

Marketing Maven Makes Big Impact

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With 25 years in the Madison advertising community, Hiebing is a recognized leader with expertise in marketing and brand development.

Headed by Dave Florin, president and partner in the company, Hiebing develops creative solutions to the evolving challenges companies face as they aim to meet the needs of consumers.

Florin attributes much of his company's success to the talented people who devise innovative strategies for their clients. But through proprietary processes and efficient practices, Hiebing has developed into a marketing company that aims to maximize the impact of its branded messages.

Q: Your company was founded in 1981. What are the most significant changes in the ad business Hiebing has experienced since then?

A: Certainly the categories of business have changed a lot and probably the biggest change today is the fragmentation of media. Where 20 years ago, 25 years ago, so much of the marketing world was mass media, television advertising and radio, today you're getting an enormous amount of fragmentation across of a lot of different communications touch points with consumers.

From the Internet to cell phones to live marketing, you are seeing a proliferation of exciting opportunities for companies to connect their brands with their audiences.

Q: What can you tell us about your company's work as an integrated marketing and brand development firm?

A: As a marketing firm, we tend to take a media-neutral view of the world. Advertising agencies tend to look at the world from an advertising-first perspective and once advertising doesn't work, then they go back to drawing board to look at what are the right vehicles.

From a marketing-centered view, you look at all of the potential touch points with consumers and try to approach it that way. It's much larger than just marketing communications.

Q: Your company helped Coca-Cola develop the name "Full Throttle" for a new type of energy drink. What can you tell us about Hiebing's product-naming process?

A: NameCalling evolved out of our overarching philosophy,



which is to be target market centric. Everything that we do, regardless of the element, ... is firmly rooted in the target market.

NameCalling is our process to make sure that as we start getting into the naming of specific brands and products, we are very grounded in the lives of that consumer, and making sure that name is reflective of the role that the brand can play in their lives, reflective of their interests, reflective of what the experience of the product can be.

This case, Full Throttle, you're talking to males who are looking for ways to stay awake, for their minds to stay engaged, and they're looking for robustness in that experience. So Full Throttle was a way to go right at what we were looking for, which was to be in that peak performance.

Q: What role does a marketing firm play in advancing a client's branding message?

A: We tend to really bring three things to the table. First and foremost, we bring people. We're only as good as the people that are inside our four walls.

One of the common elements that we've been able to uncover as we've looked back over the years is that people who were really effective in this business bring a boundless amount of curiosity. That is at the forefront of everything that we do here.

We bring curiosity into what drives consumer behavior. So if we've got the right people and they have very curious minds, that's something that we can bring to the table.

That oftentimes is a little bit more difficult for clients to always bring to the table because of some of the internal conflicts, the internal challenges marketers on the client side are faced with. They're faced with budgets, delivering on internal expectations. They're faced with being inside that environment at all times.

So coming at it from an outside perspective with a curious mind can really afford us to push them to take some very intelligent risks.

The second thing is that perspective. We don't bring the same perspective that the clients bring to the table. They have business objectives that they need to make. And at the end of the day, we have to do that as well, but we're freer to bring a different perspective to that. That target market piece is core to who we are, core to what we bring to the table.

The third thing is we bring a lot of processes to the discussion. We bring processes to help people uncover what that motivation is for their consumer and how to keep that perspective true throughout the process. It's one thing to uncover it strategically. It's another to actually be able to execute that in the finished work.



Executive Q&A

Dave Florin
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Business sector: Advertising
Number of employees: 35
Capitalized billings: \$40 million

Education: UW-Madison, international relations
Spouse: Kristin Florin
Children: 3

