

## Five Ideas for Increasing Response in 2008

### 1. Take Advantage of the Screen

Since 9/11, we have seen the proliferation of graphic information on our television screens. Viewers have become accustomed to myriads of information appearing at the bottom of the screen, scrolling by with pertinent information. A well thought out and well designed look for lower third graphics can be a significant tool in generating response to your program. Beware, however, overuse of the lower third graphic can also be a detriment. An example of this is the practice of leaving a website address or telephone number on the screen for the duration of the program. The effect is a numbing of the viewer toward the graphic. A clean screen can be equally effective in the sense that when a graphic does appear, its gets noticed. The graphic is recognized, read, and then disappears, leaving the screen uncluttered. The point is the effective communication of the message.

Fonts should be clean and solid. Stick to white and yellow as primary font colors. Your background could be anything you desire, but think in terms of trying to coordinate with the predominant colors on your set. This presents a cohesive, pleasing look for your program. Watch the networks; they are constantly popping graphic information in and out in the lower third. Many of these ads show up only in the corners. You can bet that if the networks are doing it, it is because they spent a great deal of money on research to judge the effectiveness of this process. In other words, take advantage of the money they have spent, and build on their success. Be careful not to get too busy or too wordy here, edit yourself to the bare necessities to communicate your intended message. Clutter is confusing.

If you have a hip, clever person in your department, let them have a go at these graphics. If, by chance, you aren't hip, and don't know anyone who is, go to a bookstore and purchase a few print design magazines. These will provide inspiration for font styles, color palettes, and design ideas for your look. Again, big money was spent on these concepts; why not benefit from it all?

### 2. Hang Onto The Product

Spots and promos for product are fantastic. In fact, we have seen some excellent concepts this past year, and there are some very creative minds at work out there in Christiandom. However, one thing remains constant: if the principal of your program shows his or her own interest in the product, sales will spike way above what even the most amazing ad can provide. If your host has written a book, have them hold it in their hand while telling the viewers why it is so important for them to obtain it. The same goes for products and premium offers. If the minister shows personal interest, you are bound to move many more items off of your shelves. Many principals are not comfortable or even interested in hawking their own wares, but with the cost of airtime and increasing competition, it is most often the only way to survive.

Another touchy, yet equally important concept deals with the topic of interviewing authors. Before an interview can take place, one of the two things needs to happen. Either the host has to care enough to have read the book (not just the back cover), or you or someone on your staff has to have read it. If the latter is true, you will need to provide your host with a synopsis of the literature and some

intelligent questions to ask of the author. Too often, we see an obvious lack of preparation in interviews conducted on Christian television. Man up people! You will never see Charlie Gibson or Matt Lauer sitting in front of an author not knowing the content of their book. Why should we be different? It is only fair to the author and the viewer. The point is to make the interview interesting enough to entice the viewer to want to purchase the book, and vice versa. A little research will make yourself and your department look competent, and the rise in product fulfillment requests will make everyone smile.

### 3. PayPal Anyone?

Online sales continue to increase exponentially every year. You may want to consider PayPal as a convenient way for your customers/partners to purchase products online. Many consumers continue to be wary of online security, and PayPal offers them an increased level of buying confidence. Once the consumer has created a PayPal account, they no longer have to give out their credit card information to participating vendors. EBay thought this service was so attractive, that they bought PayPal, and have made it an integral part of the EBay buying experience. PayPal does take a small percentage of each sale, but the increase in sales and buyer confidence will far outweigh your concern about the fee. Having PayPal will surely be a beneficial aspect of your customers' website experience. Please note, Cooke Pictures has no affiliation with PayPal, nor do we benefit in any way by endorsing them. We simply feel it is an advantageous way to do business on the web.

### 4. Make Someone Happy

Historically, people gravitate most easily toward a project that fulfills a need. If you are a local church, find a project in your community that people can get behind. Show them the need in detail, ask for their help, and then document the results of what their giving accomplished. Remind them of the good works they were a part of and of the lives in their community that were improved as a result of their gifts. Many times we are good at asking, but bad at showing the results. Make sure you nail it on both ends. If your ministry is nationwide, or even international, then your choices are broader, but so are your responsibilities. While extensive humanitarian efforts are needed around the globe, try to focus on a smaller project where results can be managed and documented in a real and tangible way. Be sure to gather before and after testimonies. Hire locals or send in crews to shoot more B-roll than you think you could ever need; you will mostly likely find yourself using all of it. People will buy the occasional book, or perhaps be enticed into a "gimmick" offer, however, what they really desire is to be involved in real change. They get jazzed about affecting change in the world around them and "making a difference". Be careful not to over promise and under deliver, though.

It is wise to work with local organizations whenever possible. They will know the lay of the land and what is possible or not possible to accomplish in their community. Even if you think you know better you most likely do not; your Western mind is probably skewed anyway. Don't reinvent the wheel, find a local you trust and let them run with the concept (within reasonable boundaries). Be smart, beware of scams, consider things carefully, and your project should be a success. Christ requires that we love one another; fundamentally, this is what every ministry should be about.

## 5. Be an Inspiration!

At first glance, this probably does not seem to fit in a piece about response mechanisms, but hear us out. If you are typical of 90% of the ministries we deal with, your staff is most likely over-worked and under-motivated... simply put, they are burnt out. Corporate America rewards their employees with parties, bonuses, team-building activities in exotic locations, motivational speakers, and other various activities to improve performance, morale, and employee loyalty. Ministry America typically rewards their hard working employees with something much less inspiring: more work. When was the last time your department went to lunch together, and the ministry actually paid for it? How much have you invested in advanced training or further education for your staff? Is there a sense of dedication or rather desperation among your employees? Remember, this *is* ministry; it should include ministering to your staff as well. Never forget that people in your own department may be hurting or needing guidance. If you cannot minister to those at the next desk or down the hall, you can forget about being effective in reaching your community, the nation, or the world. "What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?" Matthew 16:26 (NLT).

A content and motivated staff will change the impact of your program more than you can imagine. If you are the leader, remember that before people come to work they have lives at home. People who are happy at home will most likely be happy at work, and vice versa. If you are disrupting someone's home life by pushing them to hard or requiring too many long days and late hours at the office, shame on you! It is really quite simple, either find a way to decrease the work load, or hire more people to do the work. This is a basic concept that corporate America is able to accomplish on a daily basis, but that ministries are seemingly incapable of grasping.

Lastly, be a role model to your staff. Represent the Christ you serve. Refrain from gossip, do not exclude individuals, and do whatever you can to build a team. Your staff and your ministry will reap the rewards of this style of management. It is no secret that people must have motivation to improve and thrive. This is true in all walks of life. Do not let the fact that you are a ministry blind you to the idea that your people need to be inspired every day.