



Win business with a unique approach

How I Use Creativity To Close Deals

A goat is no doubt the oddest promotional product Brian Gould has ever slapped an imprint on. No, not a stuffed, fuzzy, give-it-to-your-kid-so-he-can-cuddle-with-it kind of goat. A real, live, stinking-like-hay, shoe-eating goat. The stunt, cooked up for an Arkansas shoe manufacturer through a Nickelodeon licensing agreement, required the four-legged creature to bear a promotional logo on its side while wearing sunglasses and riding a skateboard. “As goats go, he was pretty cool,” says Gould, vice president of LSC Marketing (*asi/321000*).

The promotion landed LSC a great deal of notoriety – and additional business – among its target audience, area ad agencies. It also resulted in Gould being slightly crushed by the goat when it fell on him as Gould attempted to put a stenciled sign on the animal’s side. That, however, followed a long day of dealing with an otherwise uncooperative animal.

When Gould first got the call, he couldn’t believe the request.

“Brian?” said his ad agency account rep – “a real neat girl, 4 foot 10, 90 pounds soaking wet,” Gould adds.

“Yes?” he responded.

“I need you to put a logo on a goat.”

Gould stopped short. He’d never heard of such a ridiculous request. But, as luck would have it, his girlfriend at the time was a “vet tech.” “I asked her, ‘What are goats like?’” Gould says,

eliciting an alarmed reaction from his girlfriend, “like I was suggesting some threesome,” he says.

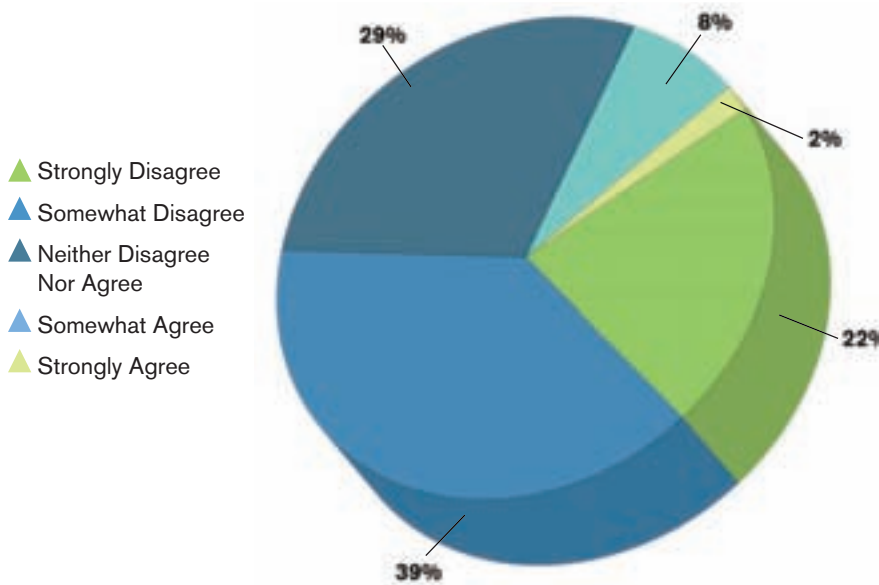
He quickly explained his promotional need for the animal. After a crash course in goat behavior, Gould visited a local sign company and stocked up on

stencils. “Something propelled me to cut various sizes of stencils, because I had not yet met the goat,” which, he was told, was about four feet at its shoulder, and his temperament was anyone’s best guess. To assuage the goat’s nervousness, Gould enlisted his assistant to calm the animal during the shoot. “So I gave her a *Counselor*, and she’s reading stories to the goat and the goat is transfixed,” Gould recalls. That is, until the animal got hungry. “The next thing I know, the goat is eating the magazine,” he says.

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Creativity Counts

Distributors report that their clients are increasingly requesting more services more from them than just the sale of promotional products. This branching out – and using creative sales to provide more value-added services to clients – can yield big revenues and profits for distributors. Here is how distributors responded when asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement that clients are seeking more services.



Counselor State of the Industry survey. ©2007



Watch The Video!

Check out Editor Andy Cohen, as he provides camera-ready tips for using creativity to win more business. Go to asicentral.com/soivideo.

In the meantime, Gould was busy stenciling the creature’s side. “I get out my paint brush and put a stencil up against the goat. When you push up against a goat, they push back,” Gould says. “So I put up my stencil, the goat’s happily being read to and gazing lovingly at my assistant. I take my hands off, and the goat falls over onto me. Mad at me, he starts to kick.” Gould, he says, is thinking, “I don’t want any part of this. I’m not assigned to be kicked by goats.”

An animal rights advocate had been summoned by Gould and the crew to

make sure the animal wasn’t harmed in any way during decoration or production, but Gould never considered that he would need his own advocate looking out for his welfare.

“Somebody was there to make sure we were not abusing the goat,” Gould says. “I’m like, ‘I’ve got a goat on top of me. Nobody seems to think there’s anything wrong with me.’”

What’s more, Gould was now covered with the sugar, salt and food coloring combo he’d concocted to safely paint the animal in the first place, the logo having smeared all over Gould when the goat fell on top of him.

If the animal wasn’t falling over, he was contorting his body to lick the sweet and salty confections off his torso. “It took six tries” to get the goat properly adorned and ready for the shoot. “Everything I put in the mixture wouldn’t work or the goat would lick off part of it,” Gould says. Finally, “I had to give the goat a peanut butter sandwich” just so he would forget about his painted body.

Ten takes later the Nickelodeon logo was finally painted perfectly and the goat, cooperating as much as he would, was ready to be filmed – on a skateboard, even.

The commercial aired several months later and created a buzz among local ad agencies, with Gould’s name always mentioned in the same breath. “What it did for us,” Gould says, “is that it showed folks, if your first choice in distributors says it can’t be done, the goat incident set me up as being the company that could get it done.”

Gould’s efforts paid off nicely, he says, “three months later I get the same call. ‘Why don’t you put a logo on an elephant?’” his ad agency account rep asked. “I said, ‘That’s where I draw the line.’” – *BC*

Four Steps To A Creative Sales Approach

1 Never say no. Being a creative partner to your clients means finding a way to always say “yes” to unique requests. Be the go-to distributor for the wackiest of promotions.

2 Think of new products to use. Many distributors look for untraditional products – not normally found in the ad specialty industry – so that they can surprise their clients. This approach will make you stand out.

3 A budget isn’t always a budget. Clients will often spend more than they planned for a creative promotion that will gain them attention. Offer options within their budgets, as well as other slightly more expensive options that will gain you notoriety.

4 Position yourself in a creative manner. Distributors should be spending more time promoting themselves in unique ways to gain attention for their services. You can’t expect to be able to charge for creative services if you don’t promote your company as one that will surely get attention for its clients.



More than 22% of large distributors believe that their clients don’t shop primarily based on price, while only 11% of small distributors have the same sentiments.