

More Rules Made to Be Broken



BY BERNIE TRUEBLOOD

All right class, let's review. Who remembers the No. 1 Rule of Promotion? Peter?

That's right, the first rule was: Make Your Own Rules. Promotion is about breaking new ground, cutting through the clutter. So we admitted that the other rules were less commandments than suggestions.

And those were? Very good, Amy, the second was: Treat the Offer as King; the third: Hone It Until You Own It; the fourth: Call for Action; and the fifth: Go for Outrageous.

Let's move on to examine the next five "rules." Pay attention — this material may be on the final exam.

Promote the Promotion: Don't just make an offer, romance it! Bring it to life and belabor the benefits. Not like Chuck E. Cheese's promotion, which offered "free tokens and other cool stuff," but buried the value of those tokens and gave no reason why readers would want such stuff.

Then, tap every support asset possible to expose your offer to the maximum number of prospects. For example, don't overlook packaging as a media opportunity, and make sure your publicity department has a plan to promulgate the event.

Provide salespeople the tools to ensure offers appear at retail, where 70 percent of brand decisions are really made.

Reward, Don't Bribe: Discounting is bribery and, as such, is de-motion, not pro-motion. It is potentially destructive to your brand's image.

Yes, Dexter? You say everybody loves a deal? Understood. So if you feel you must deal your brand, consider apply-

ing the "3 Ds" of discounting:

Delegated: It is less damaging to brand image when you let the trade channel do your discounting for you.

Deserved: Discounting is more palatable when offered in return for extra effort: trying a new product, for example, or making a multiple purchase.

Disguised: Non-monetary incentives are perceived by consumers as less mercenary than cash bribes — and can often be more effective. Attractive financing, for example, will cast a more positive

image on auto brands than will blatant cash-backs.

Avoid Cheap Thrills: Why waste creative juices crafting promotions designed not to be redeemed? Incentives will only be motivating and involving if they are perceived as meaningful. After all, "added value" is about value!

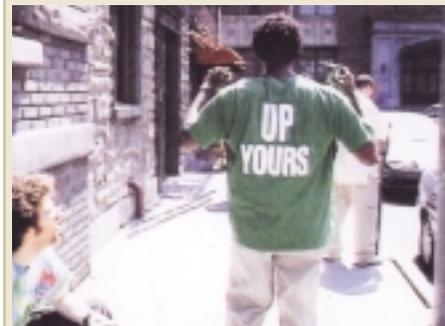
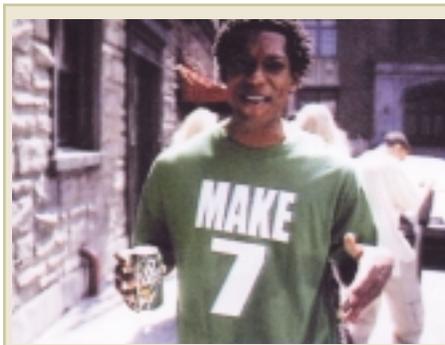
Banks are notorious for offering incentives that aren't worth the spit on the stamp of redemption. Can you think of other forms of "premeditated demotion?"

Ask Questions, Take Names, Talk Back: Great promotion is interactive, and every response mechanism is an opportunity to drive your relationship database. Ask for information on the sweepstakes entry or redemption order form. Then use that information to contact prospects — if only to initially say "thanks" and ask for permission to contact them again. Consumers who feel good about brands become advocates.

Be a Picky Partner Picker: Inside every partnership promotion lurks a potential nightmare. Will the movie you bought into bomb at the box office? What if your buddy brand gets hit with a recall? Or something worse — the Häagen Dazs folks broke their sweepstakes tie-in with the Concorde two days before that fatal crash.

So before you jump in bed, remember that partners can bring more than bucks and borrowed interest to the party — they can also bring baggage. The brand value you seek must be worth the gamble.

That's the truth. ○



Pop Quiz

Outrageous? Or is it just a sophomoric semaphoric? Did anyone consider the impact this kind of imagery can have on the B-county bluehairs who comprise a major portion of 7-UP's sipping constituency?

Perhaps barroom bawdy is best left to the marketers of beer and tequila, who have the luxury of being able to promote in venues where such is not considered offensive.

Contact Bernie Trueblood at btrue@promoprimer.com to ask questions, take names, and talk back.