



The naked truth about marketing

A recent television advertisement for New Zealand Air features employees dressed only in body paint and smiles. The message is there's nothing hidden about the airline's fees. Fees are full frontal.

The ad campaign and accompanying safety message for passengers are done in good taste – at least in the fact there isn't anything you can see in the videos you don't already see on the beach or around a swimming pool. A pair of luggage handlers haul their, ahem, baggage into the belly of a plane. A flight attendant with strategically placed coffee cups pushes the drink cart down the aisle much to the surprise of unsuspecting passengers. A pair of pilots walking through the terminal catches the eyes of two women in the waiting area. The elder of the two leans over to her friend and says, "I do love a man in uniform." (www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1D38pJX7iE)

The commercials are playful, and they've accomplished what they were designed to do – capture people's attention, hit a major pressure point and get them focused on, and interested in, a product. What do you do to keep your company's name on the minds of customers in your market?

In our jaded, seen-it-all society, it's often dif-

ficult to distract prospects away from their busy lives to focus on your message. A few famous examples come to mind of companies that have done it well. Apple's seminal Orwellian, Big Brother IBM-busting commercial only aired once, but remains one of the most memorable TV spots of all time. Wendy's "Where's the Beef?" series spawned laughs and numerous jokes, but the message stuck with consumers.

Of course not all memorable ads are on the boob tube. Clothing designer Calvin Klein and retailer Abercrombie & Fitch have made headlines with scantily clad models adorning billboards, print advertisements and catalogs.

We've written a lot about marketing throughout the years. There are many schools of thought and nearly as many methods to draw a tech-savvy audience into your world. And the Internet continues to expand our reach. (It also provides many more distractions.) Facebook, YouTube, flickr, digg, del.icio.us, Twitter, fark, stumbleupon — the list goes on. Reading a recent story about a national news Web site listed half a dozen ways to share the story and a link that offered 55 additional methods to disseminate the content to other users. Digital is the new word of mouth.

It's an age-old adage that sex sells. Some of the aforementioned citations prove that point. I'm not suggesting you strip down to your boxers for your next brochure (though if you do, you might earn a mention somewhere in our magazine). And you're not likely to see the editors of *Landscape Management* do so. We're trying to attract readers, not scare them away.

I'm wondering how far you're willing to go to turn the heads in your neighborhoods. What's the most outrageous or unusual way you've tried to reach new or existing clients? If you're willing to share your secrets, e-mail me your most effective and unusual marketing campaigns (along with images), and we'll give you due props here.

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