

A/E Rainmaker

The Guide to Attracting and Keeping Great Clients

In This Issue

- Star Bright on Branding Campaign
- Clients Deserve the Platinum Rule
- 7 Goal-Setting Tactics that Work
- Shrink Your Menu and Promote Your Signature Dish
- The Personal Touch: Let's Not Lose It!
- Don't Let Your Specialty Override the Client's Agenda
- Creating a Powerful Press Kit
- The Trouble with Most Marketing Messages
- Bouncing: A Way to Market Your Company
- Google Yourself
- Ideal Clients, Can You Pick Them Out?
- 9 Ways to Add Humor to Your Presentation
- Are You Working For or With Your Clients?
- Mail the Easy Way with www.eSnailer.com
- New PSMJ Two-Day Program For Marketers

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STAR BRIGHT ON BRANDING CAMPAIGN

By Marilynn Deane Mendell

Like a shooting star that blazes across the sky, Hickok Cole's 'star architect' branding campaign continues to create a spectacle and bring a smile to clients. The initial idea for the campaign was to produce a series of cardboard glasses that would be tied to our "Look" theme (See *A/E Rainmaker* April 2008, *A Star Gazing, 3D Branding Campaign Delights Clients*). The first "glasses" were designed to view new 3D images of buildings on Hickok Cole's web site as well as the opportunity for a prize that came with each individually numbered pair (over the year 35,000 chances will be available to win twelve \$400 pairs of real designer frames from a local upscale eyeglass store). The first glasses were similar to the familiar red-and-green lenses used to view 3D movies. My plan was to get five mailings out the door before the end of the year, so I began brainstorming with my client, Hickok Cole's principals, and their in-house marketing department, for the next two mailers before the 3D glasses went to the printer.

For the second mailer, Sara Barr, their senior graphic designer, suggested a 'Thank Your Lucky Local Stars' theme for a Saint Patrick's Day mailing that seemed a natural fit to highlight the firm's "green" efforts (this time the glasses had two green lenses). Working with the green committee, we listed all of Hickok Cole's LEED projects on one side of the mailer, along with a brief statement about their green vision. On the reverse side of the card, we worked in the firm's three main overarching corporate strategic goals: great design, great management, and great place to work, by inserting the word green in front: great green design, great green management, great green place to work, and then giving short bulleted key points as to how these green principles can help improve on those targeted areas for any firm. Again, we used the "star wars" images stamps on the mailer. I wanted to keep bringing the recipients back to the web site, so the opportunity for a prize remained as well as a path to Hickok Cole's in-house green tips newsletter. The glasses arrived on the client's desk on March 17 — St. Patrick's Day — and the firm received dozens of calls, as well as images of the recipients wearing the glasses for our web site's "star gallery," at www.hickokcole.com.

The next mailing was designed to coincide with the firm's 20th anniversary. The marketing team brainstormed for a theme and came up with an "Oscar" concept. Barr designed an invitation with illustrations of search lights and stars, inside a star-sprinkled envelope that appeared to be gold leaf.

(cont. on page 2)

STAR BRIGHT ON BRANDING CAMPAIGN

(cont. from page 1)

The message said: “The Academy proudly announces the writers’ strike has ended, therefore we look forward to Hickok Cole Architect’s 20th Anniversary Open House/Walk the Red Carpet/See the Stars;” along with a pair of fabulous sunglasses that resembled Marilyn Monroe’s fifties style, tinted shades in white frames with black stars.

The office party venue had search lights out front that could be seen by guests coming in from as far away as Ronald Reagan Airport, a red carpet out front, and a series of 15 - 24” red stars adhered to the sidewalk, with photographs and names of Hickok Cole’s projects featured in the middle. There was a black stretch limo parked out front and a Joan Rivers impersonator greeted the over 450 guests that turned out to celebrate the evening. Clients enjoyed vamping for the photographer in front of the 20th anniversary logo wall, or next to life-size cardboard stars such as Marilyn Monroe and Rocky. The next day pre-written press releases went out to the local media with photos.

I wanted the event to be about the clients, so the back of the card said, “Let’s toast our local stars” and “Join us as we celebrate 20 years of great design, great relationships, and great clients.” Mike Hickok and Yolanda Cole chose developers, contractors, and brokers that fit into movie-going categories (see list below). At

the end of the evening, everyone gathered as Mike and Yolanda opened sealed envelopes and gave out imitation Oscars to their friends and clients who contributed to their success over the 20 years.

A few familiar faces walked away with the flashy gold awards:

BIGGEST BLOCKBUSTER:

- Monument Realty – Jeffrey Neal
- James G. Davis Construction Corporation – Jim Davis

LONGEST RUNNING SHOW:

- Lowe Enterprises Real Estate Group – Michael Balaban
- Jones Lange LaSalle / Spaulding & Slye – Paul Robertson

PREMIER PERFORMANCE:

- Walker Development – Christopher Walker

BEST SUPPORTING CAST:

- Structura, Inc. – Jeff Overmiller
- Girard Engineering, LTD – Steve Millnick
- EDAW, Inc. – Dennis Carmichael

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

- Boston Properties–Raymond Ritchey

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CLIENTS DESERVE THE PLATINUM RULE

We have all heard of the Golden Rule - and many people aspire to live by it. But, the Golden Rule is not a panacea according to Dr. Tony Alessandra, speaker, author, and consultant who coined the term the ‘Platinum Rule’. Think about it, he pointed out, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, implies the basic assumption that other people would like to be treated the way that you would like to be treated.”

The alternative to the Golden Rule, the Platinum Rule states: “Treat others the way they want to be treated.” Ah hah! What a difference. The Platinum Rule accommodates the feelings of others. The focus of relationships shifts from “this is what I want, so I’ll give everyone the same thing” to “let me first understand what they want and then I’ll give it to them.”

The goal of The Platinum Rule is personal chemistry and productive relationships. You do not have to change your personality. You do not have to roll over and submit to others. You simply have to understand what drives people and recognize your options for dealing with them. The Platinum Rule could be rephrased into something as simple as: Work for your clients not for yourself. Make the effort to understand their needs and keep them in mind whenever you’re having any communication or interaction.