



GERONIMO
PROMOTIONS & EVENTS, LLC

IS SALES PROMOTION DEAD?

By John Roush, President, Geronimo Promotions & Events LLC

Someone recently posted the sentiment that sales promotion was dead. However, as Mark Twain put it: "Rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated."

Not only is promotional marketing alive and kicking, but I guarantee that it will be around as long as there is a need for marketing for one simple reason: it works. Arguably, there still isn't a more powerful word in the marketing vocabulary than: FREE! If we view traditional advertising in the same negative light is usually applied to promotion, you could argue that the death knell for traditional advertising is tolling as well. The costs of media are going up, the expense of trying to create a breakthrough ad is skyrocketing with fewer and fewer real successes, print advertising seems almost anachronistic, and television and on-line media are getting more and more fragmented....not to mention clients are still chafing at spending millions on something that is hard to measure.

In fact, what I believe is really happening is that wonderful thing call adaptation: adaptation to new media, new consumers, new technology and new realities. Adaptation that often results in real innovation....and a lot of that innovation is built around something really simple that we all talk about but rarely seem to do: integration. Marketing 101 told us that advertising, public relations and promotions all worked better when integrated. Inevitably, however, the agencies fight for a larger share of the client's marketing dollar by denigrating and ignoring the other disciplines. In the new marketing zeitgeist, we have so much information it is hard to use, a whole new social media, increasingly fragmented delivery vehicles, savvy and skeptical consumers, exploding technology, and fewer dollars that need to work harder. Big ideas often have a half-life of seconds, so marketing initiatives have to work in complete harmony for any chance of lasting success. In this brave new world, clients are more often demanding, and agencies more often stepping up with, programs that are truly integrated.

Experiential marketing tours that use national advertising, sampling, event marketing and public relations outreach are a case in point. Facebook-based programs, in-store programs, database marketing, sponsorships and even national ad campaigns are more and more frequently an amalgamation of the marketing disciplines rather than a giant, single-faceted campaign.

As always, the world it is a-changin'... and changing at a mind-boggling pace! The old Mad Men monikers barely apply anymore, because almost everything these days is a hybrid. So, you may be big, but whether you call your company an ad agency, a promotion agency, a media buying service, a digital agency, an event agency or a PR firm, you will have to adapt to the new environment that is emerging.....or sooner or later you WILL be the dinosaur.

But that's just my opinion....