



PIAMS Monthly Update

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June 2009

Printing & Imaging Association
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My Column **By Kathy Lauerman**

I don't know how to put it other than this past year seems to be more like a soap opera than real life. Just recently I commented that getting a grasp on just about anything anymore is like trying to wrap your arms around ectoplasm – which brings a bit of humor to what continues to be less than humorous. There are all kinds of visuals our more creative friends could conjure up like playing the arcade game where you use a hammer to hit the heads that pop up all over the place and once you do another one pops out of another hole, but suffice it to say “stuff” keeps popping up every time we think we have taken care of the previous one. This time it's the possibility of another round of Do Not Mail initiatives, which we have been talking about for the last couple of weeks. Then of course there is the so called Employee Free Choice Act and the national emphasis they are now putting on required sick leave for companies with 15 or more employees that was introduced in the US House on May 18th (see the following article). We had something similar introduced in Colorado earlier this year that was even more onerous that didn't pass our legislature.

As I've said many times in the past, all of the proposed legislation seems to be introduced with the best of intentions but our state Legislators and our folks in Congress rarely see all of the ramifications that would occur should their legislation come to fruition. As you will see by the title the “Healthy Families Act of 2009” sounds wonderful, but it gets a bit tricky for businesses to stay afloat with more mandates. It's too bad that those in charge of rule making rarely come from a business background and even more rarely have been responsible for the balancing act it takes to keep a business profitable enough to employ those that they seem to believe they are helping.

Now back to our immediate issue, keeping an eye on a potential resurfacing of a Do Not Mail initiative in Colorado. At present the rumblings are from the Denver City Council but there is still a strong push from our long time adversary New American Dream in conjunction with Forest Ethics and 41pounds.org. all across the county. They believe as strongly in their cause as we do in ours, and they continue to skew the

facts. We are in the beginning stages of preparing rebuttal to any of their new tactics and are watching it carefully. This time we have time before our next legislative session but it will require additional funding and front end volunteer involvement. We have already sent out an initial call to action on the funding side and will soon reactivate the “Do Not Mail” coalition that has been on stand-by since we defeated the first attempt in early 2007. We have even cancelled our annual golf tournament so that the printing & mailing community can redirect their financial resources toward this important sustainability issue. We urge you to contribute both financially and as volunteers as this effort progresses.

Healthy Families Act of 2009 **Introduced in Congress**

On May 18, 2009, Representative Rosa L. DeLauro, a Democrat from Connecticut, introduced the [Healthy Families Act of 2009 \(H.R. 2460\)](#) in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill, which is largely the same as bills issued in prior sessions of Congress, would require employers with more than 15 employees to provide workers with up to 56 hours of paid sick leave each year. Under the bill, workers would accrue paid sick leave at the rate of one hour for every 30 hours worked, could begin using the paid sick leave after 60 days of employment, and could roll over unused sick leave into the next calendar year. Employers would not be permitted to ask for written documentation of the need for leave until after the employee has missed three consecutive days.

At a time when American businesses, particularly small businesses, are still reeling from the economic downturn, federally mandated paid sick leave -- while perhaps laudable in its intent -- looks like it will create more problems than it cures. The change in Presidential administrations and the makeup of Congress, together with the concerns over the H1N1 flu virus, suggest that this might be the year that mandated paid sick leave passes.



Partnership Reminder

PIAMS members can take advantage of special pricing from the NAPL Network for membership in NAPL or NAQP through a partnership established earlier this year. See the attached for more complete information.

How to Make Marketing Work (if you're serious about making marketing work)

By John Graham

Successful marketing depends on one basic concept. To find it, start by peeling away the corporate jargon and the pompous pronouncements of the would-be gurus. If you're lucky, you may stumble on marketing's core concept: *focus total attention on the customer—not on the product or the company—just the customer.*

To state the issue as clearly as possible, marketing fails when companies act as if telling their story is the main objective. Such thinking undermines marketing by pushing the customer out of the picture.

"We have a program that's a perfect fit for your client," the radio sales rep announces. This is a person who doesn't know anything about the client except that it has nearly 50 locations throughout the region. This is the same person who doesn't have the foggiest notion about the client's marketing objectives, but who announces boldly that his media outlets are "a perfect fit."

Although this is the perfect strategy for marketing failure, it doesn't need to be this way. That said, here are seven guidelines for making marketing work.

1. Don't think about anything other than the customer. To put it bluntly, most companies get in the way of good marketing. No matter what they say, they act as if their marketing should be about them. It should showcase what they sell or what they do. Absolutely nothing could be farther from the truth.

A company serving high-end consumers developed a new website with excellent eye appeal. While it looked good, they failed to take the consumer into consideration. The website is all about the company.

Someone sold the company the website *they* wanted. There's no effort to engage the customer, other than to sign up for a service and even then, there is no provision for using a credit card, let alone get more information or express an opinion. This wasn't done deliberately. Chances are it happened because the web designers spent their time meeting with company management. No one thought about who would be using the website—the *customers*. And of course, management thought it was a great site.

If anyone had asked, "What does the customer want?" the result could have been quite different.

2. Stop trying to manipulate customers. Attempts to get recipients to open email messages with the lure of receiving "helpful information" often turn out to be nothing more than thinly veiled attempts to sell something.

Scam artists aren't the only offenders. Well-known companies use this ploy, as well. As soon as the customer is faced with a form with fifteen spaces of "required" information, the veil is lifted and the brand is damaged.

But that's not the worst of it. The objective is finding ways to connect with the customer in a mutual value alignment that establishes a relationship. It's out of this experience that sales are made.

3. Demonstrate your company's values. Avon, which describes itself as "a company for women," does an effective job of aligning itself with the values of its constituency. Its mission is "improving the lives of women" in economic empowerment, the environment, governance, people and diversity, philanthropy, product responsibility, stakeholder engagement, supply chain and workplace safety and health. As John King, a talented young branding mind at Minneapolis-based Fallon Advertising said recently in *AdvertisingAge*, "We believe that the future belongs to generous brands." He describes them as "additive to people's lives and to culture." Then he adds, "They help build ideas in the world; they leave something behind."

This is what Avon's marketing is all about.

4. Recognize that just getting people through the door doesn't make them customers. Macy's is known for its "Star Rewards," credit card-size coupons touting "Extra 20% off" or "Take \$25 off."

It sounds very rewarding until you discover that two-thirds of the back of each card is filled with tiny type listing everything you want to buy—as exclusions. The message is clear: "Hey, you suckers. Come on in."

If the "rewards" aren't rewarding, why would anyone want to be known as a Macy's customer? Unless there is a value proposition that connects with the recipient, there is no customer.

5. Don't fall for every gimmick that comes along. But don't avoid them, either. Just remember that your messages are out there for all to see. It's easy to become all atwitter about Twitter, but ask yourself, "Whatever happened to MySpace?" It fell flat on its face in less than a year.

There's another reason to be cautious about what you're doing. It's easy to find yourself in trouble. One person joined a "placement community," indicating that he was looking outside his present employer. As it happened, someone who knew the employer read the message. You may be linked in more than you expected or wanted.

If you want to explore the possibility of social networking, start by blogging, building a reputation for your ideas and using Twitter and other social media to drive traffic to your blog. That may be an effective way for your company to share its thoughts and ideas.

6. Whatever else you do, be consistent. Even the best marketing can go bad by a lack of consistency. In 2008, Kia, Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen all increased their advertising an average of 42.8% over their 2007 expenditures, according to *USA Today*. This occurred when overall auto sales had plummeted and other brands were slashing their marketing budgets.

While others lost market share, Kia's rose from 1.9% to 3.1%, Mercedes went from 1.6. to 1.8%, and VW's rose from 1.4% to 1.9%

Modest gains? Not to these car companies. "When we invest in marketing, this happens," VW's marketing chief, Tim Ellis, told *USA Today*. "We think it's important to stick to our roots and stick to our value message. We're getting a higher

percentage of the dwindling marketplace. And when this crazy situation comes straight side up again, we'll be positioned to increase our share even further." It's no accident that VW is introducing three new models in 2009. Consistency wins customers.

7. Focus on pleasing the customer. Even the most compelling marketing messages are worthless, if the customer isn't satisfied. Several people had been patiently standing in line waiting to make a purchase at a well-known auto parts store. After waiting for about 10 minutes, no one was available to help them. Finally, a worker came by with a Coke in his hand and a fellow employee asked him if he would like to take care of the customers. His reply left everyone aghast. "I'm on my break" and disappeared around the corner, leaving the customers waiting for someone to help them.

Contrast that with a visit to an Apple store where you are greeted, and assigned a knowledgeable personal shopper who is charged with the task of taking care of you for however long you are there.

In the first example, the customer leaves annoyed, if not disgusted. In the other, the customer is totally pleased. Yet, both share their experiences with others.

When the focus is on the customer rather than on making the sale, the difference is transforming. It's what it means to make marketing work.

John R. Graham is president of Graham Communications, a marketing services and sales consulting firm. He writes for a variety of business publications and speaks on business, marketing and sales issues.

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M&A Tips

With the myriad of Mergers & Acquisitions that are currently taking place in our industry we thought it prudent to remind you that there are many things that might slip through the cracks that have the potential of putting companies in a precarious position. If you are purchasing an existing firm, make sure you take care of all the change of ownership paperwork required for all environmental permits. If you don't you could put your company out of compliance as well as setting it up for potential fines if you are inspected. The same holds true in the Sales & Use Tax arena, especially if you are acquiring a company in a different municipality than your current plant.

As many of you know, whether it is in tax or environmental compliance, the agencies officials communicate regularly and one infraction can lead to many more being uncovered.

PIAMS can help you with both tax and environmental support, especially if you are an out of Denver company looking to purchase a firm in Denver – the tax municipality that loves to mess with printers. For more information call Kathy Lauerman at 303.771.1578.



Don't Miss June's Night of Face-to-Face Social Networking

seOverflow, a local search engine optimization company, will present to you everything you need to know about the hot new trends on the internet. This presentation on Social Media will include why every business needs to be doing it, and how you can get started off on the right foot.

Learn how to enhance your business marketing and networking use of:

- Blogging
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- and Facebook

About the presenter:

Reid Fenlaw is Director of Link Building at seOverflow, a Denver based search engine optimization firm. Reid has been with seOverflow since its inception and oversees "offpage" optimization for seOverflow's clients, spanning a wide range of industries and professions. Reid's study of traditional link building practices, as well as Social Media, plays a large role in his clients' successes online.

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

5:30 - 6:00pm Registration & Networking

6:00 - 7:30pm Program

The Denver Press Club

1330 Glenarm Place – Denver

The event is **FREE** to members of Design to Print Denver Media Group. Although there is no charge for members, members and non-members wishing to attend must register in advance. **Due to limited space availability, please register early.** Advance cancellations are appreciated to accommodate those on the waiting list.

- Members Free
- \$8.00 - Student Non-Members (with ID)
- \$15.00 - Non Members

The Denver Media Group was founded in 1991 as Design to Print, a Special Industry Group of the Printing & Imaging Association Mountain States. Its mission is to address the many issues facing Designers and Publishing Industry Professionals who foster communication through all types of media.

