



Does Your Advertising Deliver the Perfect Pitch?

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ADVERTISING IS ALL ABOUT CONNECTING with customers. Words, images and how they are delivered mean something—and in the hands of the experts—the right message can translate into new business and a stronger brand identity. To assess what makes a good ad, how a branding campaign can work in niche markets, and what can be done to use all of the mediums available today, *COMMERCE* magazine asked the leaders of key advertising/communications firms for their thoughts on how to turn marketing collateral into revenue for the bottom line.

The following advertising executives participated in this special report: Success Communications Group Executive Vice President Michael G. Cherson, APR; Creative Marketing Alliance President and CEO Jeffrey Barnhart; The David Henry Agency President & Chief Communications Officer David Fink; Princeton Communications Group CEO Lawrence Krampf; Linett & Harrison CEO, Creative Director, Chairman Caryl Linett; The Marcus Group, Inc. President & CEO Alan C. Marcus; Oxford Communications President John Martorana; Sigma Group President/Partner Shannon Morris; GraficaGroup President and CEO Debra Taeschler; and The CBK Group Partner/Creative Director Bill Troncone.

Caryl Linett



"A good ad has to draw in the reader and not waste his or her time but rather inform quickly while entertaining." —*Linett & Harrison CEO, Creative Director, Chairman Caryl Linett*

Q. *How can a company establish a brand in niche markets? What are the elements of a successful branding campaign?*

LINETT: The key is finding the niche within the niche market that reflects the unique aspects of the company's product/service as well as the company's DNA. It doesn't matter if it's a consumer or a B2B client; the same principles apply. The visual and verbal tone speaks volumes about the company's brand; implicit messaging is every bit as critical as the explicit. There should be a single-minded focus so that the branding is unequivocal and powerful. A strong positioning line is important. Solid strategic thinking is essential not only in developing the creative, but also in selecting the right media vehicles, from broadcast to print to Internet, so that every dollar hits the right audience with the right message—one that will compel, resonate, and motivate. Above all, everyone at the company has to live and breathe the brand; everything must deliver the brand promise and personality every time the customer comes in contact with the company or its product/service.

Q. *An effective print ad of today may not have worked in the past. What are the qualities of a good print ad? What are a few do's and don'ts?*

LINETT: Every aspect of the creative has to break through with a compelling message that is relevant to the needs of our audience. There is a flood of clutter out there competing for people's time. Online is a main source of information. There's no substitute, however, for engaging print. It's a unique experience with a powerful emotional appeal. A good ad has to draw in the reader and not waste his or her time but rather inform quickly while entertaining. It has to personalize the message and pay off for the reader by providing important benefits. Do make it worth the reader's time. Don't be cute for cuteness' sake. Don't talk down (or up). Do use simple, straightforward language. Never use jargon. Do be relevant. And do respect the reader's intelligence. ■