

Advertising Sales Tips

IDEAS FOR ASSOCIATION PUBLISHERS

Are You Ready For a Collaborative Selling Structure

A number of years ago, I worked for a large association as the Director of Sales. Like many organizations, this one was structured around product lines and each had its own budgetary goals for revenue and, in some cases, its own sales staff. The executive director understood that the various sales operations (exhibits, advertising, corporate memberships, etc.) were, in effect, competing with each other for the money being spent on the association's products by the suppliers to that industry. He had the foresight to understand that by unifying the sales efforts, the association would be better able to deliver more value to its customers and, in the process, generate more total sales from those customers. The result was more business for the association through customized packaging of multiple products, the process of which was managed by one department. But, it took a structural change within the organization to accomplish this.

First, the organization created a one-point-of-entry strategy for the supplier community. In the case of this association, that point was corporate membership. Upon joining as a corporate member, the company was immediately entitled to a discount program for advertising space it purchased in the association's magazine, and additional discounting if multiple products were purchased, such as exhibit space or mailing list rental. A unique logo was created for each new member's use

in their own advertising and collateral material. We made it clear that the organization was not endorsing or recommending any product or service of its corporate members, but simply acknowledging the support of those companies.



The next step was to identify the largest suppliers to the industry our association served and meet with key decision makers from each of those companies. The purpose of this was to determine what the marketing goals were for each company and to then develop a program including as many of our association's products as possible that delivered those goals while staying within each company's budgetary restrictions. Here is an example:

A large and well-known software manufacturer identified our industry as a target for their focused marketing campaign. Although they utilized print advertising to a great extent, they believed that the best way for them to sell their technologies was through live demonstrations. As a result of several meetings with them, they joined as a supplier member and paid dues based on their annual sales to our market (several thousand dollars of new revenue for the association). Since they were most interested in demonstrating their products, I sold them exhibit space at our national convention along with a 25-seat demonstration area adjacent to the exhibit hall floor. Their package also includ-

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Collaborative Selling (continued)

ed advertising in our website and magazine scheduled throughout the year. The result, this company, which had never purchased any single product before, spent over \$75,000 with us in the first year of this program and the best part was that as a result of the demonstration area, they made a large sale of their technology to a new customer for them.

Under the prior organizational structure, the advertising sales director and the exhibit sales director did not share customer information, did not package their offerings. Through no fault of each director, the vertical

structure simply created disincentives for them to collaborate. But, with a collaborative sales and marketing structure, all that changed and those same directors saw that by working together, they both could more easily achieve their goals. The culture changed from silos to an understanding that (as the old axiom goes), “when the tide comes in, all of the ships in the harbor rise.”

Is your organization ready to create a collaborative sales structure? There are challenges in doing so, but the result is worth the effort.

Tag, You're It!

In the ongoing discussions about the demise of print, something new has come along that may extend the life of magazines, at least for a while longer. Publishers are constantly facing the issue of lead generation from their advertisers. Today's advertisers want to be able to measure the value of the ads they purchase and lead generation is one sure measure of an ad's success. But, lead generation for print products has been cumbersome and slow causing advertisers to have to wait for a period of time to get a response report, or drive responses to their own media such as to a microsite on their webpage.

Now, we've seen a new product recently launched by Microsoft that offers a new technology that can meet some of this need. Called Microsoft Tag, it is a small unique coding system that is incorporated into any two-dimensional printed product. Once a reader downloads a free application to his “smart” mobile phone, he uses his phone's camera to snap a picture of the code

and his phone's web browser immediately takes him to a website linked to the unique code.

Utilizing Microsoft's High Capacity Color Barcodes (HCCBs), the unique readable code is a square about the size of the diameter of a penny. It can be placed anywhere on a printed page and can be used in any type of publication. The code can be reproduced in either full color or black and white making it compatible with every ad published.



The HCCB Tag

Not only can this be used in an association's magazine as a response tracking mechanism, it can also be used in any other printed product created by an association including trade show guides, product catalogs, and newsletters. But, its use isn't limited to printed products. Tags can be printed out on labels and affixed to any object including exhibits, signs, and business cards.

Set up appears to be simple. First you create a free tag account by going to <http://tag.microsoft.com>. Once your account is established, you create a unique tag for

each advertiser. You can also indicate a start and end date when each tag will no longer be recognized. For the owner of a “smart” phone, set up is easy. They simply use their phone's browser and go to a website from which they download free software onto their phone. Once installed, all they need do is to use the phone's camera function to snap a picture of the tag and it will immediately link them to the website associated with that tag.

The use of this technology is beginning to take hold. Recently, Ford Motor Co. used the technology in a print ad campaign for its 2010 Taurus and also included the tag on 700,000 brochures distributed by its dealers. The tag takes the user to a website from which can be seen several videos each highlighting a feature of the new car.

This step in technology is a way of bringing added value to your advertisers by allowing your magazine to be a portal through which your members can access multi-media information from your advertisers. It may be worth trying.