



Leadership Link



October already! Wow, where did the summer go? As we head into my favorite season of the year, AAM has a number of great projects in the works. The AAM Board of Directors is scheduled to meet at the end of the month for a two-day strategic planning session. Based on member feedback,

industry trends and committee projects, the Board will set goals and direction of the Association for the next several years.

Additionally, as you read through this e-newsletter, you will see that the 2009 Summit is in full swing. If you, or someone you know, would like to be considered for a speaking position during the event, please be sure to submit your proposal for consideration.

The Membership committee is focusing on a targeted membership campaign, while the Education committee is working on conference speaker selection and the upcoming AAM Salary Survey.

Do you know an outstanding marketing professional who's new to the industry? Are they the type who push up their sleeves and get down in the trenches? Have their achievements caused heads to turn? If so, he/she could be AAM's next **Rookie of the Year!** **Nominations will be accepted from Monday, October 6, 2008 until Friday, February 20, 2008.** Visit www.accountingmarketing.org/rookie_nomination.asp to make your nomination today!

I want to thank all of the volunteers who help keep the committees, Board and AAM running. Your commitment, passion and drive is so very much appreciated! If anyone would like to serve on an AAM committee just give us a shout and Headquarters. Here is wishing you a great Fall Season!

Granville Loar, AAM Executive Director



Membership Update

The Membership Committee is undertaking a new membership drive initiative targeting members of the state societies and accounting associations. Do you know of a friend or colleague from your state

Association for
Accounting Marketing

400 Admiral Boulevard
Kansas City, MO 64106
p:816.221.1296
f:816.472.7765

Calendar of Events

Visit the AAM Calendar of Events for a listing of educational offerings in the accounting profession.

AAM High!

Don't miss the great 2008 AAM High! lineup

society or accounting organization who might be interested in AAM? Refer them today for a free, 30-day trial membership and AAM will waive their \$50 initiation fee. Send their name and contact information to info@accountingmarketing.org and we will contact them with the appropriate information.



Education

AAM High! Schedule

Don't miss the last two AAM High! Virtual Learning Series sessions of 2008!

November 12, 2008

Establishing a Recruiting Practice in Your Accounting Firm

Featuring Christine Spray, Director of Business Development, Calvetti, Ferguson & Wagner, P.C.

December 9, 2008

Positioning Yourself as a Business Leader in Your Firm

Featuring Chris Perrino, Director of Business Development, Principal, Barnes Dennig

For additional information, or to register, visit

<http://accountingmarketing.org/webeducate2.htm>

Firm Size Roundtable Calls

Don't miss the exciting lineup of firm size roundtable calls, covering a number of topics. Full details and registration information can be found [here](#).

AAM Idea Sharing: Recent Threads from the AAM Discussion Forum

Meghan asked:

For those who have launched blogs, have they been successful? I'm looking at the possibility, but have a hard time believing that our clients would take the time to post anything.

Hi Meghan, congrats on considering entering the exciting world of social media.

Starting a blog is a fun, affordable way to connect with a vast audience of potential buyers, referral sources, and even prospective employees...no matter *what* you would decide to blog about. What I mean is that if you have a blog about the construction sector, for example, a prospective employee might be attracted to the firm because a) your firm is "hip" enough to have a blog and appears to "get" social media, 2) it shows your firm has passion about their practice, 3) it shows your firm is much, much different from all the firms waaaaaay too conservative to ever go near blogging. This is a huge differentiator in a very shallow, fiercely competitive talent pool.

I wouldn't recommend starting a blog with a goal of getting clients to

post. You're right in that it is simply not a reasonable purpose for a blog.

I've posted many articles and tips on blogging and several success stories about accounting blogs. I also have written about, or referenced resources on, the subject of benefits of blogging (aka ROB: Return on Blogging). These are found on my blog www.goldenpractices.com in the category "professional firm blogs" (see right hand sidebar).

I also try to maintain a pretty comprehensive list of accounting blogs here: www.accountingbloglist.com if you want to see, pretty much, all the accounting blogs we know of out there. I'm happy to say that after 3 years of preaching, accounting bloggers are starting to increase...we are now adding new ones about every other week! The number of true practice blogs has doubled from a scant 24 this time last year, to a still scant 51. But, hey, it doubled! J (this is in sharp contrast to the profession of law where there are THOUSANDS of blogs)

Additionally, I am attaching a 10 page collection of articles/blog posts by a wide range of authors (all are attributed) that I sometimes share with audiences of marketers and partners when I present on the topic of blogging. I hope you and other readers might find it helpful.

Best regards,
Michelle Golden, CPF
PRESIDENT, Golden Marketing inc
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Conference News



The Conference Committee is accepting applications for session speakers. Are you a rockin' marketing expert? If you are interested in presenting at next year's conference, [click here](#) for more information. **The deadline for speaker submissions is Tuesday, October 14, 2008. Don't delay!**

Exhibitors: Get ready for a legendary performance! Prepare to take center stage at AAM Summit 2009: *Marketingpalooza*. We're looking to add your company to the ticket of great exhibitors who provide services and products widely used throughout the accounting industry. Your audience will include hundreds of accounting marketing decision-makers who could possibly be your next biggest fan. As you perform, attendees will take away souvenirs in the form of increased brand awareness of your organization as well as hands-on experience with your products. If your organization is a chart-topper and ready to make a legendary performance – its time to take the stage at the 2009 AAM Summit! [Click here](#) for full exhibitor and sponsorship information.



Chapter Connection

Be sure to mark your calendars for the following upcoming AAM chapter Meetings:

Chicago

Thursday, November 20, 2008
Panel on Best Practices in Proposals

Colorado

Wednesday, October 15, 2008
Crafting a Successful Client Event

Houston

Tuesday, October 21, 2008
The Art of Becoming a Trusted Advisor

Minnesota

Tuesday, October 14, 2008
AAM/LMA Roundtable Discussion

Philadelphia

Thursday, October 30, 2008
Niche Marketing is Powerful Marketing

For complete listings and details, visit the [AAM Chapter Web page](#).



Additional News

AAM Marketing Budget Survey

AAM is looking for your help in conducting a survey on marketing budgets (our favorite subject!). Please [click here](#) to take the brief survey. It should only take about five minutes of your time. Results will be tabulated and released later this Fall, perhaps right in time to help you with your budget for next year. Thanks in advance for your participation!



Going Green

AAM's Communications Committee would like to know what "green" initiatives your firms have in place. Are you reducing paper? Are you encouraging carpooling, mass transit,

telecommuting or some other way to reduce your employees' fuel consumption? Are you recycling? Please tell us what you are doing and how your firm is benefiting--PR? Employee recruiting/retention?

The information we receive will be compiled and put into a media release and/or a story for *The AAM Minute* e-newsletter. We have received several responses already from the request we put out over the AAM Discussion List, but you still have time to have your firm's news included. Please send your information to mfarmer@somersetcpas.com by October 24.



Save Your Firm From These Accounting Marketing Nightmares!

By Mark Miller

The upcoming Halloween holiday is traditionally our nation's most frightening day, filled with witches, tombstones and perhaps scariest of all – small children dressed as Dracula, Britney, and Sarah Palin, shaking us down for candy. But for us accounting marketers, our frightening time can occur on any day of the year. Marketing mistakes that can turn into nightmares can and do occur, often without warning, at any time of the day or night.

Are such accounting mistakes/nightmares inevitable? No, I say! Not if we're vigilant, know what to avoid, what to enhance, and how to do the right thing. It is in that spirit (Get it? Halloween -- spirit?) that I present the following Top Accounting Marketing Nightmares and how to avoid them, along with selected horrifying examples of past accounting marketing screw-ups from around the globe. Prepare for a column of terror! (And that's just from my grammatical mistakes alone!).

Nightmare #1: Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: Losing Clients

Repeat business typically makes up 80 percent of clients in most businesses. Too often, marketing campaigns are heavily focused on bringing in new customers and not building relationships with current ones. Does your company have some kind of client care program? Do any of your marketing efforts involve current clients? Other companies are wooing them right now. What are you doing to get them to stay? Neglecting your clients is like neglecting your romantic partner. It can only end in your tears as you watch them walk away in the arms of someone more caring and affectionate. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Nightmare #2: It's All Greek to Them: No One Understands Your Message

Marketing messages that are contrived, confusing, too subtle or too long can easily miss the target market entirely. The most ingenious marketing plan is wasted if no one gets it. Ever read an ad and can't figure out what the product is, even after re-reading it over and over again? Your message to your targeted audience needs to be crystal clear, otherwise you're wasting their time and your money.

Nightmare #3: Over Blowing Your Own Horn You know yours is the finest, most professional, most respected accounting firm in the world; that your firm can do a better job with better results than any other accountants; that your partners have faced every possible challenge and have done world-class work for every one of their clients while providing the best value. Oh, hell, why not throw in that your partners are also the most philanthropic, healthiest, and best looking, too? Get the message? If it sounds too good to be true it probably is. Too much hype will turn people away.

Nightmare #4: Having the Lowest Prices and Still Losing Clients

Marketers sometimes operate as though one of the Ten Commandments was "Thou shalt not charge more than thy competitor." This is fallacious thinking. It's also wrong. It's not the lowest price your clients want – it's the best value for their money. Many other issues affect the purchase. Companies that feel they are

losing out to lower priced competitors are really losing out to higher value competitors. What to do? After you've finished weeping, put some effort into increasing the value, or at least the perceived value, of your firm's services in the minds of its clients and prospects. Your prices may not be the lowest, but they'll still say, "We got a good deal," and they'll be referring to your value.

Nightmare #5: Losing Valuable Profits Due to Not Up-Selling the Customer

Up-selling means taking advantage of the sales opportunity and incremental revenue by adding additional or related products to a customer's purchase. For example, adding a milkshake to an order at a fast food restaurant or adding forensic advisory services to your due diligence work for your client. The more things you can do for your client, the more money you make and the better your chance to keep him or her for life. You are, in effect, multiplying the value of your customer. And that's just plain, if you'll pardon the expression – smart.

Mark Miller is Marketing Communications Manager at Stonefield Josephson, in Los Angeles. (<http://www.sjaccounting.com/people/miller.html>) In addition to his marketing work, Mark has been a nationally syndicated humor essay writer for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

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