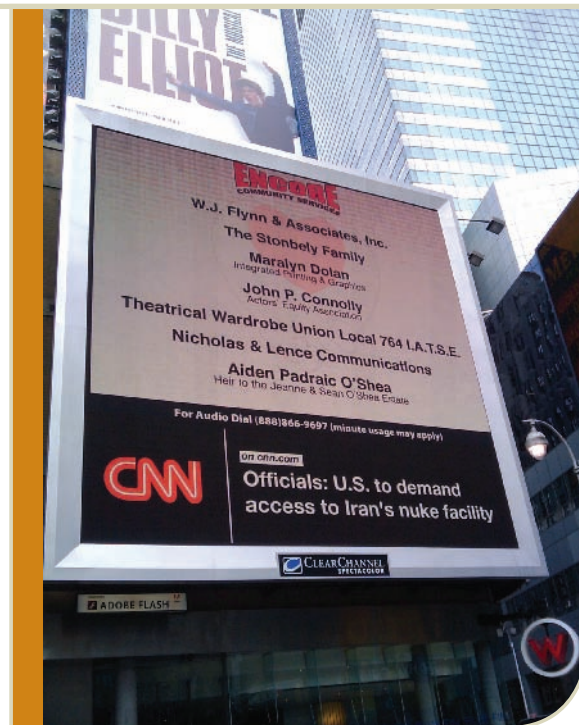




Happy New Decade! With the dropping of the ball, we recently said goodbye to the first 10 years of the new millennium. And in the words of the Grateful Dead, “What a long, strange trip it’s been.” Dubbed “the decade of extremes,” the 2000s started with a series of bubbles bursting (from Enron to dot-com) and ended with unprecedented financial challenges. It’s impossible to look back on the decade without reflecting on

major events that forever changed the world. We witnessed such mega tragedies as the collapse of the Twin Towers, Hurricane Katrina and the biggest Ponzi scheme in history. But we also saw many good deeds, including Warren Buffett’s generous donations to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Al Gore’s widespread education on the effects of global warming, which heightened people’s awareness about the importance of going green. What we learned is that people come together in times of crisis. We heard stories of those who lost all – and of others helping them to repair their lives, giving us a sense of inspiration, hope and healing. As the saying goes, “What doesn’t kill us makes us stronger.” According to a CBS news poll, despite hardship here at home, most Americans are still optimistic about better days ahead.

It has been a memorable decade for me on a personal level as well. At the end of last year, Encore Community Services (an organization that serves seniors) honored me for my involvement as a volunteer and work as a Board member by putting my name in lights on Broadway, which some say was inevitable based on my flair for the dramatic. The moment was particularly poignant to me, as 10 years ago I struck out on my own – pushing my fears aside. “I’ll be working too hard if I start my own company,” my inner voice nagged. But nothing could have prepared me for how



"The one important thing I have learned over the years is the difference between taking one's work seriously and taking one's self seriously. The first is imperative and the second is disastrous." Margot Fonteyn

Which Brings Me to “The Case for Pixels or Pages.”

Speaking of our customers – since most are concerned about “going green,” I have been researching the elements that come together in producing collateral materials. What I learned is there is an amazing amount of misinformation about the detrimental effect the print and paper industry has on the environment. And as a full-fledged member for nearly 30 years of this dedicated and hardworking community, I feel it’s my duty(!) to report that consumers greatly overestimate the negative impact of direct mail.

Of the 1,000 Americans taking part in a DMNews/Pitney Bowes survey, 48 percent thought that advertising mail from U.S. households counted for more than half of the country’s municipal waste. In reality, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, advertising mail is responsible for just 2 percent of all municipal waste.

A recent Print Industries Market Information and Research Organization (PRIMIR) study noted: “Many corporate communications executives assume that using electronic media (e-mails, podcasts, Web sites or even television) are naturally greener. The reduction of print is an easy target, but in reality, e-media alternatives have a far greater environmental impact.”

What these surveys and others like them brought to light is that the printing industry as a whole needs to better educate the public concerning strides being made in its efforts to lessen environmental impact. In the paper vs. digital debate, the most common myth is that print kills trees and computers do not.

Musings From Maralyn, continued

much fuller my life would become once I took a leap of faith and did it. It hasn’t always been an easy journey, but I admit, I’ve been blessed with an abundance of optimism along with a hearty laugh, which has come in handy along the way – especially at networking events when people ask what I do. “Oh... you’re in the printing business,” someone might say, almost sympathetically, with a look that’s thinking, “Haven’t you heard print is dead?” (At the risk of dating myself, remember the old rumors about Paul McCartney?)

Although there have been occasions where I indeed wished I had followed my dream to be a Broadway star (!), I still believe in the power of print. But, like everyone else, I was conflicted. While I was concerned about the environment, I still believed that print was not dead. This spurred me to research how I could be part of the solution to reduce waste and not part of the problem. What I discovered was that, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, although it has a bad reputation, advertising mail is responsible for an insignificant portion of all municipal waste in the United States, and that ink-on-paper is less damaging to the environment than sending emails.

Aside from loving what I do, I’m grateful that IPG has weathered the storm and survived during the rough times. Clearly we beat the odds, considering the staggering number of small businesses that have folded. I’ve been fortunate to have an amazingly dedicated staff of seasoned professionals backing me up, as well as the best suppliers in the industry. If it weren’t for wine or an occasional strategically consumed martini and my husband’s encouragement, I might have given up long ago. (I’m sure at times I was thought of as a prima donna; I prefer “perfectionist.”) In the words of Margot Fonteyn, an actual prima ballerina, “The one important thing I have learned over the years is the difference between taking one’s work seriously and taking one’s self seriously. The first is imperative and the second is disastrous.”

I’m looking forward to a new decade filled with new challenges. IPG, like most companies, has expanded its capabilities to meet the demands of its clients and has morphed from just “ink-on-paper” to become a full-service marketing consultation firm. Of course, I couldn’t have done it without my amazing customers. To paraphrase Bill Gates, your most challenging customers (and you know who you are!) are your greatest source of learning. And, in my unbiased view, IPG has the most challenging and the best customers.

Therefore, digital media is de facto greener. Those who have an “e-version” to printed materials because they believe being considerate to the environment means refraining from printing e-mails might literally be missing the forest for the trees. The environmental impact of printed material in the form of direct-mail advertising pales in comparison to the detrimental effect of toxic waste produced by electronic media. On the flip side, the knee-jerk response for print advocates is that print is greener because trees are a renewable resource and computers are “toxic energy vampires,” which oversimplifies the issue.

The future of the planet depends on continued research and development and both sides understanding the reality that the life cycles of both print and digital media have positive and negative triple bottom-line impacts. The best thing we can do if we want to save our planet is to work toward a sustainable evolution of both print and digital media.

Happy winter,


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YOUR LOGO – MAKEOVER OR TWEAK?

After a blizzard, it’s impossible to distinguish one snowflake from another, yet no two are alike. The same could be said about your business. One of the most powerful ways to remind both existing and prospective clients of that fact is to reinforce your brand awareness. This holds true whether you are a well-established company or a small business just starting out. Virtually every time you turn on television or pick up a newspaper, you’ll find some type of make-over show or article about how to look 10 years younger, how to feng shui your home or office, and so on. While updating your brand image isn’t all about the logo, it’s an important part of it. So is it time to give your logo a facelift? Or maybe some non-surgical alterations to spruce it up? A logo update can give your company’s brand a fresh start and boost team spirit, and it need not involve major surgery. Maybe your company’s market focus has changed and the logo speaks to a client base that has shifted. Or maybe it’s just dated. Even major well-established companies – Kodak, Nike, Dairy Queen, Pepsi, to name just a few – have made small changes over the years to reinforce and refresh their image.

If you think it’s time for a logo change, the first step is to consider whether you are looking for something drastic like a new design, or a few simple “tweaks” to spruce it up, such as a font change or a slight alteration of colors. Do your clients immediately associate your company with the services and products you offer? In subtle, immeasurable ways, customers believe what they see. Your brand image is on display from the minute you present your business card to when someone clicks on your company’s Web site. If it’s not a true reflection of who you are, it might be time for a change.



Volkswagen’s logo shown before WWII, after WWII modified by the British, and today’s 3-D look created in 2000.

FROM PLUTARCH TO PRESENT DAY: WHY TO ASK WHY

What do best-selling writers of the 21st century have in common with an ancient historian? Apparently, it’s the need to know and the value of asking why. According to Plutarch, the historian born in Greece during Roman rule, “The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled.” Although he died in the year 120, his ancient wisdom seems to be applicable today. Two best-sellers that expand on the “fire kindling” theme are “*Curious?*” by Todd Kashdan, Ph.D. and “*Superfreakonomics*” by Stephen J. Dubner and Steven D. Levitt.

Curiosity – The Killer Catalyst?

Everywhere you turn, you see the “Happiness Movement” in motion – on television shows, magazine articles and books telling you how to be happy – how to find fulfillment in an uncertain, unfamiliar world. In this ever-expanding field of “positive psychology,” a notable addition to the self-help bookshelves is the provocatively titled, “*Curious?*,” by Todd Kashdan, Ph.D. This book has enormous implications for the business world. “*Curious?*” offers the message that the greatest opportunities for joy and personal growth happen when we are open to new experiences and embrace the unknown. He theorizes that the key to navigating rough waters and finding fulfillment is to be a “Curious Explorer,” which helps us to thrive and meet the challenges of everyday life.

“When we experience curiosity, we are willing to leave the familiar and routine and take risks, even if it makes us feel anxious and uncomfortable,” says Kashdan. “Curious explorers are comfortable with the risks of taking on new challenges. Instead of trying desperately to explain and control our world, as a curious explorer we embrace uncertainty, and see our lives as an enjoyable quest to discover, learn and grow.”

“*Curious?*” promotes questions like, “How come?,” inviting the reader to resist the temptation for certainty in one’s personal and business domains, and move into the realm of uncertainty to grow and learn. It is the world of possibilities.

Curious Explorers

Stephen J. Dubner and Steven D. Levitt apparently understand what it means to be curious explorers. In their best-seller (follow-up to their first book, “*Freakonomics*”) they present a plethora of statistical analyses, and then use their statistics to prove why things happen.

Explored in this highly entertaining page-turner are questions such as, “Did television cause a rise in crime?” and “Is ‘Leave it to Beaver’ at fault?”

Some interesting factoids offered in the book are:

- Terrorism imposes costs on all, not just its direct victims, and fear of future attacks is misplaced. “The probability that an average American will die in a given year from a terrorist attack is roughly 1 in 5 million; she/he is 575 times more likely to commit suicide.”
- It’s safer to travel by car than by most other means of transport and far less safe to walk drunk than to drive drunk.

The stories in “*Superfreakonomics*” are fascinating. Some of the background and methodology is controversial (especially the chapter on global warming), but it is refreshingly thought-provoking and entertaining. Whatever role you play in your business, you are responsible for knowing why something turned out the way it did. The superficial and quick answer needs to be unpacked, examined and looked at from every angle.



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CASE STUDY: THE RUBIN MUSEUM

The Rubin Museum, the beautiful
and über-cool museum in
New York City specializing in
Himalayan Art, engaged us to
produce an invitation for their
annual gala.

The designer, Andrea Pemberton, created a gorgeous die cut, accordion-fold invitation with a textured coating. Paper with this type of coating can be purchased but the cost is excessive, particularly for a not-for-profit. To retain the beauty of the texture with minimal additional cost, we used a soft touch aqueous coating that gave the paper a luxurious, velvety feel. The initial envelope proposal was for a standard, off-the-shelf, square envelope to print two colors. When we learned that the stock envelopes would not be available for two weeks, we solved the problem by converting custom envelopes faster and for less money than the standard envelope. The finished product was nothing short of a piece of art, which we were able to give The Rubin, giving them more of a bang for less of a buck.

GOOGLE: A FAN OF DIRECT MAIL. WHO KNEW?

Is print advertising by an online company oxymoronic? Not at all. Savvy marketers understand the power of using both online and print advertising. Through its use of printed direct-mail advertising pieces to sell its AdWords feature, online giant Google recently launched a direct-mail campaign since direct mail remains one of the most cost-effective means to reach customers.

For 2009, an investment of \$1 in direct-mail advertising expenditures returned, on average, \$11.65 in incremental revenue across all industries. This exceeded the \$11.61 achieved in 2008 and is expected to improve

further to \$11.73 in 2010. Last year, 54 percent of advertising expenditures were comprised of direct marketing spending, and the numbers are expected to increase by 2.7 percent in 2010.

According to Print in the Mix's "iProspect Offline Channel Influence on Online Search Behavior Study," 67 percent of online action is triggered by offline – or print – messages. The study also found that for young and old, direct mail directly influences the purchase of an item or service more than any other channel.

OUR MISSION

Throughout our years in the printing industry – from producing sophisticated fashion catalogues to envelopes and labels – our dream has been 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

WRITING SERVICES: White Papers / Corporate Brochures Marketing Collateral / Fundraising Appeals

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