

The Ten Commandments of Marketing

2ND COMMANDMENT:

It's Not What You Want to Say That Counts; It's What They Need to Hear.

You've got a client meeting on Monday. You're staring at a blank computer screen and your first thought is, naturally, "What do I want to say?" Unfortunately that is *never* the most effective way to communicate.

The sequence and manner in which you describe the benefits of who you are and what you do must take into account the mental attitude of your target audience, subject familiarity and level of interest.

In the end, it's their idiosyncratic concerns that matter, not ours. And if we can identify those concerns and tailor our delivery to suit — regardless of medium — our efforts will be rewarded.

Perhaps the single most important attribute a designer-communicator-marketer can possess is **empathy** — *the ability to inhabit the shoes of your audience*. Think Meryl Streep and how she **becomes** the characters she portrays. On Monday you may need to be a 40-year-old fireman, on Tuesday an 11-year-old child and on Wednesday a self-made millionaire with \$20 million to invest. Unless we can truly and effectively empathize with each audience, it is difficult to resist the temptation to try to appeal to everyone. By definition, that path will appeal to no one.

It's what they need to hear that counts and, sometimes, what we want to say just gets in the way.

HOW TO LIVE BY THE 2ND COMMANDMENT

Think about the person to whom your marketing material is targeted.

You'll need to know your niche really well, use your ideal client's language, and know what they really want.

In other words, you have to wear your client's clothes.

The Right Point of View Comes With Experience

For 35 years, Stan Adler Associates has been advising clients about all facets of brand strategy, communications and design.

"The Ten Commandments of Marketing" series is our attempt at distilling decades of experiences, epiphanies, and of course, mistakes into something useful. We welcome your thoughts and comments.



For more information on Stan Adler Associates and the Ten Commandments of Marketing go to www.stanadler.com or e-mail Maura.Ryan@stanadler.com.

Stan Adler Associates, a division of the CHR Group

New York Office 333 Seventh Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10001 | 212.863.4100
Toronto Office 822 Richmond St. W, Suite 102, Toronto, ON M6J 1C9 | 416.921.0082