

CEO'S PERSPECTIVE

PRACTICAL MARKETING ADVICE FOR BUSINESS OWNERS



BY MORTY SILBER

Borrowed Interest VS Call To Arms

The Yeshiva Gedola of Montreal held annual fundraising dinners often but not every year. The reason they weren't more consistent about it was because the dinners were only mildly successful financially. About five years ago, the President of the Yeshiva, Rabbi Dovid Rothchild, asked me to get involved in upgrading their dinner efforts.

Besides upgrading the event itself to an operationally successful and enjoyable experience, we focused on the messaging for both the advertising and the evening itself. Many organizations expect me to advertise the event, to promote the entertainment for the event or come up with some catchy tagline. Fortunately for the Yeshiva Gedola of Montreal, that's not what we did, because what we did worked. Perfectly.

Our ads promoted the school and the school's mission, rather than the event.

Our ads focused on what was authentic and true about the Yeshiva rather than trying to use "borrowed interest" from event entertainment or some gimmicky tagline.

Our ads formed a human connection between the people at the school and the reader.

One year we highlighted Rebbeim from Kindergarten through Bais Medrash: each week focusing on a different rebbe. We captured modern black and white pictures of each and every rebbe. Next to each picture we had the rebbe write one paragraph to explain what's special about his shiur.

Of course, the skeptical person might

look at these pictures and think: well that's all well and good for long-term branding, but how is that going to help the fundraising effort? Answer: the more people identify with and wish to support the organization's mission, the more readily they'll open their wallets to show their support.

In the first year we ran ads that focused on the Yeshiva's message, we raised 10x more money than the previous year. The ads were a smashing success, to the point

money on boring ads that have pictures of all the honorees but have no emotional impact. Stop advertising the entertainment then neglect to tell readers why your organization is one valuable enough to deserve their money. You may instinctively think that the mundane organization or business might not be exciting or cool enough to advertise which may tempt you to use "borrowed interest" from the entertainment or honorees. Don't do that. Focus instead on what makes you meaningful. Start with the authentic truth about what you do and the value you provide.

And finally, try finding that human connection rather than forcing a false sense of urgency. It may be easy when spending money on an ad to want to see results right away, and therefore shout at customers that they must "act now", but I promise you'll find that a timeless and

authentic call to arms will work better over the long term than an overhyped and time limited call to action.



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where the elementary boys were cutting them out of the local magazines and hanging them on their walls and making photo albums from them.

Advertising great Lee Clow has been quoted as saying "any ad can have a call to action, but only a great ad can have a call to arms." I agree, and think that's the real difference between these ads and the typical charity event ad. Typically, charity event ads have an overhyped call to action around buying tickets but these ads had a call to arms that rallied the community around the mission and identity of the school.

Now you may be wondering how all this applies to you. Here's how: stop wasting

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