

For the Fall Semester at UWW, I engaged in primarily independent study of marketing and advertising once more. This semester's coursework included half a dozen books about marketing, client advisement, management, advertising, and creativity. Toward this semester's studies, I also hope to count participation in a seminar about Internet marketing, a conference on "prototyping," and taking a 7-week, 300-level course at NEIU exploring the many facets of creative communication and message delivery. Aside from that, I also crafted and completed a self-guided research project focusing in on three people who are shaping the current state of marketing, and of course, I continued to learn and apply my ongoing studies through my both my work at the advertising agency 88 Brand Partners as well as my board membership at the Illinois Science Council. I also independently built and promoted an app, using a marketing plan for it as a roadmap.

## **Books**

### On Relationship Marketing

*Clients for Life: Evolving from an Expert-for-Hire to an Extraordinary Advisor*, is aimed at people and businesses in the client-facing world. Authors Jagdish Sheth and Andrew Sobel use analogy and history to communicate their points clearly, encouraging the reader to consider themselves a "partner" and not just a "vendor" or resource in business. The keys to a trusting relationship put forth by the authors are not all that hard to grasp, but tenants such as being a good listener, remaining firm in your convictions, and understanding good judgment is easier said than done in the real world.

Sheth and Sobel advocate strongly for becoming a "deep generalist," meaning to live life fully and bring what surrounds your work into the work you do. With such a mantra being a challenge to follow, particularly with the pressures of work more often seeping into the rest of life rather than the other way around, the authors point out, perhaps as a source of inspiration, that the best advisors strike that balance. Making examples out of notable people like Henry Kissinger, Thomas More, Niccolo Machiavelli, and advertising guru David Ogilvy, the attainability of becoming a deep generalist doesn't seem too little far-fetched, if at least possible.

Towards the end of the book, Sheth and Sobel offer up a compelling equation for the concept of trust—a concept central to both the book and to measuring success in business. The formula basically multiplies standards by skill (integrity and competence) and divides that by risk. The result is trust. Or in other words, if you are grounded and firm in your convictions with a solid reputation that

proceeds you, a client should be more comfortable taking a leap of faith when the stakes are large.

### On Creativity

An instant best seller I picked up toward the middle of the semester was *Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All* written by Tom and David Kelley. Penned more as a general primer for understanding one's own abilities to be creative and then putting it into action, this book has become something of a sensation in many areas of business since its publication in mid-October (see Prototyping Panel & Workshop below). There are hardly two more qualified people to write about the concept of creativity: David Kelley founded IDEO, and both he and his brother Tom started the d.School at Stanford. The Kelleys are responsible for two institutions that have arguably created some of the most innovative thinking and ideas of the past decade.

The authors want the reader to believe that there are processes for creativity, in which anyone can participate meaningfully whether as an individual or as a group. The books gives examples of “non-creatives” learning to think creatively—like the lawyer who is able to argue her case better after thinking “outside of the box”—as well as examples of “creatives” thinking more sharply by utilizing the tools that the authors describe. Amongst the many lessons the authors put forth to be learned, their arguments that both the creative process isn't always forward motion, and that often finding the proper solution through creativity requires that one retraces their steps, are amongst the most important concepts in this book.

### On Managing Creativity

If you listened to the Kelleys you'd think that everyone and anyone could be wildly creative. Yet Gordon Torr's *Managing Creative People: Lessons in Leadership for the Ideas Economy* begs to differ.

Torr, a former creative director, wants the reader to know that there is a distinct difference between the ability to solve problems versus the capacity for creative aptitude, and Torr mentions it so much, you'd think that every day people were telling him that it wasn't true. In Torr's opinion the delineation of that line—which he backs up extensively from scholarly work on the topic of creativity—it is as clear as the difference between rampant creativity and ability to survive.

The exploration of the darkest recesses of the creative mind is what makes *Managing Creative People* such a captivating read. He explores what fosters creativity—not just stopping at the basics like peace and quiet or the need for space, but also the need for breadth and access to experiences that foster the discovery of connections that can be called creative. Creativity thrives, in Torr's

view, where there is risk and raciness. On the other hand, creativity is killed where there is restraint.

To Torr, a creative solution is ultimately on the shoulders of the individual, not the group. Brainstorming, in Torr's opinion, is an awful thing—an exercise in futility wrought with fear and politics that never arrives at a “better” solution. Torr's analogy to finding the best creative solution, which he terms “Exit Five,” can be summed up with considering creativity as a maze with several exits from which to choose, from the banal and obvious to the scary and difficult. The most creative can make it to Exit Three and often even to Exit Five. But regularly, the creator gets out at Exit One, also known (though not directly stated by the author) as “the easy way out.”

### On Mainstream Media

Since it has so much to do with marketing and advertising, it seemed that reading about the media would provide me with some good perspective on marketing, especially given the fact that television's powerful public personalities often play the most important marketing roles in our society. So this semester I read *Roone*, the memoirs of Roone Arledge, an individual who, though deceased for nearly a decade, gave us modern day television as we know it.

Arledge's resume reads like an archive of greatest television shows in history: introducing us to ABC's Wide World of Sports, Monday Night Football, Nightline, and 20/20, and also bringing larger-than-life legendary television personalities like Howard Cosell, Jim McKay, Ted Koppel, and Diane Sawyer right into our living rooms. Among many other notable events, Arledge was in Munich, bringing back the news that made the world stand still in 1972 when terrorists kidnapped and killed members of the Israeli Olympic team, and was there for many of the ground-breaking international political events of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As evidenced in his own words, it was Arledge's touch that made him so successful as a producer, and as a marketer as well—he knew that advertising was the bottom line in his field. From the difficult ethical decisions that might set back an entire organization to the battle to stay entertaining in the face of stiff competition, the book chronicles Arledge's life from the producer's chair with lessons that marketers can take away, and not only about content, but in deal making, and creativity as well. From a conversation he had often with Ted Koppel, one of the many great quotes: “Tell the audience what they want to see, what they are seeing, what they have seen. Viewers were smart. Make them smarter.”

## On Marketing

Jay Baer's *Youtility* is something of a primer for what marketing stands to become with technology becoming a larger part of it, starting with the premise that market fragmentation is happening and it's going to keep happening, but then offering up dynamic examples of how brands and organizations are capitalizing on it rather than clinging to the past. Baer says that your customers are looking for you on their own terms now, and not in the traditional ways, but it shouldn't be daunting—there are amazing new avenues opening up to reach audiences that were never accessible to you before. Discovering an avenue and making it work for you is what *Youtility* is all about.

Customers don't want hype, Baer preaches, nor do they want flash. They want help. And that's what the concept of *Youtility* is—finding ways to help, putting yourself out there in new ways and offering a hand. With expectations rising, Baer talks about the need to find a way to meet those expectations, or lose the customer. There's just one tiny catch, of course: in today's purchasing landscape, talking to a real person is a last resort, not a point of entry.

Baer examines how to reach your customer, and lays out a path in six steps: 1) identifying customer needs; 2) make your marketing speak to those needs; 3) marketing your marketing—try and get more out of it than just the media buy; 4) insourcing *Youtility* – find ideas and action that can come from within the walls of your own company; 5) make *Youtility* a process not a project; and finally, 6) Set goals – know what you want to get out of it.

## On Advertising

Finally, to get the perspective of the advertising world from members of the profession, I picked up a great little book titled “Peeing With David Ogilvy,” the memoirs of Creative Director Harvey Gabor. While the title might sound a little crass, this book is actually packed with memorable and relevant stories for the landscape of today's advertising world, albeit set mainly in the “*Mad Men*” era of advertising in the 1960s.

Gabor's offer of a window into that world doesn't disappoint: as it was then and still is today, advertising is an industry of personalities and characters. Certainly Gabor's sensibilities were directly affected by David Ogilvy, having worked with him for a number of years, and Ogilvy was a class act in the author's opinion. Only one anecdote from the book really focuses on “The Pope of Modern Advertising” however, but it does manage to do nothing short of solidifying the Ogilvy legend.

Toward the close of Gabor's book, the author is invited by Google to recreate one of his more famous ads, the big-budget "But the World a Coke" television spot that originally aired in 1961, only in the form of a banner ad. It is an excellent story. Gabor, still sharp as a whip but in his 70s, acknowledges that despite working with young and relatively inexperienced people, the collaboration with Google not only impressed him—but should impress on the reader the dynamic world we live in where advertising can continue to play a big role.

### **Profiling People who are Shaping Marketing**

They're out there: volumes on Ogilvy, videos about Lasker, images of the works of Clow and Bernbach and Burnett. But who among us, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will the marketing and advertising worlds of tomorrow turn to for guidance and inspiration? After asking myself this question, I undertook an independent project to identify three people who I believe are shaping the marketing landscape for the future, even if they are only considered to be on the cusp of the profession.

In no particular order, I chose Angela Ahrendts, the CEO of Burberry who will be moving to Apple early next year; statistician Nate Silver, who correctly predicted the outcome of the 2008 and 2012 United States Presidential elections; and David Axelrod, long-time political advisor with an impressive resume that stretches far beyond his role in Barack Obama's rise to prominence in American politics.

In reading, and writing about these three people, this project made me consider things from their perspective, and gave me the opportunity to reflect on why these people have had such a high impact in this particular moment. And who knows, if we can call Lasker the father of modern advertising, someday we might call Ahrendts the mother of technology marketing.

### **Persuasion Class at NEIU**

Having been encouraged to enroll in it given my course of study, I found the late-summer Communications course "Persuasion," taught by Anthony Adams, to be incredibly interesting and insightful.

Equipped with the textbook *Persuasion in the Media Age*, by Timothy Borchers, our class dove immediately into the art and craft of creating and delivery persuasive messages. Professor Adams kept each class going with excellent examples—some even from his own experience—that complemented our classroom learning. We watched and then discussed multimedia presentations, movies, and scholarly articles about persuasion. We also explored the

personalities of politicians, artists, and brands, identifying how persuasive communication built the images of them that we know.

For me, the key takeaways from the class included learning about communication mediums, cultural communications, and the elements and theories that create effective communication. We picked apart persuasion on a granular level, identifying the facets of both message transmission and conviction as well as reception and adaptation. Amongst the most fascinating concepts that we discussed were the ideas of electronic eloquence (see David Axelrod above) and the idea that “medium is the message.”

## **Workshop and Conference Participation**

### Internet Marketing conference presented by Rise Interactive

If there was a perfect follow up to reading Jon Baer’s *Youtility*, then I found it in the fall, when I had the opportunity to attend a seminar about Internet marketing hosted by Chicago media buying company Rise Interactive. The premise, as presented by conference’s key speaker Rise CEO Jon Morris, was that in order to make a connection with a customer, there are more tools available than ever before, and if used properly, success could be attained. But not without a plan first.

From an outsider’s perspective, Internet marketing generally falls under the traditional direct-marketing paradigm: a series of target prospects is determined, direct “personalized” outreach is crafted and executed, responses are tabulated, and follow-up proceeds from there. Morris pointed to many tools that can be utilized as part of this process—most interestingly, the data and analytics that can be used not only to measure success, but also to hone subsequent messages. These tools are widely available to marketers.

Rise Interactive works with its clients to identify clear paths to customers—be it through search engine advertising, interactive display placement, or any mix of digital marketing touch-points. The clear benefit of utilizing these mediums, as presented by Morris, was that once you had succinctly defined your Internet marketing goals, there were tools out there that could be put in place for every stage of the campaign.

### Prototyping Panel Discussion & Workshop at Acquity Group

No sooner had I finished up the Kelleys’ book *Creative Confidence* than I had been extended an invitation to attend a prototyping conference held at Chicago

digital media production company Acquity. It turned out to be one of the most interesting group activities I have ever participated in.

Acquity's clients are amongst the top brands in the world, and for those clients the firm creates marketing and awareness campaigns across the entire digital spectrum. Teams of designers, developers, and strategists are constantly working at Acquity to keep their clients at the top of their industries. So with all that is at stake, working together as a team to deliver the best content to their clients is an imperative for them as an organization.

In *Creative Confidence*, the authors summed up prototyping by simply stating "show it, don't just talk about it." During this event, that's exactly what we were tasked with doing. After the informative panel discussion, in which several marketing professionals shared their processes for prototyping, we split off into small groups and were all given an assignment to prototype and present.

## **Continuing Work Experience**

As in the spring, the past several months in my full-time role at 88 Brand Partners has given me plenty of opportunity to expand my knowledge of marketing and advertising. Amongst those experiences, the most notable came in the opportunity to help make a pitch for a new client account, and also in the opportunity to play a key role in the design, development, and coordination of a Facebook tab marketing campaign for one of the firm's clients.

Having been approached by a former colleague of mine who was in search of a website, I worked with my colleague Michael McGuire to put together a pitch and a proposal. I also served as a conduit to the potential client, boiling down his company's needs and expectations, while also helping to shape my firm's proposal and determine our options and level of flexibility.

Aside from that experience, I also worked extensively on a multi-stage social media campaign. Stemming from a brainstorming session we had with our client, it was determined that an idea for a contest aimed at engaging a new demographic could be executed through a Facebook Tab rollout. With the client onboard, we took a look at all the moving parts, and formulated a plan to execute it during the months of October and November, zeroing in on our goals for the campaign, then designing a timeline to stick to, bearing in mind all of the many outcomes that such a broad-reaching contest could yield. Then, of course, we proceeded with executing the campaign, monitoring engagement and aggregating data to understand where improvements could be made and choosing the best directions to go in as the campaign unfolded.

## **Facelift for the Illinois Science Council “Road show”**

Having served on the board of the Chicago non-profit Illinois Science Council for nearly four years, there have been many improvements in their communications and outreach of which I’ve been a part. That includes tripling their social media following, enhancing their media outreach, playing a key role in developing their annual fundraising campaign, and overseeing a complete redesign of their website.

Several months ago I was finally able to convince the executive director that the time had come to bring its conference booth materials up to the image that myself and the other board members felt that the ISC should project. The board’s executive director had been traveling to events and public speaking engagements with signage and materials that had taken quite a beating over time, and the hodge-podge of laminated papers and trinkets that she had dropped on numerous tables was not helping the organization’s image.

So we began the process with an audit of current materials: I asked the executive director to set up her materials at a board meeting so the remaining six members could also observe the need to change what was out there. Immediately the board bought in, and approved spending the money to make the “upgrade.” Then, over the course of the next month, other board members got involved as we priced out options, decided what we needed to get and what needed to go, and then reached a consensus on design for the new materials.

Now with a much classier “road show,” the Illinois Science Council can move forward with a much cleaner image, and continue to do the outreach it sets itself out to do.

## **Ventra Fails App**

The revolution will be mobile, I believe. So many products today are borne from the frustration that creates a need to have a better way to do something. So, frustrated with the Chicago Transit Authority’s new Ventra card payment system, I decided one evening that I would build an app that, at the very least, could give me the outlet “vent” about it.

Rather than throwing myself headlong into programming however, I took a step back and determined that I needed to develop a marketing plan in order to guide the app to success.

The initial thought behind the app was that people should be able to “check-in” and share with others where their card failed and the marketing plan guided me



along to what I believe people would ultimately want from the app itself. But by thinking about how people would engage with it, I was able to best determine how I could develop the app to most appropriately fit those needs, working with a limited amount of time and having few resources to dedicate to the project

The “frustration marketing” plan included marketing outreach, and also included preparation for attention: again, with limited time and resources, the hope was that by the sheer act of being “out there” it might attract attention. Sure enough it did. I was contacted by a reporter for Chicago Tribune’s Red Eye and interviewed for an article about “Ventra Fails.” After hanging up the phone, I immediately reached out to journalists from the Sun-Times and Crain’s Chicago Business, hoping that attention might attract a crowd.

What the marketing plan also contains is where else such a product can have a marketing touch-point. Monitoring posts on Twitter and Facebook about the system as well as the app has been something I’ve tried to do from the start—and that is in the marketing plan. Specific to app promotion, I discovered that an “update” gets pushed to the phone of everyone who has downloaded it—an opportunity to reintroduce yourself to your customer, and perhaps even regenerate their fleeting attention.

All of this is ongoing, of course. A mobile app (or a website, or any service for that matter) does not usually have an exit strategy upfront, though in the case of my app, I hope that as the powers that be set out to fix the Ventra system, the need for an app like mine will diminish. That, too, is in the marketing plan. In the meantime, though, I plan on continuing to develop the app, and have released a version for it on multiple devices and am considering a website.

Needless to say, the story in the Red Eye drew plenty of attention to the app, and it certainly has inspired people to believe that there is an alternative to just having to “deal with it” when it comes to the roll-out of the beleaguered new transit payment system. Ultimately that marketing plan I developed up front became a punch-list for the things I needed to do both inside and outside of the app’s development. Having the framework to think about the entire scope of the project however, made me much more prepared for the attention and attraction of users to the app.