

Common aerospace marketing mistakes... ...and how to avoid them.

A BDN Aerospace Marketing White Paper

There are a lot of really smart people in the aerospace marketing world. So why do we keep doing the same dumb things over and over? Let's resolve to do things differently.

You can't "engineer" a great ad

Engineers are not marketers. And marketers are not engineers. We're wired differently and our jobs are not interchangeable. Once we clear that up, we'll all be much happier (and the industry's marketing efforts will be much more effective).

Why? Engineers know so much about the products, and are so enthusiastic about the technology, that they want to list every feature and function in excruciating detail. This is in direct opposition to the marketer's goals: Get noticed quickly, make a single compelling point, and show the customer how they will benefit.

So, here's the deal: If the engineers won't design ads, the marketing people won't design aircraft.

Don't shoot the PR guy

He can't stop negative stories. And you shouldn't expect him to. It's his job to help the media by being accessible and responsive. As one editor told me, "If they would only help me when I call, I would be less inclined to report the problems I already know they are having with their products. But they won't make a move without their management's permission, and by the time they get back to me — if they get back to me — it's too late."

Management's unrealistic expectations about controlling the media



breed weak PR people rendered ineffective because they live in fear of being fired. Is that really who you want representing your company? The media won't respect him and soon they won't call at all.

The next thing you know there will be no coverage whatsoever — and no one left to blame but yourself.

The "We don't need marketing; everybody already knows who we are" Guy.

There's one in every company. And if he's the chief marketing officer, you may be in for trouble. At the first sign of a downturn, the budget is slashed. No more trade shows. No more advertising. And soon, no more sales. At the EAA AirVenture, where fixed-wing aircraft reign supreme, the mood in 2008 was markedly different than in 2007.

As one marketer reported, "You can smell the fear. No one is buying

ads." Not coincidentally, few were buying planes, either.

In September 2008, BusinessWeek and a global brand consultancy released a list of the Top 100 Brands of the Year. They conducted a survey to evaluate brand as a corporate asset, meaning how much money it is likely to earn for the company in the future. Not surprisingly, several of these top brands were spending more in the face of a potential global recession rather than cutting their branding budgets.

Monkey See, Monkey Do.

It's egos run amok and the corporate version of keeping up with the Joneses. The boss finds out that his top competitor is attending Trade Show "A." So now he wants to be there, too. Or, he sees a competitor's ad and asks why you don't have one in the same magazine.



“When it comes to marketing, a burning desire to win is good. Burning hair? Not so much.”

That’s not effective marketing. It’s herd mentality. Doing what everyone else does is counter to the fundamental idea of differentiating yourself. Establish and follow the strategy that supports your company’s unique situation and objectives, and quit worrying about the other guy. I once advised a client to stop attending expensive international trade shows. His response? “We can’t do that. Everyone else will be there. People will think we’re going out of business.”

A year later, they almost did.

Get Over Yourself

When developing external messaging of any kind, try to remember that it is not about you and your personal likes or dislikes. It’s about your target audience. Keeping this in mind when reviewing ads, brochures or other marketing material contributes to a better end product. Forget your personal prejudices (“I don’t like green!”) and try to think like your audience. Put yourself in their place, because all that really matters is what *they* think.

The same is true for rewriting copy, and here’s why. If you rewrite everything all the time, your writer will decide that you want to “improve” everything anyway, and that his or her real job is to please you, not to influence the reader.

Hair on Fire.

Crisis, chaos and panic fuel aerospace marketing. A last-minute brochure. A spur-of-the-moment

ad. Marketing swoops in, works through the night, and gets it done. “Great job, guys.” Except it’s not great. Great marketing involves strategy and planning — the mortal enemies of crisis, chaos and panic. Does your company have a marketing strategy, plan and budget? Do you follow a marketing roadmap to guide you through the year? Find a book to help you through the process and give it a try.

When it comes to marketing, a burning desire to win is good. Burning hair? Not so much.

Speaking of fire...

While studies confirm that trade shows are the No. 1 expense for most B-to-B marketing departments, the details of preparing for these important events are rarely an organization’s No. 1 priority. If you’re going to invest in a show, get your money’s worth by approaching the entire effort with a clearly defined strategy (sorry, but denial is not a strategy).

Look at a calendar. If you see a trade show that’s two months away, and you haven’t started preparing, you are already late. If that show is four months away, and you *have* started, you are probably going to attend without the stress, worry, and aggravation of a last-minute, pre-show frenzy. And won’t that feel good?

It’s possible, if you develop and start working a plan now. The clock is ticking... 🕒

10 STEPS TO A WORLD-CLASS MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Development of an effective campaign is part art and part science. Inspired creative is a must, but it must be built on a solid foundation. Here is an abbreviated snapshot of how it should work.

Current State Where are you now? Review competitive materials and spending. Review existing materials and spending. Identify respective strengths and weaknesses.

Internal Alignment Where do you want to go? Establish goals, objectives, audiences, budgets, etc., and ensure key players agree on direction up front.

Research and Analysis What is your position in the market? How are the company and its products perceived by target audiences? Review existing research, fill gaps, analyze and synthesize findings.

Creative Brief How will you achieve your goals? Creative brief summarizes work to date and outlines recommended strategy, tactics, and messaging for new campaign.

Structure How will the campaign work in its totality? What will you do when? How much will it cost? A multi-year roadmap with structure and flexibility is ideal.

Creative How will you present yourself? Capture and convey the essence and your value proposition with relevant, authentic, messaging and design.

Test Are you on target? Use focus groups or other methodology to measure impact, believability, and overall effectiveness of proposed approaches toward meeting established objectives.

Media Plan (if required) How will you deliver your messages? If you are going to invest in advertising, you should develop comprehensive media placement recommendations and budgets. Ensure alignment with key trade shows and other marketing opportunities.

Review and Approval Is everyone in agreement? If so, have a plan in place for the year — or even several years — then it’s time to move ahead.

Maintain, Assess, Adjust Roll it out! Keep it rolling. Determine if your campaign is working. Make adjustments as necessary. 🎯