

# custom publishing

- ▶ What?
- ▶ Why?
- ▶ 80 Questions



# WHAT IS CUSTOM PUBLISHING?

In a custom publication you develop content to build and maintain relationships with customers and prospects. It differs from traditional marketing in that its primary focus is on providing valuable information to engage the reader. Thus you position yourself as the thought leader who is providing this information and make it clear it's worthwhile for the reader to develop a relationship with you. Why? Keep reading.



## TYPES OF CUSTOM PUBLICATIONS

- ▶ White papers
- ▶ Newsletters
- ▶ Magazines
- ▶ Books
- ▶ Blogs
- ▶ Websites
- ▶ Research reports
- ▶ Journals
- ▶ Technical documentation
- ▶ Event materials

# WHY CUSTOM PUBLISHING?

A national poll conducted by Roper Public Affairs on behalf of the Custom Publishing Council showed that:

- ▶ More than two-thirds of respondents say that companies that provide information about their products and services help them make better purchasing decisions.
- ▶ Overall, custom media is a preferred source of information with nearly three-quarters of respondents agreeing that getting information about companies from an interesting collection of articles is more appealing than getting information from advertisements.
- ▶ 78% say that custom publications indicate companies are interested in building good relationships with them and most feel better about the sponsoring company when they are reading a publication the company has provided.
- ▶ 70% like custom publications because the publications provide articles and information targeted to the reader's specific interests.

SOURCE: "Americans' Relationship with Custom Publications and the Companies That Provide Them: 2009 Update," Roper Public Affairs and Media, April 2009.



## BENEFITS OF CUSTOM PUBLISHING

- ▶ Generate leads
- ▶ Retain customers
- ▶ Position as thought leaders
- ▶ Open new markets
- ▶ Provide information
- ▶ Foster relationships
- ▶ Build trust, credibility
- ▶ Target your market

# 80

**QUESTIONS** you need to answer to have an effective custom publishing program.

A complex process, publishing requires serious expertise to perform well (but absolutely worth it). These eighty questions demonstrate the depth of knowledge you'll need — from clearly understanding why you are publishing to how you go about determining whether or not you've met your goals.

**What do you need to know? Keep reading.**



## SIX STEPS TO EFFECTIVE CUSTOM PUBLISHING

- ▶ Thinking
- ▶ Planning
- ▶ Creating
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Managing
- ▶ Measuring

# Thinking



Custom publishing begins with the question Why?

- Why are you considering producing a publication? What are you trying to accomplish — what are your specific goals and objectives?
- Who is your audience? What do they want ... and need?
- How do you know the answers to the questions above or how will you find out?
- How will a custom publication help your audience fulfill those needs and help you meet your objectives?
- What kinds of publications are possible — newsletter, magazine, white paper, book, blog, etc. — and which is your best choice?
- What will your publication say — what is the point of view — that will excite your readers and motivate them to engage with you?
- What risks are possible in producing this publication (or in not producing it)?
- What's your time-frame for delivering a publication?
- Do you have the capabilities and assets needed to produce the publication? If not, what do you do about it?
- Who in the organization do you need to involve in this concept development? Who decides whether or not to develop the publication based on this concept?



# Planning



You have your publication concept developed, now how do you implement it?

- Who's responsible for the overall program, making sure that everything is planned for and seeing that everything gets done according to plan?
- What exactly needs to be done, and what is the schedule for accomplishing each task?
- Who will work on what, and are they available? Who is responsible for scheduling and managing these people?
- If you need to rely on sources outside your organization, how will you select them? Who will manage them?
- What will the work cost, and how will it be paid for?
- Who determines that the quality of the work done is acceptable?
- What decisions need to be made and who will make them? Will people be held accountable for results?
- Are there plans in place describing how you would respond to any risks to the plan should they occur?
- What are the objectives along the way, and how will you know whether or not they've been met?
- Are the publication processes and procedures documented and repeatable?



# Creating

## Writing & Editing



You've developed your publication plan, now who's actually going to write and edit the content?

- What, specifically, are you going to write about — what is your editorial point of view?
- Who is your audience and what action are you trying to elicit from them?
- What writing style is most appropriate to get the action you want?
- How should you structure your content for optimal results?
- Do you know the difference between writing for print and online media?
- Who is going to do the writing (you, a subject matter expert, an executive, a subcontractor)? How will you get them to write what you need and keep on schedule?
- Do you need an editorial calendar? For how long a time period? And who develops it?
- Who's going to check the writing for accuracy, copyright violations, grammar and spelling?
- Who in your organization needs to review and/or approve copy? How will you manage this review process?
- And remember, all this work is constrained by a budget, a schedule, a scope of work, and a certain level of quality expected — who's watching that you meet these constraints?



# Creating

## Print Design & Production



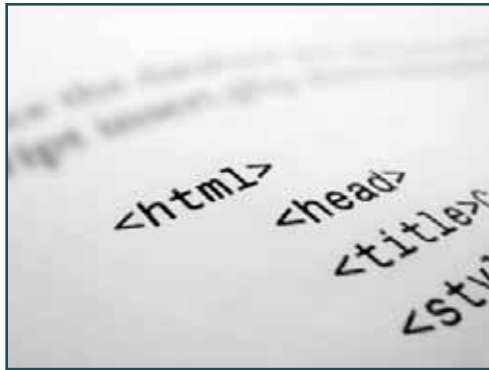
Now that you have the words you want, how will you implement them in a print media format that will give you the results you desire?

- What is the best format to accomplish your goals—newsletter, white paper, magazine ... other?
- What combination of type, color, illustration ... will lend itself to a publication that conveys your point of view and engages the reader?
- Who's going to provide the creative materials you need?
- And who's going to put all this creative material together in the format you've chosen (you, in-house designers, subcontractors)?
- What publishing tools will you use?
- If you choose print media can you easily interface with your printer?
- What type of printer will you need?
- How do you select the best printer for the format you've chosen (meaning one who offers you the quality you expect for the least cost)?
- Do you know what print specifications are most appropriate for the format you've chosen, including paper and binding choices?
- How many publications will you need printed (and what are the decisions you need to make regarding cost and quantity), and how will you deal with the inventory?



# Creating

## Online Design & Production

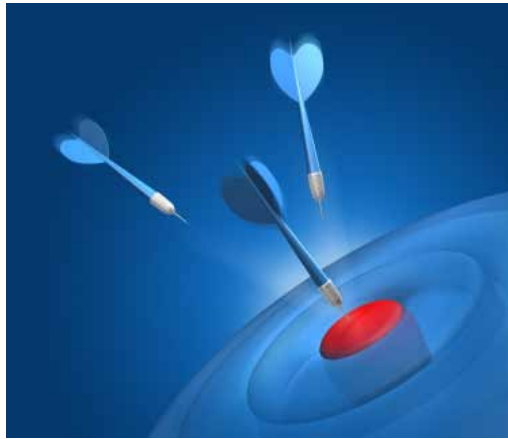


Now that you have the words you want, how will you implement them in an online media format that will give you the results you desire?

- What is the best format to accomplish your goals—website, blog, ezine, e-mail newsletter ... other?
- What combination of type, color, illustration, audio, video ... will lend itself to a publication that conveys your point of view and engages the reader?
- How much interaction do you want with your prospects and customers? How do you design for that?
- Who's going to provide the creative materials you need?
- And who's going to put all this creative material together in the format you've chosen (you, in-house designers/programmers, subcontractors)?
- What publishing tools will you use?
- What technical aspects of online publishing do you need to understand—html, seo, ftp, cms, css, php, flash, java, blogroll ... ?
- Who will maintain the publication? How much effort will that entail?
- If you have technical problems, who will you turn to for help?
- How will you manage the production workflow, from writers/editors to design/production? Who will have final say on the finished product?



# Marketing



You now have a finished publication — how do you get it into the hands of your audience?

- How does your audience know the publication exists?
- Do you sell it or do you give it away?
- If you sell it, at what price, and how do you collect the money?
- Do you target your audience (can you?) and possibly deliver different versions of your publication to different targets?
- Do you mail it, send it by a delivery service, or just hand it out at trade shows or meetings?
- How do you manage your audience list, keep it current and accurate?
- Do you integrate the distribution of print media with your website (for example, offering the print publication if the online viewer provides information or money)?
- Do you want to grow your circulation and, if so, how will you do it?
- How much will all this distribution cost?
- And how will you know which distribution method is best — in terms of image and delivering results as well as being cost effective?



# Management



Your publication is up and running. How do you keep it running and make it successful?

- Who's responsible for the ongoing management of the program, making sure that everything is getting done according to plan?
- What exactly needs to be done, and what is the schedule for accomplishing each task?
- How will you manage subcontractor relationships? Who evaluates the relationship and whether or not it should continue?
- Have adequate budgets been allocated to complete all the work?
- How is the quality of ongoing work evaluated? If not acceptable, how will you deal with it?
- Do you have in place the capability to collect data on the progress of your program? Are you getting the information you need to make good decisions?
- Who needs to know what's happening and how will they be kept informed?
- If there are problems along the way, how are they handled?
- What are the objectives along the way, and how will you know whether or not they've been met?
- Are their processes and procedures in place to help you continually improve your efforts?



# Measurement



Your audience has seen your publication — how do you determine whether or not it's doing what you hoped it would do?

- Did they actually receive it ... and have they read it?
- What do they think about it?
- How has it changed the way they think about your organization?
- How has it changed their behavior toward your organization?
- And how will you get the answers to these questions from your audience?
- Have you built in ways for the reader to actively engage with you — using surveys, premiums, website integration?
- Are you getting the results you projected?
- What else do you have to do to continue getting the results you need?
- Do you have the data you need, in the format you need, to provide information to others in your organization that explains the value of your publishing program?
- Do you know how to improve your program?

# And Possibly – Advertising Sales



If you have a periodical or online publication, you might want to consider offering advertising.

- Why do you want to offer advertising in your publication?
- Who would advertise in your publication? Will you market to them? How?
- Can you limit who advertises (your competitors, others)?
- How much should you charge?
- How much advertising would you permit in each issue?
- How do you actually sell advertising?
- What issues arise because you allow advertising in your publication?
- Will you have advertising standards? How will you determine whether or not the advertising is acceptable? Who will decide?
- Will you create ads for clients or only accept camera-ready ads? How will you handle the flow of advertising artwork?
- How will advertising affect the primary purpose of the publication (or is making money from advertising the primary purpose)?

# dancecommunications

- ▶ The effort required to produce successful custom publications can be daunting and often requires significant expertise. Dance Communications can help you with each step of this publishing process, or manage the whole process for you, to insure that your finished product delivers the results you expect.

