



SILICON VALLEY AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION

THE SOURCE FOR SILICON VALLEY MARKETERS

WWW.SVAMA.ORG

The Challenge of Defining Marketing

By Michael Becker

Thomas Edison once said, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." As marketers, there is one piece of work that we often neglect, namely helping those around us understand exactly what it is we do.

It is generally understood what most groups in a company do. The sales department sells the product or service that the company manufactures. Manufacturing (or engineering in a software company), produces the product for the sales people to sell. Management guides the company, HR takes care of the people, finance watches the money, and legal makes sure no one gets the company in too much trouble. However, it is often unclear what marketing does.

If you ask 10 people within a company "How do you define the role of Marketing?" you will get 10 widely different answers, with each respondent putting forth

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How Does Design Fit Into Your Marketing Plan?

by Erin Sarpa

As a marketing professional, you have a responsibility to increase market share, promote products and events and create brand awareness within specific time and budget limitations, all while nurturing your group's relationship with the sales team. In short, you have your hands full. How can a good design firm assist your efforts?

Design studios vary in capabilities, but in general, most have the capacity to see your marketing challenges through a trained perspective that promotes asking a lot of questions and offering unique solutions. A good firm can relieve some of your other responsibilities, such as working with a copywriter or managing print or Web production. They can even save you money by offering alternative processes with which you may not be familiar. Following is a guide to hiring the right firm, using a defined process to reach objectives and allowing creative magic to happen.

Finding a Design Firm

There are three basic types of design providers. The first is a freelance designer. This is a one-person shop, which offers you direct communication with the designer at a fair price. A freelancer should have a degree in design and a process that works for you. The second option is a typical design firm. This is a small group, usually four to ten employees. They will have multiple designers on staff with varying specialties, all educated. You will most likely communicate directly with your designer and/or a principal. The small design firm will have a detailed process, a Rolodex full of

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SVAMA calendar of events

March 10th Customer Loyalty Program
April 15th **SVAMA Career Development Event**
 Sometimes the Grass Is Greener:
 How to Switch Industries and Jumpstart Your Career

SVAMA Monthly Program Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Breaking Up Is (Not) So Hard To Do: Strategies for Creating and Keeping Loyal Customers

Join us on March 10, 2004. To register visit <http://www.svama.org/events>

WHEN: Wednesday, March 10, 2004
 6:00pm - 7:00pm Networking and Refreshments
 7:00pm - 8:30pm Program and Q&A

VENUE: Network Meeting Center at Techmart, Santa Clara,
 5201 Great America Parkway

For Directions: <http://www.networkmeetingcenter.com/locat.html>

PRICES: (Includes refreshments)

Standard		Advanced Registration (by 3/3/04)	
\$40	Member	\$30	Member
\$50	Non-member	\$40	Non-member
\$25	Student member with a valid student ID	\$15	Student member with a valid student ID

Join SVAMA now and start taking advantage of the many benefits of being a SVAMA member. SVAMA is the leading source for educational, networking and career development opportunities for Silicon Valley marketing professionals.

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subcontractors (photographers, writers, etc.) and will charge more than a freelance designer. The third option is a full service communications agency. This agency will offer marketing, media buying and placement, and strategic positioning in addition to design services. You will likely communicate with an account executive and pay a higher price than a small firm or freelancer will charge.

Once you have determined which type of firm suits your needs, get references from other marketing experts. Gather at least five or six names and then look at websites to get a feel for capabilities and the culture of the firm. Narrow your choices down to three and invite them in for interviews. Once you have a representative of the design company in front of you, make sure the chemistry works. It's almost guaranteed that you will work together under pressure so you should feel confident that the designer can and will deliver, and that they'll do it with a smile. Ask about the firm's processes and how they approach the creative process. Find out what happens if your designer is on vacation or out sick when you have deadlines looming.

Lastly, ask them to provide a quote on a project so you can compare each firm's pricing structure. Some will charge hourly and others by the project.

The Design Process

All design firms should have a process that they follow. Some will have documented their process in a detailed format so you know what to expect throughout a project and what the design team expects from you. Others will have a rhythm and will summarize their procedures verbally in the beginning of a project. Either system can work, provided that all parties understand and agree to deadlines, responsibilities and limitations. The following is a typical design process:

- Launch meeting
- Creative briefing
- Research
- Define weak spots
- Define objective
- Set milestone schedule
- Initial concept development
- Internal critique
- Choose top three design solutions
- Fine tune the concepts into comps
- Presentation of comps
- Written approval of chosen direction
- Client provides content
- Application to various pieces
- Revisions (up to three per piece)
- Final proofs
- Written approval
- Final files released

All of these steps should be accounted for in a schedule with the understanding that if one date is missed, it is likely that all of the following dates will be compromised. Defining the process in the early stages of your working relationship will set expectations and prevent headaches.

The Craft of Design

Most designers are educated very specifically in their field. Their training includes conceptual thinking, typography, color, form (2D and 3D), media, illustration, painting, photography, and art history. Your contribution to the creative process is to provide clear direction and know your audience. The best thing you can do for the creative process is to allow it to happen. Set your designer free by not providing specifics about type or color. She has seen more typefaces than you can imagine, and spent a good year in design school learning about the psychology of color. If you are not comfortable with your designer's experience or style, look for a new designer until you find one that you don't have to direct.

SVAMA Communities

A Network for Members and Friends

by Gene Hall

The CRM team is proud to announce SVAMA Communities, an online area where members and friends can network with each other and personalize their interactions with SVAMA.

“The implementation of SVAMA Communities is a milestone in our development as a marketing resource that truly responds to the needs of our members,” says Joyce Vinson, VP of CRM at SVAMA. This new resource for members and friends is located on the chapter’s Web site and includes a number of benefits designed to enhance the value of your SVAMA membership.

- Promote yourself and your business: decide if your information will be visible to others and control precisely what they will see.
- Personalize your calendar and communications, see upcoming events in your marketing specialty or all SVAMA events and you can even add personal events if you want.
- Control the type and number of e-mails that you receive from SVAMA, opt in and out of various marketing and support email communities.
- Participate in on-line discussions about your marketing specialty—get your questions answered, give feedback directly to the board, or start a new topic.
- Look up contact information of your peers; looking for the person you met at last night’s meeting? Find them in SVAMA Communities.
- Send e-mails to others in your Community Group; send an e-mail to any member of your Community Group or send a moderated message to all members.
- Manage your account information, change your contact information and we will automatically notify AMA Headquarters.

You have probably noticed the new look of SVAMA e-mails. An integrated emailing system allows SVAMA to send HTML e-mails directly to you according to your interests. Not only are the communications more attractive, they are also more targeted.

As the various SVAMA committees create additional Community Groups, you will be able to opt in to increasingly specific marketing specialties. If your specialty is not currently represented in SVAMA Communities, give the board your suggestions in the “Discussions” area.

You can login to SVAMA Communities by clicking the “login” button near the upper left portion of the window at <http://www.svama.org/>. If you don’t know your user name and/or password, enter your e-mail address at http://www.svama.org/dashboard/email_password.asp and the system will e-mail your login info promptly.

SVAMA members are automatically subscribed to SVAMA Communities when they join. However, members must set their own e-mail preferences.

Friends can participate in SVAMA Communities and stay informed about the latest Silicon Valley marketing issues. If you want to join SVAMA Communities, point your browser to <http://www.svama.org/Public/SelfRegistration.asp>.

According to Vinson, “SVAMA Communities is one more way that we add value to your SVAMA Membership. This is the result of hours of effort by many people in SVAMA and I am thankful for their time and talents in making this possible.” For more information and detailed instructions, visit <http://www.svama.org/svamacomunities.asp>.

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Open your mind to possibilities, there is rarely only one solution. When your design team presents ideas, listen to the explanation for each piece before reacting. After you have heard their pitch, pay attention to your instincts. After choosing the direction that your team agrees best fits your marketing objective, provide clear feedback. Work closely with your designer to iron out any inconsistencies and give them any specific information that might impact your audience and the success of the piece.

In short, set your expectations high and let your designer impress you. This will free up your time so you can do what you do best and get a better end result for your marketing effort.

Erin Sarpa is founder of EandI Design in San Jose, California. For more information, visit www.eandidesign.com or call 408-297-8000.