

Cure for the common cold



If you haven't seen Tucson advertised as the cure for the common cold yet, chances are you will. This is the theme of a campaign designed by LP&G marketing advertising and public relations, which recently won an Emmy award.

This common cold campaign was developed in conjunction with the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau (MTCVB) to bring winter visitors to Tucson this year.

I asked Leslie Perls, creative director for LP&G, to share some of the best practices employed by the firm to create success for their clients. You might say the most important best practices for this firm is its ability to create dynamic campaigns and help clients reach their objectives. That's probably had a lot to do with LP&G's 35 percent increase in revenues over the last four years.

The objectives are common to all service firms but LP&G is uncommonly successful in consistently achieving them.

The "Cure for the Common Cold" campaign, according to Perls, "involves a very integrated approach in two of our feeder cities, Chicago and Seattle. We looked at the demographic to discover what the people there like to do.

"For example in Chicago, we go to a Bears game, at the tailgate party, wrapping a Winnebago in Tucson graphics, handing out hand warmers and offering a drawing to a luxury trip to Tucson," Perls said. "Then, for three days after the tailgate party we have the Winnebago downtown and deploy a street team to hand out more hand warmers and talk to people to get them to register for this contest. We have a big-screen video running all the time with the message: Tucson - Cure for the Common Cold."

After the Chicago visit, the Winnebago will move on to Seattle to make a similar appearance.

LP&G doesn't eliminate traditional marketing but augments it with what's called guerilla marketing, which was created by Jay Conrad Levinson, author of numerous books on the tactic. The phrase has taken on the meaning of non-traditional highly effective marketing efforts.

"Both the traditional and guerilla marketing drive people to the website," said Perls. From there people can be given more information and marketing directly to choose Tucson as a destination site.

LP&G's people work hard on creating and implementing ideas, from the MTCVB's tourism efforts to working with University Physicians Healthcare's to build its Kino Campus Hospital, 2800 E. Ajo Way, into a strong medical facility.

What values and best practices drive an organization that must be constantly creative and dynamic?

Perls' answer is no less unique and creative than the projects she manages.

"Our driving force is love. Love as a way of looking at the world. Love of constant learning, challenge, creating places where ideas can flourish, growth, respect and love of each other and joy of watching each other experience each other," she says.

Before you decide this is idealism, consider a turnover rate which is the envy of the industry. The average employment tenure in the industry is 20 months. At LP&G, 28 percent of the employees have been there more than 10 years and 16 percent have been there more over five years.

"It is invaluable to have people on the account 10 years. It is advantageous for clients and provides them a strong historical knowledge base," said Perls.

Here are the Best Practices that drive LP&G's phenomenal creative and retention success:

1. We place family first (as defined by the employee). That sometimes means flex time or time off.
2. We believe you get what you give n respect and trust are core values
3. We let the team interview and give input on who will work here
4. Kids and dogs are often in the office if there is a need for them to be here
5. Outside parts of our lives are welcomed and embraced
6. Work with great clients who let us do our job

Not every firm could handle so much creative management, but then not every firm approaches the creativity of LPG, Inc.

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