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MUSINGS FROM MARALYN



After nearly 10 years in business,
the time seemed right for Integrated
Printing & Graphics to publish an
honest-to-goodness homemade,
printed, aesthetically pleasing
newsletter delivered by the
U.S. Postal Service.

Here it is: **IPG TALKING POINTS**, a publication that we hope you will look forward to receiving. We expect you might like it so much that you will want IPG to produce one for your company!

The timing might seem a bit off given the state of the economy, which is forcing all of us to find ways to tighten our belts. Electronic newsletters are, after all, less expensive to produce and more efficiently delivered since they can be sent out with a single keystroke. This has prompted many companies to distribute an e-only format. IPG, however, prefers to push the envelope, as our clients already know. These challenging economic times have raised the bar, compelling many businesses to apply original, counterintuitive strategies that are reflective of their own unique brand. For all of those reasons, I decided to create a printed newsletter that reflects the heart of IPG. Perhaps this might be an appropriate business-generating strategy for your organization as well.

I am amazed by the number of e-newsletters that are sent to me, quickly filling my inbox. More often than not, I quickly delete them since – probably like you – I am typically multitasking, juggling nine things at once. I often think that the last thing I need is another distraction. While I might be

MUSINGS FROM MARALYN, continued

interested in the company sending the e-newsletter or even the content, I prefer to read their message when the time is right for me. I'm guessing this might be true for you and your clients and prospects. A hard-copy newsletter can be put in a client or prospect's briefcase and read and appreciated when there is time to think. How novel an idea, having a marketing piece (which is what a newsletter is) that is thoughtfully read and considered.

All that said, we are also sending an electronic version for those who prefer reading online and, in fact, some of you might prefer to put the newsletter on your desktop to read when time is available. I just don't personally know many people that do that – maybe it is a New York state of mind...

The "Snap! Crackle! And Pop!" article shows why this is the time to market. I would love IPG to be the creative company that is at the top of your mind now and later, when this market turns around, as it most certainly will.

Challenging economic times have raised the bar, compelling you to apply original, counterintuitive strategies that are reflective of your unique brand.



WHICH BRINGS ME TO "THE CASE FOR HOLIDAY CARDS."

A few years back, in the middle of a pre-Christmas frenzy, I phoned my sister, Gael, and subjected her to my usual holiday season rant. "I hate this season," I said. Then I proceeded to complain about everything, from traffic and crowded stores to how physically and emotionally exhausting it was to try to run a business and shop for everyone and attend parties. If you can imagine me complaining about parties, then you can really appreciate my state of mind at that time.

The next day, Gael called and said she laughed aloud when she received my warm, cozy Christmas card. "You weren't exactly spreading 'peace throughout the land' yesterday," she exclaimed.

"No, I wasn't," I laughed, "but I really meant everything I wrote in the card." The message was about peace, good will and happy tidings for the coming year. I mean these things.

I love the holidays even though I can grumble about the frenetic pace of the season, which leaves me little – if any – time to relax and enjoy its meaning. I have similar complaints year after year, but each and every year our tree goes up the first Saturday in December. From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, the spirit of the holidays gives me a reason to connect with friends and family and enriches my life.

For 22 years, my husband, Alan Goldstein, has been sending out original and thoughtful holiday cards to all of his dental patients. He often hears that they not only look forward to the cards, but also save them. Some have saved the entire set of 20-some odd years of cards. Some have been funny, some goofy and some appropriate for the times (9/11, the recession). All of them reflected care and thoughtfulness.

At IPG, we do the same, carefully selecting the stock from among the wide array of new and striking papers. Each detail is painstakingly considered; should we emboss or foil, or use a creative die cut if our budget allows? What about our choice of an interesting envelope and carefully selected holiday stamp? Did you know that the U.S. Postal Service has a wonderful array of holiday stamps that change each year? I often lament when the

post office disappoints me. I don't want cute. I want non-religious stamps that match our dazzling cards. (In the middle of my lament, I am reminded of Mick Jagger's lyrics, "You can't always get what you want...") Our mailing house addresses the cards and then I personally sign each one.

Marketers remind us that clients and prospects should be "touched" every two months for a company to remain on their radar. To me, sending a holiday card is a thoughtful way for me to "touch" you and might be a good way for you to "touch" your clients as well. If you receive a card from your plumber, your banker or your dentist, then the next time your kitchen needs a new washer for the faucet, you might just call the guy that sent you a holiday card.

Each January, after the dust has settled, as I put away the holiday decorations, I go through the cards I received but was too busy to give my full and undivided attention to in the height of the season. Of course, as the president of a printing and graphics company, I have a vested interest in seeing what others are sending out. But that's not the only reason I read them; it's also to reflect on these cards because they bring the beauty of the season right into my office, during the cold and dark post-holiday months. I treasure and appreciate the cards sent to me personally as well as to IPG – as they bring the senders to life for me.

It takes time and money to send holiday cards, but I think the value outweighs the effort, especially because it reminds me how much I love what I do and how connected I feel to the people and business acquaintances in my life. E-cards, e-newsletters, e-most things, while helpful when appropriate, just don't have the same effect.

I'd love to hear your take on this. Thanks in advance for taking the time to read this newsletter.

Happy summer.


Maralyn Dolan, President
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SNAP! CRACKLE! AND POP!

Most of us have either eaten (or at least heard of) Rice Krispies Treats – perfection in a cube, created with marshmallows, margarine and, of course, Kellogg's Rice Krispies. What's interesting is that this staple of children's birthday parties, which has been popular for decades, never would have been born if the company that created the cereal hadn't snapped out of worrying about the recession and popped up with crackling new ideas about how to market its product.

Moving past the corny (ricey?) analogies, there is a point to be made. A recent article in *The New Yorker* describes how the ready-to-eat cereal market was just being created during the recession of the late 1920s. At that time, Kellogg's competitor, Post, was the market leader. But Post reduced its advertising and marketing budget to cut costs and Kellogg's soon dominated the market, among other things, giving birth to its happy trio of cereal icons: Snap! Crackle! And Pop!

The cereal story, of course, is just one of many examples of how companies that play their cards right can not only survive – but thrive – during economic downturns. It has been well documented that those companies that step up their marketing and advertising efforts during a recession – while their competitors are doing the opposite – can improve their market share at a lower cost than during better economic times. Cutting down on spending might be a short-term cure with long-term consequences; research shows that reducing the marketing budget when things appear grim puts companies at a disadvantage when the economy improves. Among the many reasons for this is simply that uncertain consumers need the reassurance of brands with which they are familiar.

Even companies without a surplus of extra revenue can step up their effort by investing more time in their marketing efforts. In the current economy, companies across the board are tightening their belts, but the problem is that sometimes the belt becomes so tight that it cuts off the circulation. One of the biggest mistakes companies can make is failing to acknowledge and thank existing clients because, as anyone even remotely acquainted with client services knows, it is far easier to retain old clients by adding value than it is to get new ones.

All of that being said, what is the most cost-effective way to acknowledge one's clients while not wasting resources? Cutting out holiday cards is not a viable option. The logical choice would be an e-card, but it would likely end up being dust in the cyber wind. An e-mail might sound like a great alternative but, according to savvy marketers, "Snail mail is the new e-mail." To stand out, everything old is new again.

A reduction in extra revenue and slashing of marketing budgets doesn't mean that all is lost. Marketing starts in a company's infrastructure and goes beyond collateral materials and advertising. A healthy marketing culture includes morale-building by selling your employees the idea that your company deserves to thrive during the storm and engendering that spirit. It begins with teamwork and getting people involved as part of a team so that marketing is a natural byproduct. It has been said, "At the end of the day, we are all salespeople." Maybe we are all marketers as well.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BEGIN?

Stephen Covey's best-seller, *"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,"* has become the "bible" for many business owners. You probably know by heart many of the habits Covey sets forth including *"be proactive," "sharpen the saw,"* and so on and so forth. The one that speaks most clearly to business people is "begin with an end in mind." In fact, Covey considered that particular habit so important that he published a follow-up book with that title.

While Covey's book is geared toward individuals, the 1995 groundbreaker, *"The Discipline of Market Leaders,"* by Michael Treacy and Fred Wiersema, addresses success in a more business-focused way. This very helpful book suggests that we think about success at the beginning of the process, not the end. It is a great roadmap, almost like a GPS for correct decision-making. The provocative book explores such issues as: how to determine what product, person (customer or staff), market, process or service are right for a particular company.

Market leaders, according to the authors, excel by identifying and focusing unflinchingly on one core business strength from the following menu:

- 1) operational excellence
- 2) product leadership
- 3) customer intimacy

While understanding that they must be satisfactory in all areas, the leaders remain unflinchingly focused on their chosen core strength.

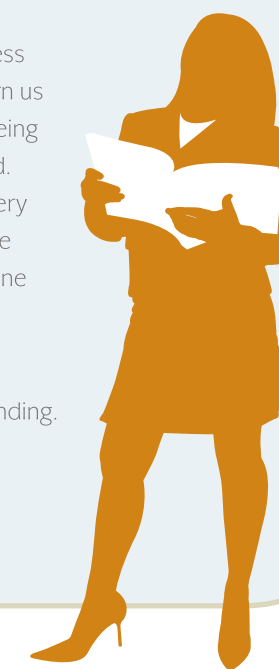
Operational excellence means that a company has identified internal efficiencies to "deliver a combination of quality, price and ease of purchase that no one else in their market can match." The authors tout Wal-Mart and Costco as examples; McDonalds is another.

Businesses that focus on **product leadership** are product innovators par excellence. The current champion in this category is Apple. They continue to introduce and heavily market a steady stream of innovative products. Nike is another company that is consistently innovating and raising the bar by developing advanced athletic footwear.

Customer intimacy is all about relationships. The culture of companies choosing this as their core strength is primarily focused on personalized and "first-class" service. Ritz-Carlton and Lexus are two companies that exemplify this discipline.

It is tantalizing to imagine or aspire to create a business built around all three disciplines, but the authors warn us against that. They advise that companies focus on being competitive in two disciplines and superb in the third. Once a core discipline is identified and practiced, every business decision will be easier to make. Taking it one step further, our entire culture will reflect that discipline and both our staff and customers will know exactly what we are about.

That is the beginning. You can write the successful ending.



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CASE STUDY: FIRST EAGLE FUNDS

First Eagle Funds upped the ante in 2009 by winning two coveted Lipper Fund Awards—one for its U.S. Value Fund, and the other for its Global Fund.

For the second straight year, IPG was honored with the challenge of designing an announcement to celebrate the accomplishment, while maintaining the integrity of the First Eagle Funds brand.

Taking design cues from the Lipper Fund Award hardware, we created a three-panel, accordion-folded announcement with a pocket to accommodate an insert displaying performance results. The two outer panels were shortened and die-cut to mimic the profile of the award, revealing a repetitive spot UV of the award that served as the background. That same spot UV treatment was used on the insert, helping to establish continuity between the two elements. We concluded the project by designing a two-color converted envelope that repeated the award background and served as the lining of the envelope. The announcement was inserted into the envelope and mailed to 9,300 recipients. The award announcements also served to dress up tables at a First Eagle conference.

The response from our client was overwhelming! "The mailers were a great success, and the table announcements made the room really pop!" We wish First Eagle the best with their fund performance in the coming year, and we look forward to the opportunity to partner with them again in 2010.



PRINT VERSUS ELECTRONIC – THE WINNER?

By using variable data printing (VDP), Time Inc. recently launched an experiment in custom publishing with its *Mine Magazine*, a publication that allows readers to customize the content. Partnering with American Express Publishing and Lexus, readers chose five titles out of the eight participating publications including Time, Sports Illustrated, Food & Wine, Real Simple, Money, In Style, Golf, and Travel + Leisure. The editors then selected the stories from these publications to put into each custom magazine.

Users received their *Mine Magazine* either in a limited-edition print format or online. The company said about 231,000 print and online copies of each 36-page issue were available. **By a six to one ratio, readers chose the print format.**

For those of you unfamiliar with VDP, it digitally prints the right information to be disseminated to the right customer at the relevant time and has been proven to increase profits and response rates. According to a recent article, "With VDP and one-to-one marketing, businesses have the advantage of generating a much higher response rate, typically ranging from 10 percent to 15 percent."

One of the ongoing issues with digital print has been the superiority of conventional printing versus digital. However, the quality of digital print has increased tremendously over the past few years and, for the appropriate marketing piece, you can't beat the versatility of digital print or VDP. Although the initial cost of VDP is higher than traditional print, the return on investment is far greater, so it might be a better long-term solution for getting a bigger bang for the marketing buck.

OUR MISSION

Throughout our years in the printing industry – from producing sophisticated fashion catalogues to envelopes and labels – our dream was to build an organization that would help our clients with their design and printing needs, and reduce their stress as much as humanly possible.

WHAT DO WE DO? We take on the design and printing responsibilities for clients – from seemingly simple forms and stationery to complex marketing brochures – with the ideal mix of high-quality printing, exquisite design capabilities, on-time delivery and fair prices.

OUR PROMISE: We will reduce your stress and thrill you with our work.

OUR CAPABILITIES

PRINT DESIGN: Brochures / Catalogs / Direct Mail / Events / Packaging / Media Kits / Stationery / Trade Shows

ELECTRONIC DESIGN: Web sites / E-mail Blasts

PRINTING: Conventional / Digital / Embossing / Engraving / Large Format / Silk Screening

FINISHING: Die Cutting / Die Scoring / Fabric Swatching / Foil Stamping / Mounting

SPECIAL BINDERY: Eyelet / Japanese Bind / Notch Bind / Perfect Bind / Wire-O



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