

Illustrating A Point About Inhouse Creatives Promoting Their Value

BOB WAGNER



A few years ago, renowned illustrator Jeffrey Moores (www.jeffmoores.com) began noticing that his usual promotions — direct mail campaigns and ads in print and web directories — weren't working as well as they used to. "Today, anyone can whip off a quick image with Adobe PhotoShop," the 25-year industry veteran said. "Work is not as plentiful, and it's more competitive."

So he tried a different approach to marketing: a personalized calendar featuring his drawings and using cover images that varied between men and women. "There are a lot of female art directors, and I thought they might relate more to a woman in the cartoon," he said.

The results were his best ever — 70 responses from 1,200 pieces mailed, seven times what his recent direct mail has done. About a third of his work that

year (2006) came from the mailing, compared to about 10 percent from direct mail most years. And the two-dozen or so resulting customers include Time Magazine, The Wall Street Journal and Forbes Magazine, where he rekindled a relationship that had gone cold for a decade. Five months after the mailing, people still referenced the calendar when contacting him. And two years later, he had created two additional personalized campaigns — a postcard series featuring his art-enthusiast character Nick Beat and a "Where's Waldo"-style oversized mailer — that generated comparable results.

The message to inhouse creative shops is two-fold. One is a reminder that, much like outside agencies, you need to promote your value to your customers. The second is that personalized, one-to-one marketing communications is arguably today's most effective promotional vehicle. Pieces made relevant to each individual recipient typically generate superior response rates and premium return on investment.



Combining personalization with his illustrations in self-promotional direct mail pieces like this series of postcards has helped illustrator Jeff Moores generate the best responses in his 25-year career. Jeff recently spoke about his success with personalized promotional marketing campaigns at the ICON5 conference (www.theillustrationconference.org) at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York.

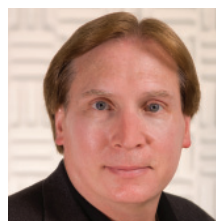


If you've never developed personalized communications pieces, you owe it to yourself, your department and your marketing organization to explore this fertile ground. Like Jeff Moores, you stand an excellent chance of developing interest in your services. And by providing one-to-one capabilities to your marketing organization, you stand an equally excellent chance of improving the enterprise's overall performance.

Inhouse agencies are especially well positioned to run these programs. You bypass the security concerns that are raised when external agencies work with customer data. You likely already have relationships with the marketing executives who develop these programs and the production shops that print and produce them.

And creating them is easier than you might think. Plug-ins to popular design software enable you to create personalized pieces with your usual design tools.

So, congratulations to the winners of American Inhouse Design Awards. Now here's my challenge to you: publicize your accomplishment to your customers with a personalized communication. See if it isn't a springboard to even greater success.



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