

Prospering by Design

Creating Successful Marketing Pieces

By Dr. Karen J. Carpenter

Whether a client is launching a startup, redesigning existing materials, refreshing its brand, expanding its market, adding to its collateral or introducing a new product, that prospective client expects to be heard, understood and respected by its marketing, design and branding firm.

The key to executing a successful marketing campaign is a strategically planned, deliberate process. When shopping for a company that will help you develop marketing pieces for your business, ask about the process it uses to keep you informed. An optimal process could include these steps:

1. Successful marketing should begin with a respectful understanding of the client's:

- Expectations
- Product or service
- Target market
- Style
- Decision-making path
- Business goals
- Budget
- Message

Spend time with your marketing consultant clarifying your goals and messages. Share product samples or branding pieces you believe best represent your style. This time is important; do not begin to work on other areas of your campaign until you've seen and approved clear copy, voiced firm objectives and established a system to evaluate or measure success.

It's helpful to know your market thoroughly. What are the industry trends? How does your catering company participate in or lead those trends? Do you have terrific photography of events and dishes or do you need to schedule a photographer?

Your marketing campaign, which may include logos, brochures and Web sites, will create a better picture of your business if you work with a marketing consultant and design team to gather information, clarify each marketing message, plan marketing strategies, deliver designs and marketing concepts, coordinate each phase and evaluate all the marketing projects. If the campaign begins with your business plan, the images you use should reflect your services or products.



Contributed by
Mashile Rafeedie,
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Rafedie's
Catering & Events

2. Prepare a long-range marketing plan.

Retaining your marketing consultant for at least a year provides enough time for the consultant to become immersed in your catering objectives and style. Ask how your marketing consultant researches target markets, benchmarks against competitors in the same market, creates a year-long approach to create a branded presence in the market, researches or determines placement for print advertising or integrates your logos in all of your materials. Also ask for a timeline for the project.

3. Once you've settled on marketing objectives, the technical work begins.

By the time the designer has created an image, the intended message should be absolutely clear and the designs should reflect it. Often, designers will provide two or more options to a marketing piece for clients to consider. If this procedure is followed, the client can choose a preferred approach, provide feedback and approve

the final design. Once they have a final approval, designers can finish the image and send it to production.

The following case studies show how having a well-defined process contributes to success.

Case One: National Association of Catering Executives (NACE) Educational Conference Brochure, Mailer Card and Logo

NACE conducts an annual educational conference, which needs a theme that helps to determine a logo design. This year, the conference theme, Xtreme, led to a design of an exotic logo, and a search for a look that best suggested the extreme in the creative catering industry.

Reproduction on a variety of media is an important concern. For example, does your catering or linen company sponsor a softball team? Will your logo reproduce well on hats or T-shirts? Will it work well in black and white for newsprint? You should be able to use all your branding pieces in black and white as well as color. Also, be sure colors are selected using a Pantone Matching Specification Color Chart, which is a reference guide used by most of the graphics arts industry, so that you can ensure the correct colors appear every time. The difference between gold, mustard and yellow is huge!

To plan marketing of the conference, we conducted extensive research to select industry members in various categories and designed mailer cards for each of those audiences. Every piece carries the same visual message. In addition, we measure the responses to the marketing efforts. We code registration forms on the brochures, so we know the result of response from each audience. The cards also are coded geographically, so we know which successfully transmitted the message we sent.

If you are planning a staged mailing [mailing at different dates or to different



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Weddings

Specialty Buffets and Stations

The Chef's Carving Display

Our chefs, dressed in white with a white toque, will kindly slice your choice of:

- Tri-Peppercorn Beef Tenderloin
- Roast Leg of Lamb
- Steamship Prime Beef Round
- Smithfield Virginia Ham
- Oven Roast Turkey Breast
- Roasted Veal Round

Served with a variety of fresh Gourmet Rolls and Petite Concoctions. An Au Jus, Horseradish cream, Dijon Honey Mustard and/or Creole Remoussade.

Neptune's Finest

Fresh Jumbo Shrimp with Red and Remoussade sauce, New Zealand Greenlip Mussels, Stone Crab Claws and Oysters Rockefeller served with Lemon brushed fish provided.

"Once again, you and your staff have proven to be consummate professionals. Before Michelle Melton, president of TURA, was even able to taste your food, she wanted to know your name because of the beautiful presentation and selection. It goes without saying how delicious every morsel was and pleasing to our guests here at City Interactive Media."

-Lynn Connor (City Interactive Media)

Weddings

