

DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

May 18, 2008

MORE THAN A REFRESHER

re-fresh-er *n* something that refreshes
re-fresh *v* to prompt or reactivate the memory with a piece of information

There are a number of important reasons why professionals avail themselves of CME programs. No, we are not talking about Continuing Medical Education programs as sponsored by pharmaceutical companies. Instead we are talking about *Continuing Marketing Education* programs. Professionals appreciate the need to continue learning and building their competencies regardless of their chosen field.

By using the term “professional” we are not referring to someone “engaged in an occupation as a paid job rather than a hobby,” as in professional versus amateur athlete. Instead, we are singling-out someone “showing a high degree of skill or competence” in her/his field. This “someone” strives to embody *excellence* in every facet of her/his work. Professionals stand-out! They stand head and shoulders above the crowd who are content to merely do their job like everyone else. The crowd is content with mediocrity. But professionals want to make a difference. Professionals are competitive. They work toward achieving extraordinary results.

While many are paid for the job they do, or don't do, the vast majority of people in virtually every field perform somewhat less than what we would expect from professionals. They are more concerned with completing the task at hand as opposed to achieving the only results that truly matter in marketing – creating brand loyalty.

This past week we conducted a very successful Open Brand Positioning & Marketing Communications College program in Evanston, Illinois. It was sold out. Marketers representing more than a dozen different multi-national companies participated in this special Continuing Marketing Education program. We started the program, as we do all our programs, inviting participants to introduce themselves to the group, identify their organization and share their expectations for what they hope to realize from the three-day intensive, interactive program.

Participating marketers responded that they wanted to learn: more about positioning; how to successfully undertake campaign development; how to nurture a productive client-agency relationship; how to communicate the brand's values to customers; to apply tools to enhance their effectiveness; to take marketing planning to the next level – among other goals. Three managers responded that their goal was to have a “refresher” on fundamentals. This word “refresher” disturbed us in that it did not feel sufficiently ambitious in light of the learning experience they would be undertaking. Moreover, it is clear that many of the concepts we espouse, quality processes that we recommend and tools that we share just don't exist elsewhere and/or are not consistently and/or skillfully applied in their roles as brand marketers or marketing communication managers.

This is not false bravado on our part. We observe it every week in the myriad of companies we serve throughout the world. Are these companies successful? Certainly. Can they be more successful? Undoubtedly! One merely has to ask the question, “Are you satisfied with your growth, or the health of your brand, or ability to manage successfully in your rapidly changing marketplace?” If you don’t have a brand positioning strategy for your brand you are not managing the brand the marketplace is, or your sales force is, or your competitors are managing it. Professionals are not satisfied with this situation and never will allow themselves to be satisfied without consistently achieving excellence.

We instructors (Richard, Mike and Dave) have approximately 100-years of experience. This experience was gained with some of the most admired companies on iconic brands in a broad range of categories, throughout the world. How could any marketer not learn something new from us? Despite having 35-years in marketing there is not a single day (and this is no exaggeration) that goes by that I do not receive a Boat or Helicopter that helps me be a better *marketing empowerment partner* in contributing to *making marketing matter*. What’s more the rich pool of participants adds another invaluable layer of insights and experience to further enrich each other (yes, including us!). Finally, the application of our productivity tools creates and cultivates a genuine learning experience for everyone to learn by doing. If one is an active listener one participates in far more than a refresher. There is absolutely no reason for one not to come away from this program with at least 5 new ideas for adding value to her/his brand.

And the program proved to be far more than a refresher. Participants found the program “extremely useful.” As one participant claimed, *“The program embodied, articulated and demonstrated every ingredient that is essential to identifying and unifying a brand, and fully integrating it into marketing communications programs and campaigns to achieve maximum benefit. What made my learning over the past three days even more real for me is when I had the opportunity to immediately apply the principles and use the tools.”*

Among the many other comments we received are the following:

- *“Gave me a deeper understanding of marketing principles and, through the various exercises, reinforced the importance of being choice-full in our work.”*
- *“The seminar offered phenomenal insights from the inside of client brand development.”*
- *“Truly helped me understand how to take apart an advertisement/campaign and see if the pieces fit nicely together in order to accomplish the marketing and business objectives.”*
- *“I feel inspired to return to work and apply some of the concepts and tools to my job. Specifically, on my brand, we are struggling with how to position the mainline brand, and I think I can use some information from this class to help provide some direction.”*
- *“Adding coaching to the ‘how’ was a wonderful addition and one that I had not seen done in any other seminar. Absolutely inspirational.”*
- *“This course allowed me to truly understand the linkage between positioning and strategy. In addition, the course provided me the tools to effectively evaluate and build a compelling brand positioning and strategy.”*

- *“The principles we learned were very sound and based in solid reasoning. It all made sense and I left today feeling like I had the tools to make a difference to the businesses I support.”*
- *“I found the session about direct feedback (coaching) to the agency most helpful. I do not think I’m very good at this, and then end up being disappointed with the outcomes. If I can give better positive direction that will be very helpful.”*
- *“I now view marketing as a discipline that can be learned. It enhanced my respect for the strategic aspect of the discipline.”*

To refresh is not enough. Continuing Marketing Education programs should not be to deliver or refresh information. Nor should participants be content to refresh their knowledge. Instead, participants should embrace the ambition of professionals to become more professional themselves. The CME programs they attend need to be designed to enhance existing skills, build new ones and stimulate participants to think differently and generate new ideas.

BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

Here are some thoughts to enhancing your professionalism and that of your organization so you may experience continued, significant success:

1. **Adopt “stretch” objectives** – Stretch objectives are beyond the norm or expected results. They evidence ambition. They represent a competitive spirit. This is a defining characteristic of professionals. They see themselves making the winning shot as the buzzer sounds to end the game. They envision leading the most successful new product launch in their company’s history. They dream of developing an advertising campaign that doubles the business. They imagine themselves running the world’s most admired companies. They are not content to settle with refreshing what they think they already know and neither should you.
2. **Do what it takes to create success** – Recognize that you don’t know everything. And, keep in mind that even if you did, knowing is not enough. One has to have the requisite skills to turn knowledge into successful action. Be on the lookout for ways to enhance and build your knowledge. ([article Learning from Small Business](#)) Be mindful that we can learn from all aspect of our lives and everyone with whom we come into contact. Be mindful that we can learn from our own experiences, as well as the experiences of others. Importantly, apply what you learn to your brand. It will help make your brand and you an even bigger success!
3. **Commit yourself to making a difference** – Don’t be content to merely manage a project. Look at the bigger picture as to how the project fits with creating brand loyalty. Then manage the project to achieve this higher order goal. And, don’t wait for your organization to take the lead in adopting quality processes, embracing proven principles, employing productivity tools. It is unlikely to happen. So, just do it! (Click here to connect to the [Brand Positioning & Marketing Communication Toolbox](#). Employ what

you learn (such as from the Open program) to transform yourself, your brand and your organization. Go out and start a revolution in making marketing matter. Do it with your actions. Do it in a way so that the only thing your management will realize is the results.

Special thanks goes to all who attended the Open Brand Positioning & Marketing Communication College program and to all who facilitated their participation. We, too, enjoyed meeting and working with you. We also learned from each of you.

We apologize to those who wanted to attend this program but were unable due to the limited availability. (We closed the program early to ensure that we would be able to provide a meaningful interactive experience to all participants.) We would like to invite you to contact Lori Vandervoort at 800 255-9831 at your earliest convenience to reserve a spot for next year's program.

Those of you who are interested in attending our *Discovering* Customer Insights and Developing Insightful Creative Brief College programs might want to check with Lori too. We will be offering each of these programs as Opens in the Fall.

Richard Czerniawski and Mike Maloney

Richard Czerniawski

.....
430 Abbotsford Road
Kenilworth, Illinois 60043
tel 847.256.8820
fax 847.256.8847
.....

reply to Richard:
rdczerniawski@adcollege.com

Mike Maloney

.....
1506 West 13th Street, #17
Austin, Texas 78703
tel 512.236.0971
fax 512.236.0972
.....

reply to Mike:
mikemaloney@adcollege.com



© 2003 Brand Development Network (BDN) International. All rights reserved.