

Multimedia Marketing Strategies

Getting the Most **Bang** for Your Bucks

Shaving brushes...You'll soon see 'em...On the shelf...In some museum...Burma-Shave.

It was an advertising campaign so successful it is still talked about 85 years after its debut. (And think about it: How many ad campaigns can you recall from last year? From last week?)

The Burma-Shave brushless shaving cream became one of the most recognized products in the United States and its marketing gimmick one of the most anticipated events for highway motorists. The company placed a series of six signs at regular intervals along major routes so that motorists driving at certain speeds would have more than enough time to see, read, and chuckle at (but most importantly—remember) the witty rhymes and the product they promoted.

But that era of marketing, when businesspeople knew—they automatically knew—who their customers were and how to gain access to them, has become a sepia-toned photo. That era is gone.

Nowadays, according to marketing experts in central New Jersey, advertising promotion has become as fast-paced as the lifestyle of a product's target audience. There are as many avenues of approach to a customer as there are media devices.

Mark Iorio, president of the Ewing-based The Mega Group, tells this story to illustrate the issues confronting advertisers nowadays.

"I had a long conversation with a former Johnson and Johnson executive who worked in marketing and advertising for 30-plus years, and he said exactly that, that years ago, we really didn't have to worry about where the dollars were allocated, we just knew that the preponderance of (TV) viewers were daytime viewers, so we'd run ads during the daytime."

But now those viewers are fragmented, with remote-control and show-recording options that can bypass advertisers.

And in an economic downturn when clients may be reluctant to devote funds to advertising, the job of people in the business of marketing has become more challenging than ever.



Mark Iorio



Pamela Pruitt



Jennifer Murphy



Andrea Kelliher

The Bunker Mentality

Pamela Pruitt, who has been running her own business, Lawrence-based The Next Level Consulting, since 2004, and who has 40 years of experience in the field, including stints in radio, TV, and the recording industries, laments the bunker mentality.

"I just know in most of my years in marketing, whether a company is big or small, the marketing budget seems to be the first thing to be cut," she said. "And that is the company's biggest mistake. When you are in a downturn, when you are being attacked, your tactic should be to market yourself strategically the best way you can."

The regional experts agreed that what that means is intensive consultation with a customer to learn their needs, identify their audience, and decide which mix of media to use for promotions.

Jennifer Murphy, who started her own firm, The Detail, in Hamilton two years ago, is facing those challenges herself as a start-up during the recession trying to convince other recession-beleaguered businesses to spend money today for benefits tomorrow.

"I think with bigger companies it's not too hard but with smaller businesses it's more important for them to see the need for it," she said. "If you are not willing to invest in yourself why would anyone else do it?"

"More people than ever are starting their own businesses because they were laid off. It's more important than ever to come up with a way to brand yourself as different and get your name out there."

Andrea Kelliher, who runs Positive Solutions in Chesterfield, concurs with the idea that in a recession advertising becomes more critical than ever.

"You need to have your name out there in some way and there are so many ways that are cost effective," she said. "People are afraid they don't know how to do it or that an agency will cost them so much more money. Their to-do lists have become a lot longer than what they used to be, people are doing two or three jobs."

So marketing suffers. Which is where the experts come in, to show clients how to do it, and where to spend money. Because if it is true that promotion is so important during a

downturn, then it also is true that in this downturn, there are more promotional avenues than ever before in the history of the field.

There are still print media: Billboards, newspapers (not dead yet!); magazines, brochures (how many political post cards arrived in your mail in the weeks leading up to the midterm elections?).

There are the traditional electronic forums: TV (Broadcast and cable; radio (FM, AM and satellite).

And there are the new-age media of the internet, web pages, pop-up ads, streaming audio and video, and the still-developing phenomena of social media: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and others.

Diversification is Key

The local experts agree that whatever a client's budget, the key—as in investments—is to diversify. Do not sink all of your advertising dollars into one venue.

Pruitt said the different media are complementary. And she should know. Among other things, she has worked as an account executive in advertising

sales for the Wall Street Journal radio network, as an assistant to the casting director on various shows at CBS Television, and as vice president for business development at WIMG-AM 1300 in Trenton. While working at Motown Records many years ago, she even wrote lyrics for songs.

So when Pruitt says an advertiser cannot rely just on one avenue but must use a mixture, she knows what she is talking about.

"Somebody will get a billboard and in their eyes it's great," she said. "But a billboard needs another medium to be more effective. Billboards should not walk alone."

For example, Pruitt said, there are two billboards on Route 1 in the vicinity of Mercer Mall that she considers prime spots. "There is a logjam both ways every day," she said, so those billboards catch a lot of eyes, but she emphasizes they cannot stand alone, because billboards can only handle so much type, often cannot communicate an advertiser's complete message, and often sit shoulder to shoulder with too many other billboards.

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lorio puts it another way. "You need a targeted approach to spending. I've been hoping for the last 10 years more clients would want to understand buying preferences, begin to get a deeper understanding of what those preferences are so that when we build advertising or marketing campaigns, they are much more targeted to what consumers want. Unfortunately we haven't seen that as often, but therein lies the opportunity for us as an organization."

Kelliher, who started her own firm about three years ago and has over 10 years experience in the field, also talked about the need for such research and planning. "You need to be realistic to what the market is bearing," she said. "Sometimes you only have \$500. What can that buy me for a month? Maybe it can't buy a color newspaper ad, but it can buy a lot online someday. You don't need to spend thousands of dollars a month necessarily. It needs to be scaled to the size of business you are."

It helps, therefore, to see where advertising and marketing dollars are being channeled nationwide.

The Nielsen Co. reported for the first half of this year that worldwide spending on marketing has continued to increase. In the United States it is a \$54 billion business, a jump of approximately 3.8 percent from the same point a year ago, seen by some as an indication that very slowly the downturn is turning a corner.

Targeting Your Audience

If that is evidence of a reawakening of consumer confidence, that confidence is directed toward specific categories.

For instance, the largest leap in advertising expenditures for the first half of this year was in the automotive industry. There was \$3.49 billion spent in the first six months of 2009 in that area compared with \$4.43 billion in the same period this year, and a great deal of that was attributable to one large company, GM.

The other top 10 advertising category with growth was department stores. For the first half of this year, advertising in that category was \$1.59 billion compared to \$1.51 billion for the same period in the prior

year, an increase of nearly 5 percent.

But other key areas, including one near and dear to central New Jersey, pharmaceutical advertising, were still on the decline. Pharma marketing dipped about 4.4 percent in the two six-month periods compared, \$2.09 billion in 2009 down to \$1.99 billion this year.

The other interesting component is—regardless of category type—in what media are those dollars being spent.

In the United States, television advertising still rules. TV gobbled up more than \$33.8 billion of advertising in the first half of this year, an increase of 6 percent from the first half of 2009. It is worth noting in this era of the global village that Spanish networks and cable operations saw the largest increases, up 29 percent and 13 percent, respectively, according to Nielsen.

Not surprisingly, advertising in various print publications overall showed no growth. However, certain specialized publications fared better than others. Advertising in magazines? Up 7.4 percent. And curiously, national Sunday supplements rose more than 20 percent from the first half of 2009 to 2010, while local Sunday supplements dropped nearly 8 percent.

Magazines are often a decent venue for a return on one's investment because they have a longer shelf life than newspapers, the marketing experts said. That latest issue of *Sports Illustrated* or *Good Housekeeping* will sit in a doctor's office for months.

lorio, who started his business in 1987, said, "I think there is certainly a place, a niche in the marketplace for print advertising. I don't think it's going to go away completely. Some people want to feel and see and touch the printed newspaper, the trade magazine, the ad journal."

Kelliher said that because people do seem to have shorter attention spans, newspaper ads work best for a client who has something specific and tangible to offer. "A bank, a food store, a special event," she said. "Those types of things do well in newspapers."

Know Your Customers

The marketing experts said it is important for a business client to understand who their customers are.

"We always recommend some level of qualitative research," lorio said. "Let's go out and find out the profile of your ideal client. Let's uncover the language they're using when they talk about your particular brand. Language means something; it's very important."

"We look at that and often times see a gap between the market research and a brand positioning statement. We build out of that research. We remain media neutral, not pushing a client in a specific direction because it doesn't matter to us where they put their money. We want it to be a benefit to the client."

But the experts in the field agree that online advertising is gaining ground for just about all products or services. It's not the wave of the future; it's the wave of the present.

Unlike 10 or more years ago, methods now exist to measure the effectiveness of ad placements online. Pruitt said that although radio spots still may be an advertiser's most economical outlet, there can be no denying the power of the digital age when it comes to reaching potential consumers.

Time was that online was considered by some agencies an added value for a customer. "It's changed," said Murphy. "You can do everything online. You can have a webinar online. You can have a project on YouTube. There is so much creativity and so many different ways to put ourselves out there."

Pruitt said that "The younger generation is learning digital faster than the older generation. They are used to looking at things on a computer screen, and that's how you gravitate to it. It's a social medium."

And the online and the print worlds can co-exist. "I think in every form of communications you need to have that tag to Facebook, to Twitter," Kelliher said. "'Check out our website' should be in every form of communications. All of those pieces are key for people finding you. Your ad gets forwarded to somebody else so they remember how to get back to you."

Murphy turned the tables and spoke about herself as a consumer. "I look for people online," she said. "I like to see that people are optimized. My generation and younger, I Google everything, restaurants."

lorio also used himself as an example in relating to social media.

"We now are at the same point the industry was facing 15 years ago with the advent of the Internet; people are scoffing at social media the same way today. I'm 53, I don't get Twitter the way someone in their mid 20s gets Twitter. But I get LinkedIn, I get other social media very well. And we're all trying to understand how those metrics work for their client base."

So, according to Murphy, businesses must realize that "It's really your portfolio online and it's easier for people to get what you do."

But regardless of what mix of media a business uses after consulting with a marketing professional, the bottom line is to use them.

"Everybody needs to promote themselves and their business," Pruitt said. "And if it costs money you need to set that aside."

And the marketing people fully understand the difficult times that we all are trying to get through.

Whether it's a marketing business like Iorio's, which has approximately 15 personnel and a client range of 25 to 30 at any given time, or one like Murphy, who works out of her home and has a staff of about five people; the goals and the attention to personal care and to detail are the same, particularly in this economy.

As Pruitt said: "Small businesses need to take look at all media, sometimes what's flashy is not what's best. Flashy is billboards, and if you don't know what you're doing call companies for each medium. And get pricing. And look at partnering with another medium."

"There was a time there in '08," Iorio said, "I don't think any one of us thought another nickel was going to be spent on advertising and marketing. No one was spending any money. You find yourself grinding it out and working 10 times harder for the same return."

So in order to survive, marketing businesses cut fees if need be, scrutinize internal expenses, "And when we come out of this thing in the next three to five years, you hope people remember we worked together as partners through the tough times," he said. ■

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