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100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Thinking Creatively

By Harry Hoover

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Three seconds. That's what you have to convey your message. Creativity is the strategic weapon that allows us to capture those few precious moments of attention from busy consumers in our increasingly competitive, time-crunched environment.

Let's examine our audience for a moment. Who are today's consumers? What are they thinking? What matters to them today, or tomorrow? What will motivate them? Compel them?

Focus groups tell us that time is a precious, yet dwindling resource. Attention spans seem to be dwindling, as well.

Consider: the average TV spot in the past 30 years has fallen from 60 seconds to 30 seconds. Today we produce 15 and 10-second spots. Five-second and three-second spots are now being considered. And not just for economic reasons.

Many forces condition people. They are surrounded by competing messages, special effects, quick cuts, pop-up videos. This environment requires extra effort on our part to get people to read beyond a headline.

In writing and designing an outdoor billboard we have to communicate clearly and creatively in three seconds. Anything more and you lose their attention. The same now is true of print ads.

In this neon, strobe-laced, fast-cut, quick-dissolve, sound-bite world, we bore easily. We should not totally surrender to these trends but instead look at the yearnings they reveal: a desire for simplicity, efficiency, truth, quality of presentation.

Everyday in our business we deal with commodity products. Me too versus the very few unique. And the unique products in the consumer's mind are few and far between. More products than ever are becoming commodities.

So, when we design and write marketing communication material we must recognize a very fundamental fact: we are interrupting someone's day.

The fact that they chose to read, hear or view our message places a great responsibility on us to present this work as best we can. All the elements must contribute to a single point. A single reason for being there. Add something and it is excess baggage. Take something away and it's thin soup. The balance is critical.

Competition for that shorter attention span is increasing, too. Today, advertisers are competing for the consumer's time with an increasing number of non-media related activities.

Thinking Creatively

Segmentation to special interests is exploding. Not because suddenly people have lots of free time to pursue other interests. It's because the tools and delivery systems exist to create and produce publications - online and offline - faster than ever. There are magazines and websites on every conceivable subject and more coming. Digital TV advancements provide six-channels-to-one over current systems. Competition for your customer is increasing. The choices will continue to expand. And people will increasingly filter out that which doesn't meet their needs. It's not just about meeting these challenges. It's about anticipating them, too.

As you institute changes that help you remain competitive today ask: where will the consumers be one year from now, three years from now. Anticipate the market on the best model you can find then add your imagination, excitement and personality.

And, we can't underestimate today's consumers and readers. They are smart and you must not fall prey to communicating to the lowest common denominator.

Our consumers demand creativity, and ultimately they are who we work for.

Creative Potential Realized

Everyone has the potential to be creative.

Creativity isn't just a flash of lightning. It is a deliberate, disciplined process.

Let's take a look at the questions we ask ourselves in order to free our creativity:

1. Why are we communicating?
2. Who are we talking to?
3. What would we like them to think?
4. What is the single most persuasive idea we can convey?
5. Are there creative guidelines? (e.g. budget, logos/colors, illustrations)

Let me explain briefly what these questions are really getting at. The first question is "what has led to the need for this communication?" It can include any number of things like: Are there misconceptions about us? Do we have a new product/service? Are we reinforcing the brand? Is this for awareness, or do we have a more retail message?

"Who are we talking to" helps us define our audience beyond the too-broad "all carbon-based life forms."

Even if it is a broad-based audience, we should try to give it some focus, e.g. adults, 25 – 49, high school educated.

"What would we like them to think" addresses tone and manner or underlying brand-specific attributes we want to leave our audience with.

"What is the single most important thought we can convey" speaks to our core message and product/service benefit. This always should be from the consumer perspective. What does the consumer REALLY get out of this?

Now that we've done the research and asked all the questions, it's time to let ideas flow on concepts, content, medium, style.

Remember, creativity takes time. Being more creative is not just as a gift. It is an ongoing commitment and practice. And requires exercise.

Now, go be creative.

Harry Hoover is managing principal of Hoover ink PR, www.hoover-ink.com. He has 25 years of

experience in crafting and delivering bottom line messages that ensure success for serious businesses like Duke Energy, InterCerve, Levolor, North Carolina Tourism, VELUX and Verbatim.

Action Vs. Inaction

By Kerri Salls

Spring is a great antidote to long cold winters. It's the same with action and inaction. Action is a powerful antidote to the stagnation of inactivity. Being creatively alive involves abandoning a position of inaction in circumstances which have traditionally immobilized you. The name of the game is action. Doing. Overcoming your inertia and acting will give you a whole new lease on being creatively alive.

Action is the single most effective antidote to depression, anxiety, stress, fear, worry, guilt, and of course, immobility. It is virtually impossible to be depressed and active at the same time. Even if you wanted to, it is difficult to keep on moping, complaining, lolling around and wallowing in self-pity if you get active and do something. Anything! Just doing is such an important part of being a fully functioning person.

In fact, that lack of action is not a result of depression; it is the cause. Don't be paralyzed by the fear of making a mistake. Taking action, gives you momentum. Initiating the effort attracts opportunities and synergistic things happen.

Inactivity, on one hand, is most often a choice rather than an inescapable fact of life, while action is a definite way to avoid being victimized by yourself or others. If you decide to do something about your problem or challenge, rather than grumble about it, you'll be on the road to changing things around for yourself. When you take action, you also take control. Thinking keeps you a prisoner of the past. Action puts you in control of the future.

If you find yourself asking, "Yes, but what can I do" the answer is very, very simple. Anything is a lot more effective than nothing.

This old proverb has a lot of truth in it: Even when you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

Kerri Salls, MBA runs a virtual business school to train, consult and coach small business CEO's and entrepreneurs in 10 key strategies to make more profit in less time. Learn more at

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