

HIGH *on* SUCCESS

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HTCC On The Move

HTCC has moved to expanded quarters at:

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What's in Store at HTCC?

Selling ice cubes in the dark?

In the early days of corporate giant FedEx, they described their mission with just three words: "absolutely, positively overnight." We remember that mission because it was to the point, consistently used and easy to remember.

FedEx wisely spoke to the emotional need for reassurance (make me feel good about my decision). Merrill Lynch also connects emotionally, using its bull image to suggest a tough and aggressive investment posture. Nike tells us we can succeed if we "just do it." Underlying these messages is an accurate understanding of why people buy. Or don't buy.

What does *your* customer need when they are choosing your product or service? **Information** that will give them confidence in their decision? **Understanding** and insight that will help them interpret what they know? **Advice** about what you think they *should* do? **Reassurance** from other customers that will make them comfortable? Or just **simplicity** – a transaction that's easy, trouble free and uncomplicated? Answering those questions is never easy. But if you don't have clarity around who your customer is, it's downright impossible.

HTCC helps its clients define and execute a strategy that integrates your product or service offering, your target customer and your geographic reach in support of your overall strategic objective.

We often begin by asking a prospective client the most basic question: tell us what you offer, to what audience, in what geographic region. A response might look like this:

"We offer financial planning software to individual investors in the State of Florida."

That's a good start. But it might mean you provide QuickBooks to senior citizens. Or day trading software for 20-somethings. Where and how do you offer your product? In a retail location? Online? At trade shows? What about customer support and service – is that part of your offering or an added cost option? Do you offer upgrades or integration with other software?

The bottom line is that every organization should be able to articulate every component of their product and service offering, mapping those offerings to the demographic and psychographic characteristics of their audience. Not to mention the geographic limits of their marketplace, and the likelihood that they're using the right vehicle to reach the targeted audience.

Last but not least, all of that information should be consistent with and in support of the company's strategic objective. A tall order? Maybe. But anything less is like selling ice cubes in the dark – by the time you know what your product is and where your customers are – both may be different from what you thought they were.





Highly Recommended

Offering you counsel and suggestions on a variety of strategic marketing topics.

Making Headlines, Building Reputations and Solidifying Relationships

By Sharon A. Espinola

Prospective customers who read a story in a trade magazine assign it the kind of credibility that advertising and marketing materials simply can't provide

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**Ask about our
boutique "accessories"**



When money is tight, it's more important than ever to look closely at what you're getting for your marketing dollars.

And in good times or bad, trade media relations is a bargain.

We don't need the National Credibility Index to tell us that we have greater confidence in a "story" that appears in a trade magazine than we have in the ads that line the magazine's pages. But the index actually verifies our own assessment, noting that print news sources are considered to have a high credibility rating, while advertising is at the other end of the scale.* That means your customers or prospective customers who read a story in a trade magazine assign to that story the kind of third-party credibility that advertising and marketing materials simply can't provide. That doesn't mean you throw out all other marketing activities, but there's no question that trade media relations can be a key element in a well-thought-out, fully integrated marketing plan.

Integrating Media Relations into Your Marketing Mix

Over the past few months, HTCC instituted a trade media relations campaign for one of its clients. Here's a quick view of what happened:

- We created an electronic press kit
- Placed the contents of that kit on the client's Web site in a media-accessible "Newsroom" section
- We analyzed and established relationships with relevant trade media
- Then pitched four story ideas to the targeted publications
- Three of the four liked the suggested stories, and we ghost wrote the articles
- Linking our client's web site to the published articles strengthened the credibility once again
- We ordered quality reprints for use at trade shows and in marketing packets
- And e-mailed the client list to be sure they knew about the articles.

Creating stories and integrating them into an overall marketing effort has helped this client to make headlines, to further build its reputation within its targeted audience and to solidify its relationships with existing and prospective clients: a value that far exceeded the investment.

* This information is based on a survey conducted October 1999 by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) regarding which sources of information the public believes when evaluating corporate performance and personal investing. These results, while directed towards one industry—the financial services industry—validate the value of trade media relations.



Many Happy Returns



motivational speakers often get our attention with a catchy question like,

"What could you accomplish if you were absolutely certain that you could not fail?"

If we applied that logic to our everyday activities – with the assurance that we would be successful at everything we did – we would quickly give up time eaters like rearranging our coffee cups and playing Solitaire. Those activities occupy us when we are bored, frustrated or uncertain about what to do with the real challenges we face.

Information overload is often cited as the reason people hide out in mindless activities. Another culprit is simply lack of planning. A home that has a place for everything is ready for the daily onslaught of "incoming" – whether it's junk mail, telephone books, shopping bags or what the cat drags in.

Similarly, a company with a plan knows what to do with the next incoming great idea, "opportunity," or requirement. A well-designed marketing plan removes the uncertainty and provides clarity about what needs to be done next. It offers a touchstone for decision making and a tool for measuring success. Unfortunately, what we hear most often when we encourage clients to create a marketing plan goes like this: (1) we don't have time to plan; (2) it costs too much to plan; (3) we don't have any baseline data anyway; and (4) besides, we need a really nice brochure by next week.

The return on investment from a

marketing plan can be measured in dollars, in efficiency, in profitability and even in sanity.

Here's a case in point...

We once had a PR client who "didn't need a plan." We got a call one day asking for our advice about a "great opportunity" to run an ad in 12 issues of a magazine for only \$36,000. What did we think? In the absence of a plan, we responded with some questions of our own...

What percentage of your total marketing budget would that \$36,000 represent? (In other words, if you have \$1 million to spend, then \$36,000 might be a great deal. But if you have \$37,000, your entire marketing effort must ride on that ad.) He didn't have a budget in mind.

How well will this magazine reach your target audience? Well, if you haven't carefully defined who your target audience is – geographically, demographically and psychographically

– how will you know what they read?

How would this ad campaign fit into the rest of your overall marketing strategy? What strategy?

What instructions will you provide to the agency that prepares your ad, in terms of the image you want to convey? The agency will know what to do.

We try to avoid clichés about "planning to fail if you fail to plan," but it's easy to see how much trouble you can create for yourself without clear guidelines about your offering, your target audience, your budget – and most of all – your objective.

HTCC's mission is to change our client's business by improving their visibility, image and condition. Taken alone, an ad, a billboard, a web site, a brochure never changed anyone's business. Creating and executing a strategy – now that can change your business.

Partner Profile

HTCC partners with a variety of marketing experts to offer you innovative, creative solutions that meet your marketing needs. This issue, we profile:

Sharon Espinola

Sharon Espinola specializes in media relations. Her 16+ years of experience include a track record of working with

both mainstream publications and trade media, resulting in 200+ published articles in trade publications and nationally recognized daily newspapers such as USA Today and The Wall Street Journal. Sharon has ghostwritten by-lined articles for corporate CEOs and coached executives on the art of staying on message when speaking with the press.





Our Corporate Identity

HTCC's visual identity was carefully chosen for its beauty, power and symbolism. Collectively, the elements of the image come together to convey an overall sensation of power,

excitement and possibility. Individually, each element represents an important aspect of the HTCC marketing vision.

A Global Audience

The darkened half-circle in the image represents the globe, emphasizing the "global" marketing made possible by new technologies.

The Speed of Light

The comet in our logo symbolizes takeoff: the ability to increase speed, power and intensity across time and distance. And helping our clients take off is what HTCC is all about.

The Sky's the Limit

The gradient from blue to black emphasizes the illuminating glow produced by the comet, suggesting a brighter tomorrow, full of possibility for those who want their business to *take off*.

Tracking and Measuring

Win-loss analysis

American sportswriter Grantland Rice (1880-1954) coined the famous statement that it isn't whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game. Clearly Mr. Rice wasn't trying to do business in the current economy.

The reality is – it's both. If you lose too many of your games, ultimately you won't get to play any more. We all know that. And yet many companies don't even keep track of how many of their opportunities end up in the "loss" column, let alone know why they lost them.

HTCC helps companies understand why they win. And why they lose. It might be price. Or timeliness. Responsiveness. Ability to understand the customer's requirements. It might be location. Or the customer's perception of your capabilities. They might think you don't understand their industry-specific needs. Or your references may fail to provide the strong support that's needed.

Whatever the reason, if you're losing more than you'd like to lose, here's another famous quotation: Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it (George Santayana).



*It is not necessary to change.
Survival is not mandatory.*

W. Edwards Deming

HTCC and your marketing boutique are pleased to announce the availability of "Brand Accessories™." This new offering will simplify the branding process for companies that don't have time to "brand" their fax covers, invoices, memos, address labels, binder spines and other materials with the corporate logo. We will take your corporate logo and create templates for your use in Microsoft Word and Excel. Other marketing accessories will be coming soon. Contact HTCC for more information.

Note: Templates are available for Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel for PC. MAC not available at this time.

Recent Project Activity

Chester Water Authority (CWA) Chester, PA

www.chesterwater.com

A regional water authority, CWA provides quality water to 200,000 people in Southeast Pennsylvania

HTCC maintains CWA's web site and provides **Express Response™** to any request affecting community health and safety.

This quarter, HTCC posted drought emergency notices within two hours and worked with CWA to protect its infrastructure from security risks by removing sensitive information from the web site.

Eagle Consulting & Development Kinnelon, NJ

www.eaglecondev.com

Provider of online, real-time automated data collection solutions to users of QAD MFG/PRO enterprise applications

HTCC assists Eagle in coordinating all activities surrounding a major trade show in May of each year, including: review and update the corporate booth; develop and produce collateral for the booth; select and order promotional materials; plan and oversee an on-site event; handle invitations and follow up. This year the on-site event will be a private dinner for 70 of Eagle's customers aboard the Queen Mary in Long Beach, CA.

New Accounts

RAVE Systems

Creates successful coach/player relationships by training and certifying coaches in the use of brain-based tools and methodologies.

RAVE Systems chose HTCC to develop and execute a corporate identity and PR strategy.

The Renaissance Group Tampa, FL, USA

Provides high-impact business development consulting services to small business owners.

The Renaissance Group chose HTCC to refine and execute a corporate identity as well as a PR and communications strategy.