

FIRE!!!

By Chris Pollok

Funny how that word always commands immediate attention. It makes people react instantly. Of course, how it's used makes all the difference. For example, if your business is on fire, that's not so good. If your communications are on fire, that's very good.

Do yours need to be set on fire?

That's what a tax consulting firm in Houston TX asked themselves earlier this year when reviewing their promotional strategies and web presence. The company – ITC (Industrial Tax Consulting) – specializes in customized property tax solutions. It operates nationally with offices in several states and also collaborates with global accounting firms such as Germany's Rödl & Partner GmbH. ITC's conclusion? It was ready for a total overhaul of its communications.

So, after careful consideration and exploring several options, ITC hired Hot Ideas NYC, basically a team consisting of a copywriter and concept creator plus – in this case – an art director and web designer to provide a fresh look and explore a new approach.

It was a courageous move by founder and President of ITC, Mark Dzeda and Tony Vidaud, VP of new business development, to engage someone they had never worked with, essentially trusting an unknown entity to find solutions to their problems. ITC wanted out-of-the-box creativity mirroring their own philosophy. It takes one to know one. And who says corporate communications are supposed to be boring anyway?

The Hot Ideas team got to work. For efficiency's sake it was decided to start building a new website utilizing the existing platform which – while somewhat limiting – was the most economical solution. In the end every aspect of the previous site was analyzed, re-considered, torn apart, re-worked or simply scrapped. A poignant tagline was



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conceived (Count. On. Us.), photos were changed, videos inserted for extra visual effect, the copy style morphed into something more substantial and less clichéd, and cosmetic changes were implemented.

But most importantly, the team - in conjunction with a very receptive client - came up with a novel idea: to treat the home page as an ad. Yes, as in print ad. A catchy visual and attention-getting headline promising a benefit replaced a static, predictable home page. But that's not all. The home page now also introduces a unique feature. The initial "ad/home page" will change periodically and new, different visuals and headlines will

be added while the previous one remains creating a de facto slide show allowing site visitors to eventually view the entire campaign. Entertaining? Definitely. Unique? For sure. Effective? Go see for yourself.

Of course, a company must do more to increase its client base and appeal to a broader range of prospects. To reach them, Hot Ideas NYC developed a long term communications strategy enhancing the brand identity established by the new website with a mix of social media posts, topical newsletters, conference sponsorships, direct mail, press releases and print ads which target a variety of relevant trade publica-

tions. Also under consideration are webinars and strategically-placed billboards.

Is the client satisfied? So far, so good. After all, they did fire their previous outfit. ■

Hot Ideas NYC

Creative communications: from newsletters to website development and everything in-between.

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