

Lessons for Law Firms: Don't be Summer's Eve!



Before creating any marketing message, material or tactic, you should ALWAYS think about your audience first. Just because something informs – or amuses – you, doesn't mean your audience will embrace it.

I'm not in the habit of talking about feminine hygiene products on this blog, or anywhere for that matter. Like most of you, the ads tend to make me cringe a bit. But being an ad guy, I do look to ads from all areas of life for ideas, and love when I see something creative, no matter what they are advertising. But I was stunned last week when this [campaign](#) start cropping up on Facebook and Twitter, accompanied by a lot of ranting about how ridiculous and offensive it is.

Go ahead, take a look if you want. I'll wait...

Feel like you need to wash your eyes out now? Don't get me wrong, I'm all for creative concepts, and I don't mind pushing the envelope with a message either. But Summer's Eve really seemed to miss the boat here. In an ad obviously targeted to women, they managed to turn off nearly every woman that saw this ad. By using racial stereotypes and questionable imagery, they offended nearly every woman I know.

So why am I talking about this on a legal marketing blog? It's a great lesson in knowing your audience, creating targeted messages and testing your concepts before going live.

I can't tell you how many Websites, brochures and even ads I've seen that seem to be all about the law firm, and have nothing to do with the client. So my first tip is to always read your copy and look at your imagery from the eye of the person you are trying to reach. Talk directly to that person, or certainly use language that makes them want to read more. I doubt you'll ever do anything quite so ridiculous as the Summer's Eve ads, but if your message isn't getting through, it's still a waste of your time and money.

On top of that, make sure you know who you are targeting in the first place. If you are marketing your employment law services, then customize your message to business owners and talk about how they will benefit from engaging your firm. Or if you are a tax attorney, maybe you want to create messaging targeted at CPAs, since they will be your most likely referral source. The more targeted you can be with your marketing messages, the more likely it is to "stick" and turn into business. Bland, generic marketing rarely makes enough of an impression to convert readers into clients.

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Then test it out! Whether it be a formal focus group or simply a few trusted clients and colleagues, run your messages by others to make sure you are communicating the message you want. Like I said earlier, what may be amusing to you may offend others, so get a variety of honest opinions before distributing your message. I love bold, and encourage my clients to be bold, but if it ventures into offensive territory, you need to pull it back a bit.

What do you think? What tips can you share with us to ensure your message is on target and reaches your intended audience?



Welcome to The Matte Pad! Here you'll find tips, trends and tools to help the busy legal marketing professional. I hope you'll find this content valuable and practical. Information on the latest social media trends, creative ideas and marketing strategies that you can use at your law firm or in your legal marketing department.

