

Six Steps to a Power-Packed Tagline

When done well, a tagline can be your first and best marketing tool — communicating the essence of your brand or a specific product to the world, all usually in 10 words or less. Now that's power!

What is a tagline? Simply stated, it's a quick-read description of your unique selling proposition. Like 'You can do it, we can help' or 'Bank of Opportunity,' a tagline — generally positioned with or near your logo — adds that extra little 'a-ha' clarification or point of competitive differentiation to your company or product name.

Let's face it: often a company name is not the best descriptor of what we do or how we can help a prospect solve a problem (uh, Fahoury Ink, anyone?)

But add a solid tagline to the mix (like Creative Business Communication or

Creativity on Call), and your prospect is at the very least being led down the right path.

Well-written taglines don't restate the obvious. Instead, they add heft to your side of the equation when a potential customer is weighing you vs. the competition. Think taglines such as 'Good to the last drop' or 'Imagination at work.'

Nor should a tagline promise something you are not prepared to deliver. Imagine standing at the entrance to Walt Disney World and seeing nothing but neglect — dirty sidewalks, peeling paint, out-of-order rides. Chances are, you'd be thinking, "The most magical place on earth, my fanny."

To Disney, 'The most magical place on earth' is much more than a tagline or a marketing ploy...it's a mission that permeates the

organization at every level and is taken into consideration as part of every major strategic decision. If your tagline makes a strong brand promise, be prepared to deliver.

Creating your own winning tagline

Now that we've established the power of a tagline for communicating your marketing message, here's a six-step process for developing a strong one of your own:

1. Do your competitive homework.

Is there anything you can position against? Avis scored a classic winner here with 'We Try Harder' in painting itself as the underdog in the rental car wars. A more recent example: 'Think Outside the Bun.'

If your main competitor has a touchy-feely tagline, consider making yours more direct

(cont'd on page 2)

Spam Blockers: Bad Business Practice?

In the quest to cut down on spam, many businesses have turned to filtering programs that automatically fire out what's called a 'challenge email' to senders. This email basically asks the writer to justify the message they're sending — the 2.0 equivalent of the old-school phone gatekeeper asking, "May I tell him what this is regarding?" Picture David Spade in his snotty receptionist persona from *Saturday Night Live* and you get the idea.

Sure, you're simply trying to cut down on email clutter like everybody else, but picture how off-putting this approach could appear to prospects — especially if they are responding to an offer, commenting on a recent blog posting, or following up on a meeting.

Instead of the challenge-type spam blocker, consider a programmable filtering system. It allows you better control over your in-box and doesn't require future customers or partners to leap tall buildings in a single bound just to correspond with you.

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Work the Pond!*



Steal This Idea

THE PORTLAND BEAVERS, a Triple-A affiliate of the San Diego Padres, sent out letters to every 'Bob L. Head' it could find across the country, offering them the chance to be immortalized in an upcoming bobble-head promotion. Bobs were asked to submit a brief essay describing why they were worthy of the honor.

Source: portlandbeavers.com

HAVE SOME SUPPORT VIDEOS that educate or train your product users? Don't overlook their value as a viral marketing tool, says word-of-mouth pioneer Andy Sernovitz. In addition to featuring the videos on your own site, why not post them on YouTube or MySpace? "People love to share videos, and helpful how-to content is very popular," says Andy in our favorite ezine, *Damn, I Wish I'd Thought of That!* "Surround the video with links to your site and products. You'll get far more advertising, for free, than you could ever pay for. And in a category with generic products that you can buy anywhere, you'll stand out as a highly helpful, service-oriented company."

Source: gaspedal.com

WHO KNEW YOU could create your own sweepstakes in 10 minutes or less? Turn-key system Caffeine makes it easy to add an online sweepstakes to your marketing mix. Like a multi-state lottery, Caffeine spreads the cost of each prize across a number of contests rather than just yours. Users pay nothing for prizes, which range from electronics and gift cards to travel packages and shopping sprees. Simply select a prize, choose a theme, and customize with your name, web address and logo. Costs start at about \$1 per qualified registrant. Caffeine lets you specify a weekly budget and geographic boundaries to control costs, and change your promotion on the fly depending on audience response.

Source: caffeine.com

...Power-Packed Tagline (from p. 1)

and hard-hitting as a differentiator. Or, if they're competing on speedy turnaround, counter with something akin to 'We will sell no wine before its time.'

2. Examine your company's current Unique Selling Propositions (USPs) for clues.

Here's the part of the process where you pull out a blank pad or open a fresh document on your computer and start brainstorming.

Review your web site, sales letters, bios of principals, brochure copy, packaging — any and all of your marketing collateral. Write down every phrase or industry term — whether you personally think it has

merit or not — that could potentially be part of your tagline. Then do the same for your competitors and sites or publications covering your industry, such as trade magazines or professional associations.

Start to look for clever word pairings or memorable turns of phrase that you might turn into a tagline. Warning: keep paper and pen handy at all times during this phase, because you'll find new possibilities pop into your head at the most inopportune times, like while you have a headful of shampoo in the shower.

3. Pull out the big guns for more research.

Thanks to the internet, there are close to a zillion creative tools at your fingertips without ever leaving your office. Here's where it really gets fun. Get creative and channel your inner scribe. Grab a reference like *Metaphorically Speaking* or log onto clichesite.com and add clever plays on words to your list of possibilities. Think 'Your Marriott Awaits' or 'Tropicana: Squeeze the Day.'

Leave the business realm for a few minutes and consider possibilities like popular song lyrics, famous movie titles or well-known dialogue, even poetry. Great resources include the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com), lyricsserver.com, and quotesandsayings.com.

Finally, reach back to your glory days of high school English when you learned about literary tools such as alliteration — the repetition of an initial consonant, as in 'Pure Performance' — and the lesser-known assonance, the repetition of an initial vowel.

4. Polish your contenders.

You should now have a working list filled with enormous potential. The next step is to look for relationships between the words or phrases on your master list and start combining them in pleasing ways. Perhaps a new opportunity for alliteration presents itself, or two disparate thoughts suddenly combine for the perfect turn of phrase.

Throw nothing away — keep your working notes intact, because you never know which dots might suddenly connect as your unconscious mind mulls over the possibilities. Once your creative juices have finally exhausted themselves, copy your top 10 tagline possibilities into a new document and take a well-deserved break. Overnight, you may find a handful of new thoughts or directions spring to mind.

Review your working list once more, ditch the dogs, polish the remainder, and get ready for some constructive criticism.

5. Run your candidates by a varied group of trusted advisors.

The toughest part of the creative process is being objective about your creation. Narrow your list of possibilities and put them to the test — the opinions of smart, creative people you



know and trust. This could include members of your board of directors or networking group, savvy family members, colleagues (both in and out of your industry), and long-time clients.

Be sure to include a wide cross-section of thinkers, not just the like-minded, and keep your focus group to a manageable number of participants (perhaps six to eight). Email your final list to the group, and request that they either rank the choices or pick their absolute favorite and tell you why their top choice resonates.

Often, your test group will spot something you haven't thought of: a too-close resemblance to a competitor's positioning, an unintended double meaning, or a tricky pronunciation that could get you into trouble. A colleague was at the design stage when she realized that the type treatment she was considering spelled out the unfortunate acronym 'PEE.'

Based on the results of your informal testing, you should now have a handful of fabulous finalists from which to make your selection.

6. Finally, confirm right of use.

Again, the internet simplifies the process of vetting your new tagline. Google each finalist and see what comes up. If similar phrasing is in use by another company (especially one with comparable service offerings), you may want to move down the list to your next choice.

Patent attorney Jaconda Wagner (wagnerjlaw.com) recommends visiting the online home of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (uspto.gov). Here you can search trademark records (both completed registrations and pending applications), and check details on ownership.

Why consider trademarking your tagline? Says Wagner, "Trademarks are among the simplest and least expensive ways for a business to acquire intellectual property protection. A formal registration at the state or federal level gives protection; however, simply using a tagline may give common law protection. To ensure this protection, a business should be consistent and clear in its use of its taglines, names and logos."

If you've fallen in love with a tagline that's already in use, all may not be lost. According to Wagner, trademarks are issued in 45 different classes. If a company in a completely different industry wants to register the same tagline, chances are it could be approved. "The standard applied is, will the consumer be confused?" she explains. "If the answer is no, the same trademark may be used in a variety of different classes."

Now that you've finished your due diligence, let the real fun begin! It's time to work with a graphic designer on layout options, so you can see how well your tagline visually connects with your logo. With professional counsel on typeface, color and positioning, you can be sure that your shiny new tagline attracts all the attention it deserves.

"I don't fail. I succeed at finding out what doesn't work."

*Christopher Titus
Comedian*



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Trendwatch

Pet Products: The Cat's Meow

- Annual spending on pet products is projected to reach \$52 billion in the next two years.
- 42% of dogs now sleep in the same beds as their owners.
- According to the 2007-2008 National Pet Owners Survey, 63% of U.S. households (approximately 71 million) now include at least one pet.
- Pet care is the second fastest-growing category in retail, just behind consumer electronics. What's next, kitty iPods?
- Companies including Paul Mitchell, Omaha Steaks, Origins, Harley Davidson and Old Navy now offer lines of pet products ranging from shampoo, attire, and toys to gourmet treats and food.
- The person most responsible for purchasing pet products is typically a female in her mid-40s.

Sources: *BusinessWeek*; *American Pet Products Manufacturers Association*



Creativity on Call™

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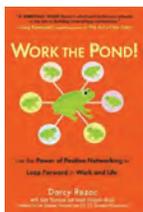
Need a new tagline? It's just six short steps away...see inside!



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off the bookshelf



Work the Pond

Darcy Rezac with Judy Thomson and Gayle Hallgren-Rezac

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Whether you simply don't like networking or have convinced yourself you're not cut out to be successful at it, Darcy Rezac has three words for you: get over it.

"You can't get out of it, so you might as well get into it," says Rezac, lead author of *Work the Pond*, a guide to sorting through the frogs to find your 'princes' — people who can help you advance your career. "Networking — done right — is one of the good things anyone can learn to do in life."

Traditional networking continues to be viewed as highly transactional, and clouded by unspoken expectations of 'what can you do for me?' Truly positive networking, on the other hand, is all about discovering what you can do for someone else.

Positive networking, you see, has absolutely nothing to do with sales. Nor is it solely about business. Making connections with our fellow planet dwellers builds what Harvard researcher Robert Putnam calls 'social capital' — the connections among people and the greater good that is created from these connections.

From close friends and family members to more remote acquaintances, the depth and breadth of our networks can greatly enrich both our personal and business lives. So how do you get started? Use *Work the Pond's* four easy-to-remember Es of networking to:

Establish — Make eye contact, smile and focus your full attention on the person you are meeting.

Extend — Be the first to extend your hand. This is where a firm, confident handshake is the key to a solid first impression.

Exchange — Serve as the catalyst by being the first to give out or ask for a business card. If you are the host of an event, encourage attendees to exchange cards.



Engage — Didn't hear someone's name? Don't be shy about asking them to repeat it, then be sure to use it throughout the conversation. Ask questions based on the business card handed to you...and really listen to the answers.

The rewards of positive networking are the seemingly random and unexpected good things that happen to those who master its secrets. By effectively working the pond and kissing a lot of frogs, you'll be well on your way to a successful happily ever after.