

Guest Speaker: The Chickenman approach to marketing

Any publicity is good publicity, and this approach can increase your firm's media exposure.

"He's everywhere, he's everywhere. Up in the sky, it's Chickenman!" There's screaming and yelling in the background. So starts a 1960s Chicago radio station parody on Superman.

Over the years, I have developed a theory that has consistently borne fruit and is as reliable as my digital watch. Be everywhere. Any publicity is good publicity.

Of course, there's everywhere and there's EV REE WHERE. Knowing the boundaries can be tricky. Understanding the corporate mission and culture and steering business that embraces the same vision and direction go hand-in-hand with a great deal of listening.

Interviewing people inside the firm and discerning the exact clients they really want must be heard by you—the one doing the pitch. Listening will elicit what they really think about themselves as well. This preparation takes a lot of time, and it is key to knowing how far you can push, where you can go, and where you might find clients.

Many companies focus on only peer business journals and a few targeted periodicals in a particular market segment. If a firm has a broad project type, then, in my opinion, it requires the Chickenman approach. If the company just wants everyone to know it exists—use the Chickenman. Chickenman means everywhere.

You really have to know your firm's limits. Are they extremely private, or fun and carefree? The ev-ree-where has to reflect the firm's culture. If they're quiet, refined, and specialized, you can still throw out a broad net, but you look for well-heeled and universally respected technical journals, university publications, and periodicals that reflect its client base. If it's old money, you look at a connoisseur's type of market and you

may advise them to support art galleries and environmental causes.

■ **The Chickenman approach takes a sort of renaissance person or a jack-of-all-trades-and-master-of-none mentality.**

Being able to see the hook and the facets one single project can produce necessitates a broad-brush base of interests. To stay current requires constant reading. I go to magazine stores and buy a different selection of magazines each month. After a while, a pattern emerges of what reporters and editors cover, and what styles and layouts they lean toward. I tailor pitches toward specific themes and layouts that reflect the personality of each individual publication.

■ **The Chickenman approach is inclusive.** In-house, it is a team sport. That means the business development, marketing, and public relations departments work strategically together to accomplish the goal. That means placing staff everywhere, in all kinds of organizations and encouraging them to move up ladders; it means teaching them to ask for assignments and speaking opportunities. It means supporting people in the firm who show an interest in writing articles. If they've never been published, interview them, sketch out the article, let them edit it, and then submit it for them. If you know enough about the topic, then you write it and they get the credit.

Being unattached to one's own ego works wonders when applying the Chickenman approach. To get the entire firm marketing, talking, and being energized comes from getting their projects recognition, getting them awards, getting them published, and getting them in the spotlight. Apply for a broad spectrum of awards. If the project doesn't win, apply again with the same one until you win.

All of this action takes a great deal of organization. Keeping track of articles published, about to be published, and possible ideas for upcoming articles all need to be tracked. Keep charts and spreadsheets: who belongs to what organizations, a two-year plan for all media public relations, an

award-tracking chart, a promotional mailer chart, and more. Set goals, stay on budget, and document results.

The most important list is the current media contacts. That's everyone you can know at one place, including the editors and the publisher. Make them your friends. Contribute information that has nothing to do with your firm. When you look at the list, it should look like a magazine store's bookshelf. If you see just architectural magazines, then you aren't working the Chickenman. Try anywhere and see what you get. When you begin getting articles in the penny-savers and tiny local papers, your firm will begin to give you pushback. To appease the naysayers, and possibly your boss, make sure you place the big fancy articles in their wish list publications.

Once a year, pin up all of the things your marketing and public relations department has produced for the entire office to see. It sparks new ideas from them and they think, "Hey, I might get published or I could speak at a conference, if Sally did."

The whole point to Chickenman is that people do not remember where they see things. They just get a feeling. The more often you have your name out there, the subliminal message is all that remains: You're everywhere. People must think you're great for you to be published and they transfer that to mean, in their minds, you are great. If you're working the Chickenman, you're getting everyone in your firm some kind of recognition, you're in hundreds of publications yearly, lots of people in the firm do speaking engagements and interviews, your graphics department rocks, and you're getting new projects, and winning tons of awards. Everyone's in motion—everywhere. The whole town gets the buzz and it becomes infectious! ■

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the **Zweig** A/E Marketing Letter

November 6, 2006

A ZweigWhite Publication

Marketing dollars wasted

Mark Zweig looks at why A/E firms need to not only spend more on marketing, but they need to follow up on opportunities that present themselves as well.

As a founder of a twice-named *Inc. 500* fastest-growing, privately-held firm and researcher and consultant to the A/E/P and environmental industry for many years, I learned long ago that one path to being more successful than your competitors is to outspend them in marketing. Yet, it seems like whenever I suggest this in a talk or a consulting session, someone inevitably points out that it has to be spent wisely. While I think that attitude usually results in a marketing budget that's less than it should be, recent experience trying to hire an environmental firm points out there may be some validity to this point of view.

Don't let your marketing dollars go down the drain over stupidity and inattention. It's completely avoidable.

A few weeks ago, I needed an asbestos abatement firm for a small project I'm doing. I did some Internet research on who is doing similar projects here in my area and turned up the name of a firm. I then got on their web site and filled out an electronic contact form and asked them to get in touch with

me. I felt for sure I'd be called by someone from this company in the next day or two, but guess what? A week went by and no one ever contacted me.

As I really needed the services of a company like this, I got back on their site and found the phone number of their local office. I called it and asked for the person responsible for asbestos abatement projects. I was given a name by the receptionist of a fellow who wasn't in that day. So I asked for his voice mail and left a message telling him I had a need for their services and would appreciate a call back. More days passed with no response. So I called another time on a different day and was put on hold for so long, I eventually hung up in frustration.

I don't know why I have to keep telling stories like this. You would think by now that everyone in our business could see that this kind of stuff should never happen. Yet it still does! All the marketing dollars are down the drain because the firm simply cannot respond to incoming leads.

These situations are, unfortunately, an everyday occurrence. There's no good reason why they crop up. Sure—there are plenty of BAD reasons—like the IT department was unaware that electronic inquiries went to a dead e-mail inbox, or the receptionist is new, or "Bob," the head of that particular service line, is "real bad about returning his phone calls." It's all a bunch of BS and really lame excuses. Companies who tolerate these incidents deserve to go out of business as far as I am concerned. And it's a complete waste of marketing dollars spent to generate those inquiries.

CEOs who learn of these kinds of incidents occurring in their own companies better get real excited (and probably agitated). You have to let your people know that this is a huge deal and not just something to shrug off as "business as usual" with a lick and a promise to do better next time. I can admit that there have been instances where leads weren't responded to in my own firm, but I will also tell you that I didn't just let it go. We even lost a principal once over this kind of lackadaisical treatment of clients. →

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My friend, Mike Stennet, owns the local Fayetteville Steak 'n Shake restaurant. He is a tough driver of an owner who really cares how customers get treated. One of the ways he finds out how well they are doing is he hires "mystery shoppers" who go to his restaurant, eat, and then send him an e-mail describing the experience. If he learns someone wasn't greeted and seated, or someone sat there for a long time without being waited on, he freaks out and calls a meeting of the entire staff to discuss it, after confronting those involved in the incident directly. Maybe firms in our business should start using "mystery client inquirers." It could be an eye-opener.

Don't let your marketing dollars go down the drain over stupidity and inattention. It's completely avoidable.— **M.Z.**
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Mark Zweig is the founder of ZweigWhite. Contact him with questions or comments at mzweig@zweigwhite.com.



Marketing's role in job descriptions

Discover how marketing professionals can play an effective role in writing job descriptions.

When firms want to hire new employees, marketing professionals are often given the task of writing the job descriptions. Marketing professionals who write job descriptions should not view this responsibility as a burden, but rather as a marketing opportunity to sell the firm. Job descriptions are viewed by hundreds of people; after all, they are posted in the newspaper, on the company web site, and on a plethora of job search web sites. Therefore, it is vital for marketing professionals to invest time in crafting job descriptions that will promote their firm.

"When I became manager of our marketing department three years ago, I reviewed all of our current job descriptions from our HR department and updated them to match the staff's current

responsibilities," says Julie Oseland, regional marketing manager with **Harris & Associates, Inc.** (Concord, CA), a 480-person program and construction management, municipal services, and civil design firm.

Oseland, who is responsible for writing job descriptions for her team of marketers, has a marketing staff of five coordinators, one marketing assistant, and one assistant marketing manager. When writing a job description, Oseland uses the firm's standard template that the HR department created. This ensures that the firm standardizes its job descriptions. The job template includes a job summary, position responsibilities, and specific job requirements. Due to the fact that the firm has had marketing coordinators on staff for the past 22 years, writing a job description from scratch has not been an issue for Oseland.

Although there is a standard template for writing job descriptions, Harris & Associates is still growing and changing; therefore, it is vital for Oseland to keep herself up-to-date with the individual job responsibilities in the marketing department. Oseland keeps herself in the loop by working with her marketing manager, who is responsible for overseeing the staff and managing the work flow on a daily basis, she says. This way, she is constantly aware when work responsibilities change with her marketing staff.

"With a growing company like ours, things are constantly evolving: the services we provide as we grow our staff, the types of projects we pursue, and the clients we serve. As we develop new positions, we must tailor our job descriptions to better identify appropriate candidates. It is an ongoing process," says Oseland.

Robert Dickson, director of marketing at **Maser Consulting P.A.** (Red Bank, NJ), a 275-person consulting engineering firm, relies on his 25 years of experience in the marketing field to write effective job descriptions. Dickson also relies on his peers in the **Society for Marketing**

Professional Services (SMPS)

(Alexandria, VA) to get examples of job descriptions from their firms.

"Over the years, the words marketing and sales/business development have been portrayed as the same functions; however, they are clearly two distinct and different functions that require different types of individuals and experience to perform and succeed," says Dickson.

To ensure that Maser's job descriptions are up-to-date, every year, at an employee performance review, employees are asked to write their primary and secondary responsibilities they handle in their job, says Dickson. These responsibilities are compared to the current job description and changes are made as needed and agreed upon by the employee as well as the director of marketing.

RAND Engineering & Architecture, PC (New York, NY), a 60-person engineering and architecture firm, has hired about 20 employees in the past six months, says Marketing Director Peter Scallion.

Scallion is responsible for writing the job descriptions for all of the firm's positions. He uses the existing job descriptions as templates and revises them by adding specific skills or levels of experience to fit each individual job.

Typically, Scallion writes two descriptions for each job; the firm places an ad in the *Sunday New York Times*, where it only lists the abbreviations and the essentials of the positions, because the firm pays by the line. RAND also places a job description on the company web site and on the Craigslist web site (www.craigslist.com) which costs \$25. These job descriptions include more details on the position, the company, and benefits, says Scallion.

Scallion writes a job description that promotes RAND by describing the firm as "rapidly growing." After all, the firm has grown from 25 to 60 employees over the past five years, says Scallion. To attract recent graduates, the firm also mentions that its architectural and engineering



positions provide experience that will count toward Professional Engineer (PE) and Registered Architect (RA) licensure.

Scallion also includes the firm's web site address in its job descriptions; he suggests that other firms include their web site address when writing job descriptions, so that prospective employees can research the firm to see if they are interested in working there.— **KRISTINA RIELLY** (krielly@zweigwhite.com) ■

Feedback

A reader responds to a recent *Zweig A/E Marketing Letter* article.

In his article “We don't get any respect” (Issue 147, September 4, 2006), Ed Hannan looked at why marketing professionals who went to the **Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS)** (Alexandria, VA) conference in August are misguided in feeling like they don't get any respect from their peers or firm leadership. His article prompted Beth Harris, chapter secretary of SMPS Georgia, and marketing manager at **KHAFRA** (Atlanta, GA), a 140-person engineering, environmental, architectural, and planning services firm, to write:

“Ed, you have certainly stirred up the SMPS pot. Who were you talking to at *Build Business*, anyway? Nobody I was with or that I met, that's for sure. Let's consider the other side of that story. As a marketing professional for an A/E firm, and in the industry since 1995, I certainly do not feel a lack of respect for what I do. If anything, I get a lot of respect in my office because people see me working hard to bring in business. And they all, I mean ALL, know that SMPS provides our firm broad exposure that it would otherwise not have—locally as well as nationally. From a first-timer at *Build Business*, it was great to meet so many people who do what I do. I was energized by it, as were many.

“It is unfortunate that there were people speaking unprofessionally about their principals and/or firms. And more unfortunate that you chose to focus on that in your article, instead of all of the great things that happened at that conference. Too bad you didn't hear SMPS members talking about how great it was to exchange ideas and even brainstorm with so many peers who understand the difference between marketing plans and strategic plans, the importance of an up-to-date web site, how to break into a new market segment, how they juggle marketing/business development activities, the list goes on ... there were a lot of good discussions you could/should have written about.

“Being a non-technical (marketing) professional in a technical industry, I find it challenging and fun keeping up with engineers on a daily basis! Don't you find, too, that when you are respectful—you tend to get respect in return? The fact that my firm supports my very active involvement (on a local, regional, and national level) in SMPS shows me that there is no lack of respect from where I sit.”

Ed responds: “Beth, thanks for writing in. I picked up on the sentiment from talking to and overhearing conversations with many people who were there. They were more than happy to be at the conference and feel it is worth their time, but at the same time, they felt they were getting a lack of respect from people within their firms. Consider yourself lucky if you are respected by the people in your firm; it is quite common for the opposite to be the case. And by no means am I trying to convey the notion that good things did not happen at the SMPS conference. I believe I made the point several times in the article that the networking and educational opportunities are what make the conference worthwhile.” ■

Have a comment to make about something you've read in *The Zweig A/E Marketing Letter*? Send us your feedback and your comments may appear in an upcoming issue of *The Zweig A/E Marketing Letter*!

On the Record: Where does your 2007 marketing plan stand?

Find out how far along these marketing and business development professionals are in setting their marketing plans for the upcoming year.

Devising an effective marketing plan in advance can ensure you're ahead of the game. Although it's only November, strategic planning for 2007 is already underway. Find out what these marketing and business development professionals have in store for 2007.

Jason Redmond, marketing director with **DiNisco Design Partnership Limited** (Boston, MA), a 20-person full-service architecture firm:

“Our 2007 marketing plan currently includes our overall branding strategy, which has remained constant, as have the methods we use to communicate it to internal and external audiences. We continue to research current market conditions, as public-sector work is constantly fluctuating. Finally, we plan to establish benchmarks against which our marketing success in the existing as well as new markets can be monitored and measured.”

Howard L. Isnor, assistant marketing director with **Strand Associates, Inc.** (Madison, WI), a 350-person consulting engineering firm:

“We are now in the process of evaluating known leads and preparing strategic plans for 2007 for each of our technical disciplines and geographic target markets. We have engineers who coordinate marketing efforts for each of our disciplines and they are responsible for initiating these efforts. In addition, we are currently looking at personnel needs to meet overall marketing goals and objectives for 2007, on a discipline-by-discipline basis.”— **KRISTINA RIELLY** (krielly@zweigwhite.com) ■

For more responses, read this article online at www.zweigwhite.com/trends/marketing.



Portfolio

Dewberry remembers 50 years

Find out how this 1,840-person engineering and architecture firm incorporated employees, clients, and friends into a year-long 50th anniversary celebration.

For its 50th anniversary, 1,840-person engineering and architecture firm Dewberry (Fairfax, VA) knew it wanted to commemorate the occasion, but it also knew that it couldn't just be a one-day event. So, the firm decided to make its anniversary a year-long celebration for clients, friends, and employees.

Work began on the anniversary celebration in September 2005, says Molly Wagner, corporate communications manager at Dewberry. "We wanted to thank clients and friends of the company and we wanted to thank employees."

The first piece was sent out in January 2006 to kick-off the anniversary year. The firm had 13,000 New Year's Eve cards printed that announced the anniversary. The center of the front cover of the card featured the firm's name and logo as well as the phrase "50th anniversary." On either side of the front cover were the phrases, "1956 Celebrating the past" and "2006 Focusing on the future." When opened, recipients see a magnifying-glass graphic, which was done in-house, with the phrase, "In 2006, take a closer look at Dewberry! 30 offices, 1,840 employees, thousands of clients & projects, over \$220 million annual revenue."

The cards were sent to all 32 offices where, once received, employees wrote personal notes and mailed the cards to clients, Wagner says.



Throughout 2006, Dewberry is celebrating its 50th anniversary with clients, friends, and employees with a variety of pieces, including dewberry jam and the book, *The Dewberry Way: Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence*.

The Details

Firm size: 1,840

Marketing tactic: The firm commemorated its 50th anniversary with a year-long celebration that included a New Year's Eve card sent out in January 2006; a March event for executive management, key clients, and longtime friends; an April celebration for employees; a book titled *The Dewberry Way: Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence*; a framed poster and a magnifying glass so employees could find their photos on the poster; and intranet contests with prizes for employees.

Distribution: For the gala, the firm invited roughly 300 people including key clients and longtime friends. For the firm's April 13th birthday, a breakfast was held at its 32 offices and all of the employees were invited. Throughout the year, the pieces have been given to clients at receptions.

Cost: The total cost for the project was \$205,000. The book cost \$45,000 and the remainder of the celebration, which included the marketing efforts for the gala, cost \$160,000.

Results: The firm has received a lot of positive feedback from the piece. The book, *The Dewberry Way: Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence*, has also been given to contacts.

But, for Dewberry, there was still much more to celebrate. Dewberry held a March gala for roughly 300 people that included executive management, key clients, and longtime friends. The firm showed a video at the gala that included interviews gathered by Jeanette Kramer, director of corporate marketing services, and Wagner. The video included tidings from clients and public figures such as United States Senator John Warner (R-VA).

Each attendee also received a hard-cover copy of the book, *The Dewberry Way: Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence*. Along with Chairman Sid Dewberry, Brenda Tudge, manager of human resources communications and events at the firm, worked on the 124-page book that takes readers through an in-depth history of the firm. The book begins with a dedication that reads, "To the employees and clients of Dewberry, who together created this company, give it substance and purpose, and have sustained and supported it for a half century. Thank you." Six of the nine chapters of the book focus on a particular decade and



include titles like “1950s: Friday, April the 13th— A Lucky Day” and “1970s: Mapping the Future.” There’s also a chapter on “The Dewberry Way” as well as contributions from the firm’s past and current CEOs. Photos of the employees at Dewberry’s different offices are shown toward the end of the book. A copy of the video presentation in CD-ROM format is included inside the back cover of the book.

Along with the text, project photos and clippings from media outlets decorate the pages. The project photos were taken in-house, Wagner says, and the clippings came from a scrapbook that Dewberry has kept over the years.

Gala attendees received a jar of dewberry jam as well. Wagner says the firm found a North Carolina company that makes dewberry jam, which is a berry that resembles blackberries, and ordered more than 500 cases. The firm created the label, which includes a photo of Dewberry and the organization’s logo. “We thought that it would be neat to give away something that’s made out of dewberry,” Wagner says.

The gala allowed the firm to say thank you to clients and friends, but it still wanted to pay tribute to its employees. On the firm’s April 13th birthday, Wagner says, it held a breakfast celebration to thank those employees where the video was aired that included clients and public figures congratulating the firm. Also, Wagner says, all employees received a jar of the dewberry jam and a tote bag with the firm’s logo. The bag contained the book, *The Dewberry Way: Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence* and a DVD of the video.

Each office also received a framed poster which shows the U.S. covered in smaller photos of the firm’s employees. Accompanying the photos is the phrase, “The Future of Dewberry. Our People!”

Along with the tote bag, employees got a magnifying glass enclosed in a leather pouch. The cover of the pouch reads,



To kickoff the year-long anniversary celebration, Dewberry sent out a New Year’s Eve card in January 2006 to employees at all of its 32 offices. The employees personalized the cards and forwarded them onto clients.

“Find yourself in Dewberry’s future.” Using the magnifying glass, Wagner says, employees could search for themselves or other co-workers within the poster.

Throughout the year, Wagner says, Dewberry has also used its intranet to celebrate the anniversary while maintaining a connection among all offices. Once a quarter over the entire year, contests have been listed on the firm’s intranet whereby interested employees can participate and win a prize. For instance, contests included word jumbles where the first 10 people to answer correctly got a gift.

The cost for the year-long project was roughly \$160,000. That cost included marketing efforts for the gala like the jam and video, Wagner says. The book had a separate cost of about \$45,000.

The firm has received a lot of positive feedback from the pieces, Wagner says. “We continue to give out the jam.” People have made requests for the jam and individual offices have been holding client receptions where they have given out the jam. The posters also scored with employees who really enjoyed finding themselves and co-workers using the magnifying glass, she says. While the book, *The Dewberry Way: Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence*, has been passed along to contacts as well.—

FRANCEEN SHAUGHNESSY
(fshaughnessy@zweigwhite.com) ■

Tactical Toolbox

Learn from Dewberry and do the following with your anniversary celebration:

Add a personal touch. By giving clients, friends, and employees a jar of dewberry jam, the firm added a fun, personal touch to the gift. Find a gift that makes a personal connection with recipients as well as adds some humor.

Connect all of the offices. It’s easy for branch offices to feel left out during an anniversary celebration. The firm’s intranet can help make all of the offices feel like a part of the celebration.



Portfolio

BAR Architects web site raises the bar

Discover how this architecture and planning firm created a new look for its web site.

Wanting to represent itself in a fresh light, 85-person architecture and planning firm **BAR Architects** (San Francisco, CA) decided to overhaul its web site.

“Our firm is 40 years old and we have transitioned to second-generation owners. We wanted to embrace our traditional reputation as well as a new, fresh, energetic architectural style—to build from our past and embrace the future,” says Linda Crouse, an associate principal and director of marketing.

BAR Architects wanted its redesigned web site to show its timeless architectural style as well as its modern design capabilities to potential, past, and existing clients within its market. BAR also wanted the web site to exhibit the firm’s diverse portfolio and capitalize on quality images without overloading its browser, says Crouse. It was necessary for the firm to have a web site that was easy to navigate, could load quickly, and be updated in-house by the marketing and administrative staff.

BAR began discussing its web site redesign in April 2004. It launched the site in June 2005. The firm began the overhaul of its web site by establishing a web site committee that included a cross-section of 10 people: principal, associate principals, associates, technical, and marketing staff. By having buy-in from the firm’s employees, it helped the process become a reality, says Crouse.

The web site committee conducted preliminary research from April through June 2004 by reviewing more than 100 web sites. During this time, the committee established what it liked and what it did not like in web sites. Committee members also made note of who designed the web sites. The web site committee did not limit its research by only looking at web sites from architecture firms, but also reviewed web sites outside of the industry, says Crouse.

After doing preliminary research, BAR interviewed several web site consultants and hired Fine Design (San Francisco, CA). Crouse initially met Steve Fine, project manager with Fine Design, a year and a half earlier when he came in to introduce his firm’s graphic capabilities. Crouse was impressed with the firm and Fine’s energy; however, BAR was not looking into creating a new web site at that time. Crouse says BAR liked Fine Design’s style; it wasn’t too overdone or stylized.

The budget for the web site redesign was \$40,000 to \$50,000 for the web site consultant, additional photography, and two

years of site hosting. The actual cost of the web site overhaul was \$44,000.

BAR’s redesigned web site includes large, vibrant project

images that showcase the design quality of the firm. When visiting the firm’s web site (www.bararch.com) a rotating portfolio of the firm’s work is displayed on the homepage. The photographs change each time a browser visits the web site, giving the homepage a fresh look each time it is visited. The web site is also user-friendly, with areas of content listed on the left-hand side of the firm’s homepage, including news, recognition, principals, and clients etc.; the content buttons do not overload the web site or take away from the images.

BAR’s web site has been a success; the firm has had various e-mails, voice mails, and phone conversations regarding its redesigned web site. The firm’s new web site also won “Site of the Week” by *Communication Arts’ Design Interact* web magazine for the week of September 26, 2005. BAR’s web site also won first place in the web site category at the **Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS)** (Alexandria, VA) 2006 Marketing Communications Awards.

BAR anticipates that the firm’s new web site will remain functional for four years or longer. “We stayed away from a trendy look for a more simplistic look, therefore, it may last longer than that,” says Crouse. If BAR has 700 browsers a week on its web site for four years, the cost is only \$.30 per browser. — **KRISTINA RIELLY** (krIELLY@zweigwhite.com) ■



Tactical Toolbox

Learn from BAR Architects and do the following with your web site:

Take the time to research. Research is critical to determine what you like and what you don’t like in order to create a successful web site. If you don’t know what’s out there, it’s impossible to effectively craft a web site that is unique and up-to-date.

Get buy-in. Working in the A/E industry, employees are especially sensitive to design tactics. Take advantage of this by getting buy-in from other principals and leaders of your firm.



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■ **The Chickenman approach takes a sort of renaissance person or a jack-of-all-trades-and-master-of-none mentality.**

Being able to see the hook and the facets one single project can produce necessitates a broad-brush base of interests. To stay current requires constant reading. I go to magazine stores and buy a different selection of magazines each month. After a while, a pattern emerges of what reporters and editors cover, and what styles and layouts they lean toward. I tailor pitches toward specific themes and layouts that reflect the personality of each individual publication.

■ **The Chickenman approach is inclusive.** In-house, it is a team sport. That means the business development, marketing, and public relations departments work strategically together to accomplish the goal. That means placing staff everywhere, in all kinds of organizations and encouraging them to move up ladders; it means teaching them to ask for assignments and speaking opportunities. It means supporting people in the firm who show an interest in writing articles. If they've never been published, interview them, sketch out the article, let them edit it, and then submit it for them. If you know enough about the topic, then you write it and they get the credit.

Being unattached to one's own ego works wonders when applying the Chickenman approach. To get the entire firm marketing, talking, and being energized comes from getting their projects recognition, getting them awards, getting them published, and getting them in the spotlight. Apply for a broad spectrum of awards. If the project doesn't win, apply again with the same one until you win.

All of this action takes a great deal of organization. Keeping track of articles published, about to be published, and possible ideas for upcoming articles all need to be tracked. Keep charts and spreadsheets: who belongs to what organizations, a two-year plan for all media public relations, an

award-tracking chart, a promotional mailer chart, and more. Set goals, stay on budget, and document results.

The most important list is the current media contacts. That's everyone you can know at one place, including the editors and the publisher. Make them your friends. Contribute information that has nothing to do with your firm. When you look at the list, it should look like a magazine store's bookshelf. If you see just architectural magazines, then you aren't working the Chickenman. Try anywhere and see what you get. When you begin getting articles in the penny-savers and tiny local papers, your firm will begin to give you pushback. To appease the naysayers, and possibly your boss, make sure you place the big fancy articles in their wish list publications.

Once a year, pin up all of the things your marketing and public relations department has produced for the entire office to see. It sparks new ideas from them and they think, "Hey, I might get published or I could speak at a conference, if Sally did."

The whole point to Chickenman is that people do not remember where they see things. They just get a feeling. The more often you have your name out there, the subliminal message is all that remains: You're everywhere. People must think you're great for you to be published and they transfer that to mean, in their minds, you are great. If you're working the Chickenman, you're getting everyone in your firm some kind of recognition, you're in hundreds of publications yearly, lots of people in the firm do speaking engagements and interviews, your graphics department rocks, and you're getting new projects, and winning tons of awards. Everyone's in motion—everywhere. The whole town gets the buzz and it becomes infectious! ■

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What's Working: Short takes on actual A/E marketing tactics that are producing results

A media kit that works

While the original intention was to get several media outlets to attend the opening of a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) pre-certified building, 192-person architecture, landscape, planning, structural engineering, and interior design firm **Dekker/Perich/Sabatini** (Albuquerque, NM) scored a bigger hit with the media kit that accompanied its invite.

Sent to roughly 50 publications, the media kit included an introduction letter that announced the opening of the firm's new corporate headquarters and the first building to be LEED-CS (the LEED Green Building Rating System for Core and Shell Development) pre-certified in the state of New Mexico.

A media kit with a brochure that highlights the new building as well as provides information on the U.S. **Green Building Council (USGBC)** (Washington, DC) LEED program accompanied the letter. Within the first pages of the brochure, recipients get a thorough explanation of what LEED is, including a chart that outlines the different points and categories in the LEED system. The following pages provide an explanation on some of the building's features as well as a partial list of the products used to make this structure LEED-CS pre-certified.

The firm has received several phone calls inquiring about the building from local media. Also, three newspapers—*Albuquerque Journal*, *The Albuquerque Tribune*, and *New Mexico Business Weekly*—wrote articles on the building.

Building name recognition

For any new branch office, it's a challenging task to build a name for itself in a new market. **BSB Design** (West Des Moines, IA), a 320-person architectural and land planning firm, put together a

five-part series to build the name of its young office in the Boston market.

As part of the series, the organization is sending out postcards that focus on different topics and showcase the firm's work. Every three weeks, the firm is mailing a postcard with one of the following titles: "Inspiration," "Innovation," "Luxury," "Experience," and "Design." The "Inspiration" postcard was mailed in September while "Innovation" was sent in October.

For "Inspiration," the postcard's front cover shows a beach house with the word "inspiration" at the top and the phrase "Something's Brewing in Boston" at the bottom. The back reads, "We all need to be inspired. BSB Design uses regional context and natural site elements to find inspiration. Prospective buyers will find it in the homes BSB helps you create."

By targeting a specific group of clients, BSB's office found a way to build its name recognition while showcasing its work.

Spreading some knowledge

Usually, a company newsletter is packed with information on firm-specific topics like new employees or updates on projects. However, **Faithful + Gould** (New

York, NY), a 2,000-person construction management firm, decided to share some knowledge with existing and potential clients in its newsletter, *International Construction Intelligence*.

Published bi-monthly, the July/August 2006 issue contains informational articles on public-private partnerships and global infrastructure needs. The front cover of the newsletter has an in-depth story on the growing use of public-private partnerships. The story is broken down into sections like "Key features" and "Making it work" that provide information to recipients on these topics. A sidebar story titled "What is it?" explains that a public-private partnership "is a contractual arrangement between public and private parties to provide public infrastructure." Another story about global infrastructure needs has a graph that compares the infrastructure of several countries.

Turning a newsletter into an informational resource increases the likelihood that the firm's name will stay on the radar screen of clients and potential clients. ■

Compiled by Franceen Shaughnessy.

If you have something that's working in your firm, let us know. E-mail Managing Editor Ed Hannan at ehannan@zweigwhite.com.

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Real-world tactics at work in design firms today

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