

What's The Prognosis, Doc?



Magic wands, looking glasses, tea leaves...the industry is using them all. And the prognosis for future communications activities? Slow and steady seems to be the prevailing word. We continue to see slow media sales, wider than usual inventory openings, continued sluggishness in print media. The 'wait and see' mindset of the last 9-12 months seems to be wearing thin, as impatience for good news, continued improvements in the economy, and a recognition of eroding brands in need of polish (after a year of price-driven/transaction-oriented messages) are driving new initiatives from marketers. Search consultants are seeing an uptick in reviews after a very slow year as well. While we're not in boom times, those of us who are eternal optimists are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Here's to a better 4th quarter and 2010 for everyone!

Silver Anvil Win!



Rawle Murdy recently won a Silver Anvil from the National Public Relations

Society of America! Considered the Oscars of the PR field, our work with the Charleston Animal Society was considered the top nationwide in Community Relations and Issues Management campaigns.

Today Show hit makes the phones ring off the hook at Wild Dunes Resort

Outside of being featured on "Oprah," having your company or brand highlighted on the "Today Show" is the crème de le crème of media placements. In addition to remarkable visibility, roughly 5.5 million viewers each morning, it appears that having your brand mentioned on the show carries some influence too.

Wild Dunes Resort was recently featured in a segment highlighting great family travel deals, as selected by the editorial team at *Travel + Leisure Magazine*. The story highlighted the Wild Dunes' Stay More, Save More promotion, a progressive discount that increased based on the



number of nights booked. The reservation phone lines and Resort's Website were buzzing within minutes of the story airing, and by day's end Wild Dunes had a record-breaking day for reservations. The Resort attributed more than 500 room nights and roughly \$140,000 in revenue to the Today Show mention.

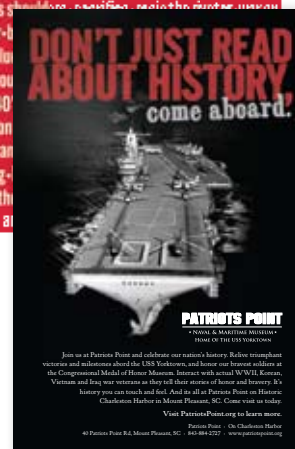
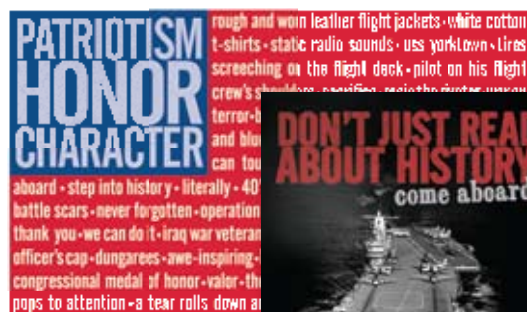
The media placement was just one bright spot in a highly successful, integrated spring campaign for Wild Dunes which, in addition to media relations, included eCRM, direct mail, SEM and targeted online and print advertising. The resort increased room nights and room revenue reservations and revenue by 22% and 24% respectively (compared to year-ago levels). In this economy, where hotels and resorts are struggling, this is a truly amazing success story. Congrats to Wild Dunes!

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum is an historic landmark attraction with significant national recognition. This year, the Patriots Point brand has been refreshed with a new, but vintage, look. Reflective of WWII posters and imagery, the brand begins to tell the stories of our nation's most historic moments.

As part of our new brand, we recently completed Patriots Point's first ever TV spot, which can be viewed at the Rawle Murdy YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBu2nVk7rlw>.

So how are the results? Thus far, summer attendance is actually up (!) from last year, which puts it (along with Wild Dunes) in rarified territory in the tourism industry.



Wearing Two Hats:

The rare challenge (and opportunity) of simultaneously serving as client marketing director AND advertising agency president



by Bruce Murdy

Years ago I worked at a large multi-national agency. I left the politics of a big firm to work at a small, innovative agency in the South. More than 20 years later, and now as president of that agency, I've never looked back...and the opportunity I've describe below is one of the key reasons why.

Earlier this year, after facing a challenging year and making the decision to let go their marketing director, our largest and long-term client of 23 years asked if I would personally step in as interim marketing director, and help lead their company's business — through the marketing function — into the 21st century. Needless to say,

I had to weigh the long list of pros and cons, not to mention the precedent that was potentially being set — to my knowledge, this was the first time someone would be both the outside agency president AND the client marketing director at the same time.

And while challenging, who in our business — especially those of us who've worked on one side or the other for years — could pass up the opportunity to be both the client and the agency? A self-proclaimed "car guy," this was my chance to not only drive the car, but help design what's under the hood.

While agencies no doubt offer an invaluable outside perspective, I also quickly found out that I had plenty to learn about the day-to-day of being a client-side marketing director.

Of the many insights I've gleaned from wearing both hats — things that all of us, regardless of agency or client-side, should consider — there are 10 that stand out most:

1. The Marketing Director is often NOT the last word— few have complete autonomy to make major decisions without checking with someone first...whether it's a management team or the chairman of the company. The director of marketing has to do this as well...they HAVE to have buy in from their peers, their bosses, and others, to ensure full support. All of that takes time.
2. Many internal battles are fought on the agency's behalf— just as agencies don't bore our clients with the nitty-gritty of what we go through to get work to them; they don't share all the battles they have to fight to get buy-in on their side. But believe me, good clients FIGHT for our ideas.
3. Our schedule is NOT their schedule — just because WE want an answer TODAY, doesn't mean we're going to get it. Shocking as it might sound, agency work is not always the most important thing on the mind of the marketing director! When we wait days for responses, it also doesn't mean the client isn't interested...it may simply mean they had something more pressing to deal with.
4. More than anyone, clients have passion for their brands — agencies often talk about having passion for clients' brands. But could you stay passionate about a brand you have to think about 24/7? That's what marketing directors do — they live and breathe the brand, and love it.
5. Communications are only a small part of what a marketing director works on — this is one of the most important lessons I've learned. What a marketing director is tasked with goes far beyond expectations. But what I can tell you is that our work is the most FUN thing they work on!
6. The best agencies make the marketing director's life easier, not harder — yes, you need to know what's going on, but don't spend as much time asking questions as answering questions. And any 'simple solution' agencies tend to bring to the table often is much harder to execute than expected on the client side. Risk management, legal, IT, turf wars, and more can add to internal complications.... Instead, learn how to bring smart solutions and ideas while keeping their internal challenges in mind.
7. Bring ideas that build business. Want to make your agency invaluable? Bring solutions to questions that haven't been asked. Be a trusted advisor, consultant and resource that the client simply can't replicate. In most cases, our breadth of knowledge, resources, insight and inputs can truly complement the clients' in-house resources. But make sure our ideas are measurable — in today's economy, results have to be the focus.
8. Keep the marketing director informed throughout the planning process — don't wait until major campaigns are completely developed and perfectly designed... keep the marketing director involved all along the way. Especially in this economy, that means quicker to market, more cost efficient solutions, and a marketing director who is bought into the solution from day one.
9. Things change — everyone, particularly agencies, has to be nimble. The agency's job is to bring new thinking and new ideas to the table that will deliver tangible results. Anticipate changes, and continue to move faster than client's can to prove your worth again and again.
10. Don't tell the marketing director the agency can turn everything around, because you have no idea what "everything" is. We can help, but what we influence is also influenced by other marketing and operational initiatives over which we have no control or input. The good old rule of thumb is still valid: under-promise and over-deliver.

As I write these insights, it dawns on me how simple so many of them are. But many agencies rarely actually take these into consideration. Be thoughtful, be proactive, and be an advocate for what's exciting, what's new, and most of all, what produces results.

New Client

We're very pleased to announce that we will be working with **The Carolina Inn** in North Carolina. The Carolina Inn, founded in 1924 on the campus of The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, has 184 guest rooms and 13,000 square feet of meeting and event space. We'll work with them on a strategic marketing plan to focus on building their group meeting, leisure, and weddings segments.



THE CAROLINA INN

The Fall Season

We always enjoy the new fall crop...of interns! And this year is no different. We have joining us this fall: Trina Naz from the College of Charleston, Caroline Harris, a University of Alabama graduate, Katie Seeger, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Humberto Briceno, a graduate of the College of Charleston via Venezuela. Welcome aboard!

