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Value added: "Exceeding expectations" should be more than a slogan

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Everyone likes to get added value (or value-added) on whatever they buy. "Value added" refers to extra features of a product, service, person etc., that go beyond standard expectations and provide something more while adding little or nothing to its cost. Providing value-added can give any business an edge over competitors and build loyal customers.

The best advertising slogans promise a lot more than just the product or service you're buying. Here are memorable taglines and how they imply you'll get more than you pay for (added value):

- * "Your world. Delivered" (AT & T) - All your communication needs at your fingertips .
- * "Can you hear me now?" (Verizon Wireless) - Better connections than the competition
- * "Imagination at work" (General Electric) - We build jet engines and your refrigerator
- * "Where's the beef?" (Wendy's) - Compare the size and quality of our burgers to others

Note that these slogans have many things in common - They convey warm, positive images and reinforce "the brand." They are simple, memorable and imply that the product will give you a lot more value for your money. Creating a slogan that meets all these criteria is not an easy task. Trust me.

When planning marketing and PR, owners should define the value-added aspects their products or services offer and emphasize those in news releases, on websites, blogs, sales materials, etc. At the same time, your marketing person should also bring some added value to the table to boost your brand, build buzz, and boost your bottom line. (This is the place to insert my observation that business owners and managers may want to do their own PR - but running their day-to-day business usually prevents that - so it never really gets done.) Here are a few value-added 'extras' your PR advisor may offer to help tell your story and reach target audiences:

Access to a national media database of every editor of all publications plus bloggers and journalists in selected industries or geographies who will receive your news releases and story pitches, and publish them.

Collect requests from reporters working on articles, seeking interviews or talk show guests, then write the story or coordinate the interview.

Media contacts -- Editors know and trust the sender (the PR person), having received accurate, interesting story leads from him/her over many years.

The title of Fox's Bill O'Reilly's book asks, "Who's Looking Out for You?" The answer should be: An experienced and creative PR / Marketing professional.

Stanley Hurwitz is president/founder of Creative Communications, Stoughton, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540