

Melissa Brogan

## **E - 2 Using Humor to Enhance Marketing, Mark Miller**

---

Just because accountants take their business seriously, doesn't necessarily mean that they have to take themselves seriously. Being personal and personable in the marketplace can be a fierce way to stand out among your competitors.

In a time when recruiting/retaining employees and top-notch client service are of constant importance, what is an accounting marketer to do? Humor, if done correctly can be just the distinctive edge you've been looking for.

Twelve humor techniques:

1. People as objects / Objects as people
2. Anthropomorphism – giving human traits to objects
3. Use a mascot – like Geico or
4. Use a recognizable pop culture format
5. Play on words
6. Metaphors
7. Subtlety
8. Do-it-yourself punch lines
9. Be universal
10. Make it eye-catching
11. Good copy can stand on its own
12. Juxtaposition of opposites

Five ways to get inspired:

1. Immerse yourself in humor
2. Top 10 billboard advertisements
3. The New Yorker magazines cartoon database
4. Marketing humor from [www.buildingbrands.com](http://www.buildingbrands.com)
5. "Dilbert"

Case history on Hood & Strong LLP

We were then joined by Len Auletto, CMO with Hood & Strong LLP. Len's firm had great success with a series of clever ads, developed by their ad agency, positioned Hood & Strong as CPAs who took their business seriously, but not themselves.

Steps to their success:

1. They started small – Hood & Strong began with focus groups
2. Approval from the top down – Their managing partner was on board from day one.
3. They had a plan – Their ads are strategically run in the local papers and business journal.

4. ROI – Measurement steps are set in place and they plan to gauge their reach in print advertisements. The immediate results have been in getting them in the forefront of mind in the marketplace.

The quirky, out-of-the-box ads were distinctive and most definitely differentiated them from their competitors in their marketplaces.

Accounting services in and of themselves aren't something to laugh about, however, having a humorous nature about you will make you memorable!

Lastly, using humor IS risky. But NOT using humor can be riskier.