

Engaging the Consumer's Senses

There was recently an interesting article in Native.news entitled, "The Vanishing Tourist Postcard" (see bit.ly/NN-02-28-22). In the article the author explains, "Today, most people are happy to take their own photos rather than buying and sending postcards with pre-populated images." While I completely understand the appeal of taking and sharing photos online, I think there's more to a postcard than just the image. The truth is, there's a distinct difference between digital and printed materials.



Printed materials vs. digital materials

Depending on the condition, age, rarity, subject matter and other factors, postcards printed in the mid-1800s can demand a hefty price. The oldest known picture postcard sold in 2002 for just under \$50,000. This sale was no surprise to deltiologists who study and collect postcards.

Baseball cards are also highly-priced collectibles. A 1952 Mickey Mantle card sold at auction for \$5.2 million in 2021.

Why are postcards and baseball cards demanding such a high price at auction? Because they are physical objects, printed parts of history.

Will today's digital images ever become collectibles? Some are trying to elevate digital assets to the level of printed materials. Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) seem to have exploded out of thin air this year. An NFT is a digital asset representing real-world objects like art, music, in-game items and videos. I have no idea if NFTs are worth the money. What I do know is print is a real-world physical object.

A postcard recipient is touching a tangible object containing a personal

message from someone who took the time and effort to find, write and send that postcard. The same goes for baseball cards, movie posters, comic books, first edition books and many other printed ephemera. You can touch, engage with and experience these printed materials. You should never underestimate the emotional connection that can be made through the power of touch.

The impact of touch on humans

When thinking about the power of touch, think Apple. When you walk into an Apple store, you're free to touch and play with all of their products. Apple aims to create a unique customer experience, while other computer stores have their products secured in boxes wrapped in cellophane. Apple knows that when you touch it, you feel a personal connection with the product. There's something primal about the sense of touch.

Think of a young child when thinking about the primal nature of touch. A small child is fascinated when you give them your keys to play with, but when you want your keys back, what is the child's reaction? "Mine, mine," the child will say. Why? Because the child was holding, playing and owning the keys. That sense of touch means, "This is mine." Yet, Apple's sense of touch goes beyond the store.

When you buy a new Apple product, like an iPhone, the packaging is all about your senses, your experience. The box engages your senses of sight, touch and hearing. The box is clean, smooth and made with thick, substantial paper. The way the top and bottom of the box fit tightly together, so tight that you can hear them rubbing against each other as you slide the box open. It's a sensory experience.

The evolution of printing techniques created to engage the sense of touch goes beyond the primal sense of "This is mine." Gloss, matte and soft-touch coatings, embossing or unique paper stock appeal to our sense of touch. Have you seen wood printing stocks? There are labels materials made from oak, birch and cherry wood veneer. These have the texture and grain of wood, yet the

surface is smooth enough for printing and converting.

Print is a sensory experience

Beyond postcards and product packaging, printing connects with humans on various sensory levels. And that connection can be profitable for brands. Research shows that media that appeals to more than three senses can increase brand impact and engagement by more than 70 percent. Thus print should be the media of choice.

It's interesting to see how printing has innovated over the years to incorporate the senses of sight, touch and smell into various forms of print media.



Special photochromic inks activated by UV light.

The sense of sight goes beyond a pretty picture. Printers can engage the sense of sight with specialty photochromic inks activated by UV light, so a splash of sunlight can cause a printed piece to burst into color. Indoors the packaging looks one way; then, when exposed to the sun, the packaging takes on a different look. Imagine the social media attention a bag of chips or a soft drink container would receive with packaging that changes right before your eyes.

Thermochromic inks are activated by heat. Imagine seeing a soda can and knowing if the contents were warm or cold. The use of thermochromic inks makes this possible.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) used thermochromic inks to commemorate the solar eclipse of August 21, 2017. USPS created a series of postage stamps where the black circle in the center of the stamp turns into an image of the full moon when pressed

with a finger. This was made possible by using thermochromic inks.



The sense of sight is also triggered through the use of variable data. Coke® personalized labels in their Share a Coke campaign, and you can still personalize your bottles today for a special event. Variable data allows for personalization, which encourages interaction and communication.

Through the use of print and a mobile device, augmented reality allows a wine label to come to life. I'm sure you've seen the 19 Crimes® series of wine bottle labels that tell the stories of the convicts pictured on the labels. The Walking Dead wine labels engage your sense of sight and your sense of hearing with their AR capabilities. If you haven't interacted with these labels, you're missing an exciting sensory experience.

Engaging the sense of smell

Augmenting the senses of touch and sight with the sense of smell will take a printed piece to the next level. Most of us have engaged with scratch and sniff technology on children's stickers. The USPS introduced a line of scratch-and-sniff stamps with illustrations of colorful frozen treats in the summer of 2018. But this technology goes way beyond stickers and stamps.

To read the rest of the article please go to <https://www.piasc.org/engaging-the-consumers-senses>.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Giving Your Marketing Text a Refresh

As the saying goes, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. In marketing, however, sometimes it can be difficult to tell if your text is "broken" or not. Even if it seems to be working, perhaps it could work even better. This is especially true as time goes on.

You may be in a "wording rut"

The good news is, sometimes in these situations a complete rewrite is not called for. All that's really needed is some tweaks—a minor "refresh."

What I've seen is that when you write about the same products or services repeatedly over time, it can be easy to fall into a rut of always describing things the same way.

Of course, this is not necessarily a bad thing, because it provides messaging consistency. However, every now and then it can be a good idea to try using other ways to describe your offerings, to see if this alternate approach drives a greater response.

Here are some things to consider...

Your writing may be based on outdated assumptions

An important issue to consider is that things change over time. If it's been a few years since you wrote your marketing text, remember that a lot has changed. Your industry, technology, the ways in which people work and myriad other factors have evolved. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, has had a profound impact on many things.

The question is, how has all of this impacted your target audience? Are the things that were most important to them when you wrote your text still valid? Are there new problems that they need you to solve? Has their buying process changed? Etc.

Your own focus may have changed

My own business is a great example. Ten years ago, 70% of my income came from writing website text. Last year 70% of my business came from writing blogs, newsletter articles and books. I'm currently working on a website update that will reflect this.

There are many ways to give your text a refresh

Try taking a look at the following:

- Products and services that you feature
- Adjectives that you use to describe your products
- Benefits that you focus on
- Problems that you claim to address
- Objections that you are seeking to overcome
- Order in which you present bullet points
- Examples that you give
- Testimonials that you feature

Once you make changes, be sure to track your results to see if the refresh worked!

Source: Linda Coss, Plumtree Marketing, Inc., www.PlumtreeMarketingInc.com

RISK MANAGEMENT

3-D Secure Technology for eCommerce Transactions

As eCommerce gets more and more popular, online transactions are becoming second nature. With more transactions, though, comes more opportunity for fraud and theft. That's the main reason why cardmember associations like Visa and MasterCard spend so much time developing technologies for effective fraud prevention.

One of those technologies is called 3-D Secure, although you may know it by many other names. Here's a quick overview of how 3-D Secure can help your business.

What is 3-D Secure?

3-D Secure is an XML-based protocol that allows merchants to take advantage of an additional layer of security for their eCommerce transactions. This technology was developed by Visa and Arcot Systems and has since been implemented by all major card networks under different names, such as SafeKey, ProtectBuy or MasterCard SecureCode.

The first version of 3-D Secure (1.0) had several limitations, including a clunky system for confirming a customer's identity. 3-D Secure 2.0 fixed all major issues, improved optimization for mobile and added several other features, making it a more attractive option for merchants.

How 3-D Secure works

If your system has 3-D Secure, the process is relatively simple. First, the customer enters their payment information via phone or computer. Your customer then sees the 3-D Secure page, which asks them to enter an authentication prompt. To get past this page, the customer must

enter their password or authentication code.

Once the customer enters the code, 3-D Secure allows your system, the issuing bank and the acquiring bank to exchange encrypted information. This is a secure and convenient way to accurately verify the customer's identity. Once their identity is confirmed, the customer receives a notification that the transaction was successful.

Implementing 3-D Secure

There are plenty of benefits to adding 3-D Secure to your system, from reduced liability to fewer chargebacks and labor losses due to theft. That said, implementing 3-D Secure isn't a simple task, and there are a few good practices to keep in mind.

First, you should have an extensive FAQ section on your eCommerce site that explains the 3-D Secure authentication process. Educating your customers in this way will help you reduce your cart abandonment rate, as many customers still perceive the need for authentication as a threat. You should also let your customers know that there's no fee for this service in the checkout process.

When implementing 3-D Secure, you'll have the choice between opening up a new authentication page and embedding it into the checkout process. Research shows that the second option is better, especially if the inline frame shows your branding in the page URL rather than the branding of the issuing bank.

Source: MONA Solutions, www.MonaSolutions.com



HUMAN RESOURCES

Can You Deny Vacation Requests?

In general, yes. But you should have—and document—a legitimate business reason for doing so. Denying vacation requests will undoubtedly hurt morale, especially if it happens frequently, and low morale leads to higher rates of turnover.

Discrimination claims are also a risk. Although denying vacation requests for legitimate business reasons will reduce the chance of a discrimination claim, you'll also want to make sure you're not denying vacation in a way — even unintentionally — that disproportionately affects employees with the same protected characteristic. For example, if you deny vacation requests from employees in the customer service department, which happens to be mostly women, more than other requests, they might have a gender discrimination claim. We also hear from employers who want to deny vacation requests when the employee is asking for time off for medical procedures or recovery; this clearly raises disability discrimination issues.

The best approach to avoid these types of discrimination claims is to periodically crunch the numbers to see if employees who share a protected characteristic are significantly more likely to have their request denied than others and, if so, adjust your practices accordingly.

When you really must deny a request, do so carefully. It's important to show empathy in these situations. You never know what someone has going on in their life. Stay focused on the fact that rejecting their request isn't something you want to do—it's something you must do. State the business reason you couldn't approve the request and work with them to find an alternative time they can take off.

If you find you are regularly denying requests when employees have a vacation planned, we recommend reaching out to an employment law attorney for additional guidance.

Source: HR|BIZZ

Employees May Be Terminated for Performance Issues Discovered During FMLA Leave

An employee is protected from termination for taking leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), but not for performance issues that warrant termination, even if they are discovered while the employee is on FMLA leave, as the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit recently reiterated.

In *Anderson v. National Lending Corp.*, an employee with a history of performance deficiencies went on FMLA leave. While she was on leave, the company's audit system flagged a number of errors in her work that caused a government agency to cite the employer. Her supervisor recommended her termination, and Human Resources conducted an investigation into the employee's performance. She returned to work while the investigation was still ongoing. Upon its completion three days later, the decision was made to terminate her employment. She sued, claiming violation of her FMLA rights to reinstatement and retaliation for taking FMLA leave.

The Seventh Circuit noted, however, that "an employee is not entitled to return to her former position if she would have been fired regardless of whether she took the leave." In this case, the Seventh Circuit found that the employer had evidence of her poor performance, which warranted discharge in the company's honest opinion, and the company's Standards of Conduct permitted termination for substandard performance without prior disciplinary action.

While this case supports the ability of employers to take appropriate disciplinary action, regardless of an employee's FMLA leave, we caution employers to ensure that they are treating such employees consistently with how other employees with similar performance or conduct issues have been treated.

Source: *Fiona W. Ong is a partner at Shawe Rosenthal, a management-side labor and employment law firm based in Baltimore, Maryland and representing employers nationally. She may be reached at ong@shawe.com or 410-752-1040.*

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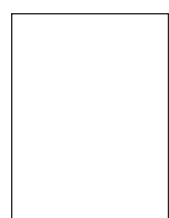
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Want to place a classified ad? Contact Kristy Villanueva at 323.728.9500, Ext. 215, Kristy@piasc.org.

PIASC Events Calendar

JUNE 6	CPR & First Aid In-Person or Webinar-Based Training Monday, June 6, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Chino, CA (if in-person) www.ostisinc.com/webinars
JUNE 3	CPR & First Aid In-Person Training (in SPANISH) Friday, June 3, 8:00 am to noon Chino, CA www.ostisinc.com/webinars
OCT 22	LA Printers Fair Saturday-Sunday October 22-23 Carson, CA www.printmuseum.org/los-angeles-printers-fair
AUG 17-19	America's Print Show 2022 Wednesday-Friday, August 17-19 Columbus, OH www.americasprintshow22.com

For full list of events, please visit www.piasc.org/events



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