominent placement, picture and key message inclusion and lack of mention of competitors. The PR piece should be evaluated to see if the majority of release, direct quotes, company name, service name and contact information is included.

Measuring awareness requires much more effort, such as using surveys or other tools to determine if anyone remembers seeing your marketing communications. This is because it measures outcomes and not output. Similarly, measuring attitude requires tracking studies, snapshot surveys and focus groups.

To measure contacts, you need to evaluate it for separate marketing efforts. For example, for PR/advertising/direct mail, you can measure the number of placements or pieces mailed, ad equivalencies, response rate, conversion rate, average order and cost. Similar

Measuring Marketing Success (Cont.)

items can be measured for trade shows, websites and customer events.

Measuring sales also is crucial to assessing marketing ROI tools. One of the simplest ROI tactics to implement is asking prospects "How did you find out about us?" This enables you to learn from prospects what efforts are working and reaching them. Be sure to record your sales information.

How to Measure Marketing ROI

There are five steps to measuring marketing ROI that you can begin implementing immediately. First, set measurable marketing goals that include quantification, deadlines, purpose and an action plan. Second, use multiple measurement tools. Third, agree on what is being counted such as identifying what you are trying to measure, what data you are collecting and what data will look like in the final report. Fourth, use existing measures before creating new ones. Finally and arguably most important, effectively communicate and present ROI findings. It is important for your team to understand how marketing efforts impact the bottom-line positively. While tracking marketing efforts to show ROI takes some time and money to implement, the results will mostly definitely be realized when you sit down to make your next year's marketing plan.

Wendy Ward is Vice President of Constructive Communication. With degrees in English and marketing, Ward is the author of a variety of articles in the design, construction and facilities management industries. She can be reached at 614-529-6551 or wward@constructivecommunication.com.

Branding for the Small Firm: Part I

By Marilynn Mendell

Branding to me means building an awareness of your company. Most people think that in order to accomplish this, one simply advertises more and sends out more press releases. Quite the contrary, in fact, a great deal of planning needs to occur long before any implementation can begin. You must apply these three distinct necessary phases in order to get results: gathering, assessing and implementation. I will briefly elaborate on these in three articles. All of them can be helpful to small firms, and incur little expense.

1.GATHERING

Database

My observations over the past thirty years of consulting are that few firms have a database commensurate to, or in proportion to, the wants and needs of the firm. For a small firm an average sized database should be around 4,000 entries. I like the software ACT!. It will accomplish all of the tasks required and is relatively inexpensive. Groups should be established such as; sub-consultants, clients, media (a minimum of 150 press contacts). Each group is then subdivided into specialty areas. For instance, a client main group would have developers, brokers, and architects as sub-groups. There should be groups for party invites and holiday cards. It goes without saying that the program should interface with PDAs, produce reports, letters, labels and a myriad of other administrative tasks. **The WHY**: A database is your lifeline to possible new clients, your peer groups, your media contacts, and your lost memory. This will be used to track your contacts, support your direct marketing efforts, and act as the key organizing mechanism for your entire effort.

Budget

Every single aspect of the marketing dollars spent must be compiled in one place. Start with these categories: memberships, advertising, sponsorships, photo shoots, awards, employee and client gifts, and parties. For this phase, just get the data entered. Use Excel and learn how to do hyper-links and pivot tables to link all of your charts. **The WHY**: Budgets track marketing expenses and they act as the skeleton to the marketing plan. Without one, you will often cut marketing back when you need to be expanding your identity outreach the most.

Tracking

Set up more Excel charts. Here are a few: proposals (submitted, won and lost, 'thank you' sent), articles & publications, speaking engagements, and press releases. Part 2 will address "assessment."

With over 30 years of experience, Ms. Mendell, president of Win Spin CIC, Inc., a creative intelligence consulting re-branding, re-imaging and public relations corporation, is known for her award-winning campaigns. She has written hundreds of articles and speaks at national conferences. In 2006 she was nominated as Woman of the Year for the Washington Women in Public Relations. She can be reached at: mmend125@aol.com.

Keep It Real:

Refine your communication style to be a better business developer

By Anne Scarlett

The best compliment I ever received from a prospect was this: 'I truly enjoyed talking with you; you are so…*real*!' The timing of the compliment was excellent. Unknowingly, this prospect had shared his sentiment during a networking conference, directly within earshot of my firm's CEO. Shortly thereafter, we converted that prospect into a client-for-life!

Since then, it is my goal to be deemed as 'real' within all contexts of my professional and personal life. What does 'real' mean, and why is it valuable to prospects, clients, and co-workers?

Let's start with the definition of business development. In its simplest form, it cannot be disputed that business development is, in fact, sales. A softer side of sales — a potentially more strategic and multi-faceted approach — but it is sales nonetheless. The stereotypical sales personality – aggressive, pushy, single minded – is one that people within our service-based A/E/C industry guard against. Business developers often need to overcome the guarded perspectives by quickly establishing a comfort level and a true human-to-human connection. Otherwise, we are forever faced with the uphill battle of getting others to trust our intentions.

In the context of this article, what constitutes 'realness', and how can we best communicate in a manner that will make us truly connect, human-to-human?

Be accessible: Accessibility involves not just the literal sense of being available and responsive to phone calls, emails, and other outreach. It also means to be accessible in terms of communicating on a similar plane. For example, be selective when using industry jargon. Does your audience really understand what you are saying, or have you overwhelmed or intimidated them in an effort to impress?

Be empathetic: Oftentimes, a client does not want to feel like he/she is alone. He/she wants to know that there are others who share problems similar to their own. Within your business development approach, shape your responses to remind clients that while their organization is certainly unique, the *crux* of their problem is something that you have previously witnessed (and resolved) for other clients.

Be humble: While we wish to be viewed as a hero and heroine to our clients, we are indeed human. Our firms will occasionally make mistakes, and we do what we can to resolve those errors in order to deliver the highest quality of services. Stating that you or your company will 'save the day' rarely communicates the message of 'realness'. Being (selectively) forthcoming will work to your advantage. Note: within your language, you should still emphasize the value that clients glean from your services, while simultaneously remaining down-to-earth.

Be giving: As business developers, we were taught to listen carefully and do only about one-third of the talking during dialogue with prospects. However, that one-third must be meaningful. Sometimes, when prospects are sharing their challenges, it is important to toss out something about you or your company, assuring them that you, too, are sharing information. Preferably, it will be anecdotes (rather than a sales pitch) that go beyond your promotional material. You may offer advice for free. Don't make prospects feel they are baring their souls and getting nothing in return; upon reflection they may feel vulnerable or regretful for over-sharing.

If you seek to be 'real' then strive to eliminate any pretenses, ego-driven airs, and 'we're-always-right' attitudes. To assist in re-shaping your style, identify a role model that you consider 'real' – someone that is a natural at earning trust, and making others feel comfortable and connected. Study that person carefully. What works for them? What do they say or leave unsaid? What non-verbal

(cont. on bottom of next column)

Key Benefits of Entering Award Programs Sponsored by Professional Organizations

Recognition of one's design work through design awards can be a rewarding personal experience and a prestigious professional experience for a firm. But is the effort worth the accolades and accompanying prize, where there is no guarantee of success? The answer is yes, if one is willing to go the distance in a marketing quest that is purely overhead on the surface, but may hold the potential of capturing the attention of a prospective client, or group of clients.

The initial decision to enter must be based on whether the program entered is important and recognizable within the specific design discipline. Next, one must consider the cost of assembling and preparing the entry as required by the program rules. Next, consider the time required to prepare the materials against the firm's workload, as it can take hours, days and even weeks to prepare properly. Also consider how many awards one can seek within the year, again balanced against the workload of the firm.

First the materials

One needs two sets of project descriptions; the first, a basic list of the project team, manufacturers list, square footage, and so on. This must be fit into the word limitations of the award submittals. Second, you must have good photography at the ready, or all is lost in seeking design awards. Good graphic design will also help in making the material clear to the jury. It also helps to know details about who will be judging the awards and what their criteria and preferences might be.

Key benefits include:

♦ Exposure to potential clients and businesses locally and globally.

♦ Coverage through media, web sites, exhibitions, international trade fairs, annual publications and promotional material.

♦ Expert feedback opportunities.

♦ Best practices benchmarking.

♦ Corporate positioning as an innovative leader.

♦ Networking opportunities with design-related professionals.

♦ A conduit to government agencies that shape design policy.

♦ Peer recognition.

Measurable Outcomes

Participants in design award submissions could benefit from:

♦ A permanent sponsored profile for all entries, complete with images and company details.

♦ Articles published in the leading mainstream trade publications.

Expert Feedback

Often, a detailed summary of the judges comments and citations are provided.

Printed Promotional Material

Entry may be featured in the official program of the specific award presentation distributed to members of that specific design industry.

Local Exhibition Opportunities

There may be an annual exhibition of finalists co-located with the awards presentation function.

Assessment Criteria

While it will be different for each type of design category, general awards criteria includes:

* Innovation
* Visual/emotional appeal
* Functionality
* Quality

Keep It Real (cont.)

cues do they use? What are their character traits and how are they exhibited to prospects and clients? Document your observations, and then use them as inspiration so that you, too, can be that 'real' person that clients seek to build relationships with, and award business to!

Anne Scarlett is president of Scarlett Consulting, offering A/E/C industry-specific marketing expertise. An advocate of relationship-building through effective communication and networking, Anne has provided leadership to organizations such as Corporate Real Estate Women (CREW). She is also past president of the Chicago Young Executives Club (YEC). She can be reached at: 773-251-8132, or e-mail at anne@annescarlett.com. Her web site is www.annescarlett.com.

Got Training? Part 3

Professional Development Programs & The Secret Ingredients

By Joanne G. Linowes

When you conduct a training program in-house, you expect to see results – sharper skills, better communication, more technical competence, more successful management and administration. The great misconception, however, is that by simply offering courses and having staff participate, results will be what you are expecting. To make change happen, to make learning "stick," to make the new skills even more valuable to your firm, your training program needs well-constructed courses/seminars that go beyond standard subject matter.

Behind-the-scenes of putting together courses and seminars is the corporate desire to provide a training program that is worth the investment and proves as maximum value to both the firm and the individuals. Good skill-building courses need to be enhanced by being sprinkled with the secret ingredients. Keep the corporate overview in mind as you add:

Ingredient # 1: Attention-Grasp

Grasping attention of adult learners doesn't just happen because they need the particular information. Regardless of how valuable the course participants find the subject matter, regardless of the need to bring certain skill-sets up-to-speed, you know it is a finely honed art to provide quality, results-driven professional development experiences.

Your personnel are busy with billable activities. When they take time to participate in training courses, seminars, lunch-and-learns, etc., the sessions must grab and hold attention, deliver information succinctly, and maximize use of time.

The secret ingredient that moves a class from "just fine" to "really terrific" is the inclusion of *adult-learner-techniques*. Training consultants advise that course construction integrate techniques to enliven subject matter so it "sticks". Noticed only subliminally by course participants, these techniques focus on strategies and motives for how adults learn.

Adults, like kids, learn best when information is delivered in a format that makes it easy to acquire the new skills. This varies as each of us absorbs information differently. Some people absorb information best when it is delivered visually. Some listen best. Some prefer to get their information through tactile approaches like models, manipulatives, and props. Still others prefer experiences like role plays and practice problem-solving. Various lecture styles impact how adult's best grasp concepts and facts. Some learn best via storytelling, some by lists of details to memorize, some by analysis.

Areas to note include: arrangement of the classroom, blend of mixed media and mixed instructional styles, varied use of time, repetition of key skills in differing formats.

The secret ingredient for terrific seminars and classes is to engage every type of learner. Going forward, design classes and seminars that build-in multiple opportunities are able to grasp attention and reinforce new learning.

Ingredient #2: Business Development Focus

You can admit it! One key underlying motive of your in-house professional development or continuing education program is to enhance business development. *Every* course, and *any* course can help contribute to bringing in business, just by adding a few key promotional elements.

Consider that tomorrow's successful firms need to build a corporate culture that encourages business development at every staff level. Therefore, your personnel need to be armed with motivating concepts and practical techniques they can comfortably, easily, sincerely, and *proudly* use to help grow the firm. This includes ways to weave business development into daily

Got Training? PART 3

CONT. FROM PAGE 8.

interactions and routine meetings.

These are not generic techniques – they should be crafted with the expertise of marketing, training, and business development consultants to reflect your firm's strategies for success and bringing in new work. All this, of course, must be subtly and expertly intertwined within the "regular" subject matter of the course – even those on technical, design, HR, administrative, IT, and scientific topics. Make your seminars/classes incorporate your broader agenda for business development.

Use these two secret ingredients, not the regular fare. When you take the extra effort to strategically and professionally add them to your training events, when you allow your larger vision to introduce new approaches that go beyond simply offering a range of courses to fill skill-gaps, the yield is effective, well-received skill-building that contributes to employee satisfaction and business growth.

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.

MY TOP 14 MARKETING ISSUES

By David Golab

1. Voice mail - make it easy for me to call you back. Experienced marketers skip, or zip through their phone number so fast you can't write it down and frequently they don't speak clearly.

2. Return calls - answer phone calls and e-mails promptly.

3. Business cards - keep them handy and hand them out - I'm surprised at the number of "marketers" who don't carry enough.

4. Taking but not giving - information is a valuable resource, sharing rightly implies that both parties are giving.

5. Be creative - don't just do the same old, same old - keep it fresh. If something doesn't work - try something else.

6. At networking events - make it your job to introduce people who don't know each other. This is one of the most productive things you can do. People will be thankful and you will be seen as a leader.

7. Plan your pitch - at a networking meeting or client visit, plan your pitch ahead of time, but be flexible enough to go with the flow.

8. Talk without action is nothing - the marketing profession is full of good talkers who don't follow through with action. Avoid being near this type, or being one yourself.

9. Use moderation while marketing - and don't drink and drive.

10. Use of "Out of Office Auto-Reply" on your e-mail - marketing is a time sensitive business.

11. Have a unique value proposition - know what makes your firm different, why clients should hire you, and be able to answer those questions in one quick sentence.

12. Measure and track your results - if you can't track results, it's not worth doing.

13. Personalize your communications - it will greatly improve your response rate, and improve first impressions.

14. Know your client audience - be able to tell what distinguishes them, and what their individual needs and preferences are.

David Golab is Director of Marketing for Superstructures, an architecture and structural engineering firm dedicated to exterior building restoration. He can be reached at 646-437-1350 or dgolab@superstructures.com.

The FAB Approach is Passé, Sell Risk Reducers Instead

There is often a disconnect between what we offer our clients and what they are buying, how we present our qualifications and how they interpret them, and how clients use a two-tier selection process, yet we sell only to one. The first tier is the sorting out by objective performance criteria; e.g., the number of similar projects, accuracy of cost estimates, quality of the documents, the list goes on and on. Since most firms are expected to perform well in these areas by clients, there is still little to distinguish one firm from another.

Competitive strategies that design firms use include size, location and experience, yet all of these can be countered very easily. No firm even gets close without relevant experience. Technical superiority and design excellence are difficult attributes to prove and clients don't believe these claims anyway.

The second tier is purely subjective, and perception of value is paramount, and this is where firms must identify and establish clear differentiators. Conventional wisdom used to point to the "FAB" approach - features and benefits as the key to winning the client's project, and rightly so. But, it's not enough. The reason is simple. Clients disregard features altogether. Unless you've been living under a rock, you've heard of the "so-what?" rule. This question, posed at the end of every claim, leads to the unanswered question, "where's the benefit?"

This is the starting point for clients. They never talk about a firm's features as being a reason for having hired them, only the benefits they received as a result. What the client really wants is to know how the features translates to benefits, and further how these benefits can provide reduced risks for them and their projects.

Features beg the question, "what's in it for me?"

Benefits link the feature and provide the answer.

Risk reducers further reassures the client of how the benefits will mitigate the risk of anything going wrong, provide better coordination of the project, lessen the chance for errors, lower the possibility for liabilities, assure they will get latest solutions, and so on.

Benefits linked to risk reducers should be part of every business developer's lexicon, and an integral part of every proposal from the cover letter, executive summary, approach, resume and project description. They must prove that your stated benefits are real by adding substantiating facts. This is often the difference between winning or losing the project.

From *Marketing To Win: PSMJ's Guide to Developing and Improving Marketing Materials for A/E/C Firms.* For more info call Bruce Lynch at 800-537-7765, or go to www.psmj.com/publications/?id=117.

SMPS Awards Sets A/E/C Marketing Communications Standards

The Marketing Communications Awards program (MCA), one of SMPS's premier events, is an opportunity to acknowledge outstanding promotional material produced by A/E/C firms. This year 195 firms submitted over 350 entries in 18 categories judged by over 70 jurors.

"The program is a great opportunity to increase marketer professional awareness. The entries and winners highlight the marketing trends and stimulating cutting-edge design that is at work across the profession," according to MCA Program Chair Kim Niedzielski, senior marketing manager, HGA Architects and Engineers, Minneapolis. "Holiday Piece, Special Event, Web Site, Target Market, and Corporate Identity were among the more competitive categories this year," she said.

Additionally, a jury of industry leaders and national trade magazine editors selected the annual Best of Show, and People's Choice winners, as well as a winner for the new Adobe Merit Award. A full list of award winners and their entries can be viewed at (www.smps,org/awards/mca.htm). The 2008 MCA program entry deadline is April 7, 2008. Details will be available at www.smps.org in January. Awards will be given out at Build Business: Innovate to Elevate, the 2008 SMPS/PSMA National Conference, August 6-9, in Denver, CO.

Discussion: Judging the Marketing Communications Awards

Judging the Society for Marketing Professional Services MCA program is truly an educational experience. Not only is it an opportunity to view and examine the creative work of such a cross-section of A/E/C firms nationwide, but a chance to glean comments from the deliberations of the judges who represent the top marketers, business development consultants, writers, journalists, editors and clients involved specifically in the A/E/C industry.

Pete Kienle, past president of SMPS and CMO, McKim & Creed, PA, was one of the 70 judges this year, and observed, "creativity is alive and well in the A/E/C industry. Given the daily need to produce marketing proposals and pieces within frightening deadlines, I am amazed that marketers can clear their heads long enough to develop such creative pieces. And what usually wins is simple concepts, well written and displayed, and implemented in a high quality fashion." He added, "the short list of the best pieces falls out through critical review, and the open discussion of the marketing principles applied."

In the advertising category for example, Alexander Brown, Director of Marketing for Balfour Beatty Construction noted, "advertising has traditionally not been embraced by our industry, so I was pleasantly surprised by the number and quality of the entries."

"A few entries rose effortlessly to the top. These campaigns carried a clear, consistent message from ad to ad, were graphically appealing and connected with the reader on an emotional level. While the top entries tended to have well-defined targets and objectives, almost none measured the effectiveness of their ads. The big exception to this was the winning entry. In fact, it was this strategic approach that secured them the top spot," Alexander added.

General comments from judges of the Best of Show

The 'Best of Show' judges had the difficult task of picking one winner from all the first place winners in all 18 categories. Comparing brochure to brochure, or direct mail piece to direct mail piece is a much easier task, and this led Ann Looper, Director of Public Relations, American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), to comment: "I was fascinated by the innovation and creativity displayed in each category. Just when I thought I had seen what had to be the very best among the winners, I'd find the next category's winner just as effective and appealing but in a totally different way. From the memorable holiday greetings to evocative project proposals, each winner displayed clear messaging, visual appeal, valuable information, and impressive results."

Richard A. Belle, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), described the challenge of comparing the best among the best. "I was impressed with three things. The first was fidelity to the client; those pieces that understood the client, and understood the message, then effectively put that message across. The second thing was the level of creativity. The third was those that really showed a little different thinking, and were a little unorthodox. The ones that really worked sold their message to the client. They were especially creative, unusual and provocative in a very positive sense. They really made me sit back and think twice about them. And that's the purpose of any PR effort, is to remember it after you've finished reading it."

Kristen Richards, Editor-in-Chief of *ArchNewsNow*, felt the same way, but noted that the overall impression she had was, "not only the care and thoughtfulness that each winning piece displayed, but how thought-provoking they were. More than I'm used to seeing. Really good stuff." Kristen also commented that her motto after the judging is "we don't do can't." She was referring to the OPUS Group's series of ads which used evocative headlines paired with innovative photographs. Check it out at SMPS.org/mca/htm.

A/E Rainmaker

The Guide to Attracting and Keeping Great Clients

November, 2007
Volume 3, Number 11

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 ❑ Virginia Daffron, Verdant Communications ❑ John Doerr, Wellesley Hills Group ❑ Rick Einhorn, EYP Mission Critical Facilities ❑ **Michelle Fitzpatrick, Marketivity** ❑ Richard Friedman, Friedman and Partners ❑ Rolf Fuessler, Fuessler Group ❑ Guy Geier, FXFowle Architects ❑ Amy Gesenhue, Amy Wrote It ❑ Kay Godwin, Marketing Avenues ❑ **David Golab, Superstructures** ❑ Chuck Goldstone, Goldstone Communications ❑ 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 ❑ Gary Hunt, AMI Institute ❑ Jack Jolls, John D. Jolls and Company ❑ Judy Kienle, Kienle Communications ❑ Pete Kienle, McKim & Creed ❑ **Joanne Linowes, Linowes Executive Development International** ❑ Susan Lowe, Expertise Marketing, LLC ❑ **Peter Ashton Lyon, U.S. Cost** ❑ **Marilyn Mendell, Win Spin CIC** ❑ Scott Mickle, AEC Marketing Solutions ❑ Susan Murphy, Murphy Motivation ❑ Anthony Musemuci, Emtec Engineers ❑ Katy Potts, Marketivity ❑ Kim Niedzielski, HGA Architects and Engineers ❑ Paula Pradines, Schirmer Engineers ❑ Paul Regensberg, Raincastle ❑ 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 ❑ Barbara Shuck, Emc2 Architects ❑ Bernie Siben, The Siben Consult ❑ Marcy Steinberg, Cynosure Communications ❑ Frank Stasiowski, FAIA, PSMJ Resources, Inc. ❑ Karen Susman, Remarkable Associations ❑ Mitch Tobol, The Tobol Group ❑ **Wendy Ward, Constructive Communications** ❑ Andrew Weinberg, The LiRo Group ❑ Steve White, Graham Communications ❑ Karen Winters, AEC Marketing Insights

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.