

FROM UNHEARD OF TO RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN THREE EASY STEPS

DiMassimo Brand Advertising and Jericho Communications

Category 49: Professional Services

OVERVIEW:

Did you know that readers of Newsweek have three times as much sex as those who regularly curl up with TIME or U.S. News & World Report? That Pepsi drinkers are more likely to cheat on their spouses while Gap fans are true-blue when it comes to love and romance? So says DiMassimo Brand Advertising. On behalf of this relative newcomer to the ad industry, Jericho created an ingenious, high-impact promotional tool that successfully captured the attention of the media and potential customers. Based on Jericho's original theory called "Emotional Distancing", surveys were developed to measure how American consumers' brand loyalty and media consumption habits influenced their opinions about current events and their own lives. The resulting news stories were chock full of fun facts and sometimes surprising findings. DiMassimo and Jericho Communications took the pulse of the American public using a good strong dose of humor. In the process, DiMassimo established itself as an industry leader and watched revenues soar.

PLANNING:

The objectives of the program were to:

- * Raise visibility for and brand the relatively new DiMassimo Brand Advertising agency
- * Position DiMassimo as a major player and leader in the advertising industry
- * Stimulate market interest in DiMassimo, resulting in a greater pool of new business leads

To do this, the following strategies were employed:

- * Develop a new marketing/advertising theory and support it through original research
- * Conduct a series of consumer surveys that piggyback onto topical issues and showcase the DiMassimo philosophy
- * Generate high-profile articles in key business, advertising and consumer media to demonstrate that DiMassimo is an industry expert

DiMassimo's target audiences were:

- * Business owners and executives
- * American consumers
- * Advertising industry
- * Consumer-oriented media, business publications and advertising trades (as conduits to above audiences)

JERICO'S CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY:

We believe that stars are not made in business by relying solely on press coverage in the trades. Articles about advertising agencies placed in the ad books, for instance, become less poignant because the competitive clutter dilutes them. But, when potential customers repeatedly read about that same agency in a general business magazines and then on the sports pages and hear about it on their favorite radio show, they begin to recognize the name. The ad agency gives the impression that it has transcended the trade media and permeated into the everyday lives of consumers. These are the companies that make it onto the short lists of potential advertising clients. Our publicity program for DiMassimo was based on the philosophy that the only way to achieve strong brand recognition is by creatively moving the client out of their own media category and into the popular news media outlets.

EXECUTION:

"Emotional Distancing" is Borne – In phase one, DiMassimo and Jericho created an original marketing/advertising theory called "Emotional Distancing." The concept asserts that Americans today have access to much more information than ever before (the bulk of which is negative in tone), and that this relentless deluge of messages is deeply effecting their beliefs and opinions. It suggests that the data overload experienced by many consumers today is creating disbelief, lower standards and widespread doubt. As a result, Americans are tuning out, becoming more and more emotionally distant to the events happening around them. When applied to everyday life, the theory works like this...During the alleged Presidential sex scandal, Americans debated for months on end whether President Clinton was immoral and should be impeached. As the media phenomenon wore on and on and Americans felt more and more emotionally distant to happenings around them, the overall opinion of the American public began to sway in Clinton's favor.

Surveys Takes America's Pulse – In phase two, a successful promotional campaign was launched. Over a two-year period, Jericho and DiMassimo conducted and publicized three "Emotional Distancing Surveys":

- * The first survey queried 1,200 Americans about their views on the Clinton scandal, linking consumers' opinions about the President to their viewing, reading, web surfing and purchasing habits. With a tongue-in-cheek attitude, a press-release announced the survey results. The headline, for example, read: "Sammy Sosa, Mark McGwire, Jerry Springer and Fab Detergent May Determine the Future of Our President." Additional statistics were communicated through a "Did You Know ..." fact sheet. An aggressive telephone follow-up campaign reiterated the news and offered one-on-one interviews with Mark DiMassimo. The study broke new ground in its interpretation of brand loyalty -- and the news landed on the pages of top advertising and business magazines nationwide.

- * Survey number two revealed how the sex lives of Americans are influenced by what they watch, read, and how much time they spend on the Internet. The press release and "Did You Know..." fact sheet noted that those who read

Newsweek have three times more sex than readers of TIME and U.S. News & World Report; and people who watch more than 15 hours of CNN per week have sex only once a month, while those who regularly tune into Touched By An Angel indulge at least three times a week. The survey also linked facts about the sex lives of respondents with their brand loyalty: Pepsi drinkers are more likely to cheat on their spouses while Gap lovers are true-blue in love. Major newspapers, news magazines and ad trades were seduced by the story.

* The third survey in the series was aimed primarily at trade publications. It revealed that word of mouth is the most powerful form of advertising today above radio, television and print. Jericho's staff secretly told 1,500 of their friends harmless untruths regarding news or ads, and surveyed them a week later to see how this "word of mouth" affected what they thought. Some of the results: 17 percent of the people polled said "Just Do It" was a tag line for Ex-Lax (after being told so by a friend), compared to 58 percent of the control group who obviously knew it was a Nike slogan. Or how about this one: 29 percent of people polled said that Ken Starr was the CEO of Starbucks coffee (after being told so by a friend), compared to less than 1 percent of the control group who knew the real identity of Starbucks' CEO. A compelling press release and "Did You Know..." fact sheet announced the news.

New Business Approach Redesigned – The "Emotional Distancing" concept proved to be such a market differentiator that DiMassimo redesigned its approach to soliciting new business based on the concept.

EVALUATION:

1) Making Headlines. DiMassimo's "Emotional Distancing" juxtaposition of politics, sex, marketing and media was a sure winner with the press. More than 79 million media impressions were generated, including high-profile placements in: FORTUNE (twice), BUSINESS WEEK (twice) ADWEEK, BRANDWEEK, BRAND MARKKETING, LOS ANGELES TIMES, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, DALLAS MORNING NEWS, STAR TRIBUNE, ARIZONA REPUBLIC, BALTIMORE SUN, SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS...and more.

2) DiMassimo is the Authority. A coup for DiMassimo, the campaign securely positioned the agency as an innovative industry leader. FORTUNE magazine said of the program, "DiMassimo's survey...the first poll ever to correlate political attitudes with brand loyalty." ADWEEK adopted the emotional distancing theory: "In an era in which there is an inverse relationship between the: amount of information and the level of credibility, savvy consumers are as easy to fool as their naive predecessors." Mark DiMassimo (the agency's president and creative director) was quoted extensively by both the consumer press and advertising trades about his theory and insightful opinions. The DALLAS MORNING NEWS said: "Mr. DiMassimo, the advertising man, also puts forth the argument that the president and all those products aren't so different. "My theory is that Bill Clinton is just another brand", he says..."But he's a resilient brand. It should be the goal for a lot of advertisers to be as resilient as Bill Clinton". Jericho Communications not only helped him coin a phrase, but also established DiMassimo as an authority on the subjects of both "emotional distancing" and

"Brand Clinton." DiMassimo's marketplace influence even extended into academia when a professor from Stamford began teaching a class on "Emotional Distancing" after seeing publicity about the concept.

3) Bottom Line Benefits. The publicity generated by the "Emotional Distancing" campaign coupled with the agency's new business approach translated into tangible bottom line benefits for DiMassimo Brand Advertising. Over the two-year campaign, the agency's revenues increased from \$10 million to \$120 million and staff resources quadrupled.