

the cutting edge

NEWS FROM THE CUNA MARKETING COUNCIL

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Selling your Soul

To understand what all the hype is about brand, we need to dip our toe in the pond of understanding. What exactly is a brand? And why is it so important? Better yet, why does it continually elude companies? The answers are many... —by Leslie Rowe

a business's greatest asset, something that makes good products great...is it packaging or just a short-term fad? The word that was once a "seal of ownership" has spread to every aspect of the company. It has superseded design and the traditional 'look and feel.' In short, it is now all about your company's personality.

Pick three objectives of a famous person. Let's take President George W. Bush, a man who preaches conservatism, old fashioned family values, self-control and common sense. He wears sober suits and has a very sensible look. We believe him to be a man of moderation, a family man, without excess. This is his created brand. Now imagine this—the next White House function: Bush sitting next to Pamela Anderson, sporting a Versace suit and fashionable new crew cut.

Yikes! The brand is definitely ruined. We will never take conservatism, family man or George W. seriously again.

So, back to company brand. It is more than a logo. Here's another one to help you relate: Nike—they are about being modern and aggressive. They choose the sports figures that fit this brand—people and images that keep their advertising cutting edge. You will find no element of Nike that cannot be described by the same few branded objectives. Why are they successful? Because we live in a world where information flows freely, and everyone is overwhelmed by words and pictures. Without focus or consistency, a company's brand is style without substance, like a house without a foundation.

Your objective? Integrate business that originally stood alone and think—what does my business do and how do



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selling your soul *continued*

the people within it think and work?

How do you work and how do your members perceive you? Perhaps your new brand (your personality) may be defined as a blend of experience, intelligence, integrity, member focus and innovation. This may accurately reflect the way you work and the way your members perceive you.

The brand, marketing materials, such as advertising, logo and stationary, and even the name emerges from the analysis of the way you work and how your members perceive you. Why is brand consistency so important? Because again, it is your personality. Your business can only hold together if it behaves and works in a consistent way.

Your credit union needs a heart. It requires a personality to define and differentiate it. It needs to transcend the individuals who run it. And, it needs to communicate this across everything it does. But what does this mean in practice? Developing a brand requires buy in across the credit union. A marketing team working in isolation can create a stellar logo, unique 'look and feel' and dynamic advertising. But hear me now—this is not enough.

Let's use an example out of our industry. You are considering sending your kids to a summer camp. You find one that has a motto, "your home away from home." Their brochures are warm, the pictures show camp counselors hugging kids, laughing and telling them a bed time story. You decide to call. You are greeted with a

curt phone reception. Your interest would more than likely end there.

We work with so many different targets, niches and demographics. Our communications span generations, ethnic backgrounds and more. Consistency is paramount. Potential team members should be assessed with reference to the brand—first. The entire team should reflect the core attributes of the brand. So an intelligent, experienced, innovative credit union has to recruit people with those qualities. At the year's end, appraisals should measure brand values alongside of performance. This means from answering the phone and e-mails to strategic decisions our behavior is 'on brand.'

Appoint brand ambassadors—those that will volunteer to become the focal point for the brand-related ideas and suggestions. A bunch of like-minded people who understand the benefits of the brand will want consistency.

Lastly, marketing will need flexibility to adjust the message appropriately—like Bush visiting the tropics and wearing a Hawaiian shirt—but the core values and style will remain the same.

Traditionally, a centrally controlled 'guide' is required—a brand 'bible' if you will. It will

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have a chapter on logo, writing style, literature, color and much more. It is the canvas and a frame inside which the picture is painted. Everyone should use it, talk about it and meet on it regularly.

In conclusion, consistency is a given. Your brand is much more than packaging—it is the soul of your credit union. This is why you will never see Bush sporting a diamond stud earring.

—Leslie Rowe (formerly Galea)

Leslie is an independent marketer with dv8Marketing Group, Tampa, FL, she has served the industry for more than 20 years in several successful credit union's executive marketing roles. She is a repeated award winner, sought after speaker and marketing consultant. She can be reached at dv8marketing@aol.com.

Influencing Leadership

By Nancy J. Lewis, MS, PHR

Influencing leadership is a vital skill for building successful organizations in this millennium. Strong leadership that has the ability to persuade is essential to taking your organization to the next level. Do you have the ability to positively impact others and effectively get them to understand and support your ideas? What is your credibility rating with those you work with? You cannot effectively influence others unless you have trust and credibility with those individuals that are a part of your team. It takes

courage, consideration and confidence to be a person of influence.

Influencing leadership means you understand

the importance of building alliances and strategic partnerships. Influencing leadership means you know the importance of connecting, developing and sustaining relationships that allow you to identify your power bases. Do you know who the power players are in your organization? Are you cultivating relationships with them? You must

understand the importance of becoming a strategic thinker and visionary. It is important to be able to communicate

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your ideas with clarity, confidence and compassion. Influencing leadership means you are willing to serve others and go the distance to bring about positive, productive change. At the core of influencing leadership is your ability to walk the walk and talk the talk; making sure what you say and what you do are congruent.



The CMC Conference

Explore the Marketing Universe!

The Tenth Annual CUNA Marketing Council Marketing and Business Development Conference will take place March 26-29, 2003, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Phoenix, AZ. With the theme of The Marketer's Guide to the Credit Union Galaxy, this year's event is destined to explore exciting new marketing strategies and provide an opportunity to share discoveries with your peers.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS BEGIN WEDNESDAY MORNING WITH A CHOICE OF SEVERAL STELLAR TOPICS:

- ❖ **How To** Recruit, Select, Develop and Retain Sales and Service Employees Who can Sell
 - ❖ **WebSight:** Developing Profitable Credit Union E-Business
 - ❖ **Business Development:**
 - PART 1.** Managing Multiple Relationships
 - PART 2.** Opportunities in Your Membership
- That evening, a welcome reception will launch the conference

festivities, with registration open from 4:00-6:30 p.m.

The keynote address for the Opening Ceremonies on Thursday will be "The Service Quality Imperative" given by Ron Zemke, President of Performance Research Associates in Minneapolis. Morning and afternoon breakout sessions will include the following:

- ❖ **Emerging Technology:** The Member and You
- ❖ **Culture Connect:** How to Market Your Credit Union to Hispanics
- ❖ **Swimming in the Event Stream:** One-to-One Marketing and Market Research



- ❖ **Part 1. Pizzazz in Presentations:** Presentation Skills and Trainer Tips for Business Development
- ❖ **Part 2. Presentations to Influence and Inspire:** Presentation Skills for New Product Ideas

Thursday's luncheon will include the Diamond Awards presentations.

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CMC Conference *continued*

Later that day, the Best Practices winners will share the secrets of their success.

Thursday evening, you are invited to boldly go where no one has gone before.... A buffet dinner and cash bar will delight the palate while your imagination is awed by the Challenger Space Center, rising majestically from the desert floor.

Along with Friday's General Session panel discussion on building brand awareness, the day's breakout sessions will offer terrific information and insights:

- ❖ **Reach for the Stars** in the Youth and Young Adult Market
- ❖ **Influencing Leadership**
- ❖ **Understanding Your Customer** Using Predictive Behavior Models
- ❖ **How to be an Effective Closer**

At Friday evening's annual Recognition Dinner, CMC's award winners will rocket to fame.

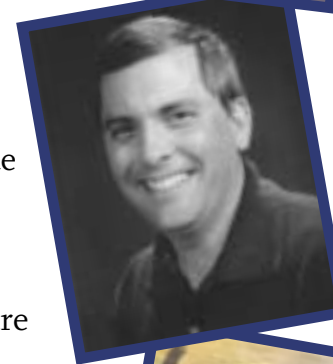
Before adjourning Saturday morning, conference attendees have an opportunity to hear presentations by **Karen Hollingsworth** on *Becoming a Malcolm Baldrige Award Recipient* and by **Randy Harrington** on *Breakthrough Leadership Strategies*.

Hotel reservations can be made directly with the hotel by calling 602-252-1234. Rates are \$189 single/double occupancy per night plus tax. Conference fees are \$799 for CMC members and \$1099 for non-members.

Whether your career in marketing is just taking off or you need to boost your efforts into a new dimension, **The Marketer's Guide to the Credit Union Galaxy** promises to fuel your creative energies. For more details, click on Agenda on the 2003 Conference web page.



Ms. Hollingsworth is Vice President of First in Service® Performance Excellence for 2001 Baldrige award recipient, Clarke American.



Randy Harrington who will speak on "Breakthrough Leadership Strategies," is CEO at Extreme Arts & Sciences.



Blast-Off for Fun at the Challenger Space Center

Sure to be a highlight of this year's CMC conference, an evening at the Challenger Space Center is scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2003. Attendees will enjoy a buffet dinner and cash bar while marveling at the center's striking design and outstanding space exhibits.

the Challenger Space Center's central cylinder rises four stories from the desert floor, set against bold geometric structures. The facility features a Mission Control Center modeled after the Johnson Space Center. A realistic next-generation International Space Station performs experiments, launching "probes" into the depths of outer space. At the learning center, visitors fly simulated space flight missions complete with flight crews, mission controllers and scientists. The center also hosts space camps, special programs, and planetarium shows.

Bus transportation to the Challenger Space Center will be available—the buses will board at 5:15 p.m. and depart at 5:30 p.m. The event will run from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend what is sure to be an out-of-this-world experience!

