

Let's Talk about Word of Mouth



Ryan Hanser
Senior VP

In our last issue, I outlined why Hanser & Associates believes public relations firms are uniquely qualified to lead the evolution to a new level of stakeholder

engagement. Now, I'd like to outline a more specific point of view on the nature of Word of Mouth and what it means to our clients.

First, the Word travels (mostly) by mouths, not keyboards. While much is being said about "social media," about 90 percent of conversations about brands, products

and services occur between people talking face-to-face or by phone.

Second, the Word comes from people motivated by a desire to help others, not a desire to be compensated. Discovering and sharing good information supports individual self-worth. It's one of the reasons "good" Word travels more easily than "bad."

Third, the Word can be fostered, but not forced, by organizations. A community – an environment of exclusivity and trust – is the best place to facilitate Word of Mouth. Organizations can facilitate formation of a community or they can participate in existing communities. Either way, the Word is authentic; it cannot be invented or faked.

These points, supported by research and practice, drive our strategies and tactics for clients' Word of Mouth programs.

H&A's Word of Mouth services provide a predictable, sustainable and measurable methodology for making an organization more efficient – harnessing the credibility, knowledge and passion of customers and others to refine your entire operation. And the profound impacts on marketing and sales alone are worth the investment – or reallocation of your budget from "traditional" marketing tactics.

In future issues, I'll detail our service's components. In the meantime, please call me (515.224.1086), if you're interested in exploring a Word of Mouth program.



General Manager Charles Greth (center), West Des Moines Interim Mayor Rick Messerschmidt, store consultant Rich Donckers and members of the City Council and chamber perform a "bread cutting" at The Market's grand opening which benefited the Food Bank of Iowa. See case study inside.

casestudy: The Market at Jordan Creek

The Market at Jordan Creek

The Market at Jordan Creek is a West Des Moines-based gourmet destination. The 24,000 square ft. market opened in April 2007 and offers customers options such as take-home meals, catering, foods from local producers and specialty desserts.

PR Action:

The Market retained H&A to implement an integrated marketing campaign led by public relations. The goals were to introduce the public to the concept of gourmet groceries, encourage them to shop at The Market and differentiate The Market from “the average neighborhood grocery store.” H&A planned two soft opening events and one grand opening “bread cutting” for The Market at Jordan Creek – events that benefited local nonprofit

organizations. News media were invited to a sneak peek event as well as the grand opening event. After launch, H&A continued to help The Market with ongoing media relations, community relations and a Word of Mouth program. H&A’s partner advertising firm, Redstone Communications, is providing advertising for The Market.

Results:

The soft opening and grand opening event attendance totaled 820 and donations to charities exceeded \$9,000. H&A gained more than 130 total news story placements for the store opening through print, online and television, generating nearly 5.5 million impressions and produced an ROI of 43:1. The integrated marketing campaign has supported strong store sales.

communicationstrategies

Content reprintable with attribution.

A quarterly publication of

HANSER & ASSOCIATES

4401 Westtown Parkway, Suite 212
West Des Moines, IA 50266-1037
Phone: 515.224.1086
Fax: 515.224.0991

10031 Maple Street
Omaha, NE 68134
Phone: 402.393.5435
Fax: 402.393.2139

Email: hanser@hanser.com
Web site: www.hanser.com

Member of



Over 60 offices in North America, Asia/Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East

clientnews

Meet Three New H&A Public Relations Clients

Hanser & Associates is pleased to announce that three new clients have retained the firm for public relations services:

Grisanti's

For more than 20 years, Grisanti's



An array of Italian cuisine is available at both Grisanti's locations.

Restaurants in Omaha and Lincoln, Neb. have been a place for celebrations over fresh Italian food. H&A is supporting a customer engagement campaign in partnership with Redstone Communications that capitalizes on the restaurants' community connections.

Humane Society of North Central Iowa

The Fort Dodge, Iowa-based chapter of The Humane Society operates a non profit animal shelter serving a 12-county region. H&A is conducting a feasibility study regarding a new shelter in Fort Dodge.

T & C Rodeo Company, Inc.
Lamoni, Iowa-based T & C



T & C offers spectators fun and exciting events including bull riding, mutton busting and barrel racing.

produces North American Bullriding Association-affiliated professional rodeos at venues in Iowa and Minnesota. H&A is developing sponsor relationships for the 2007 season.

Ronald Hanser Published in Developing PR Campaigns

“PR for People in Corner Offices” provides PR insider’s perspective



Ronald Hanser
President

Ronald Hanser, APR, president of Hanser & Associates (H&A), wrote a chapter for the newbook, “Inside the Minds: Developing Public Relations Campaigns” published in May 2007 by Aspatore Books.

Boston-based Aspatore, America’s largest publisher for C-level corporate executives, describes the book as an authoritative, insider’s perspective on the key strategies for creating, implementing and benchmarking successful PR campaigns. It provides an overview of the key steps and considerations involved in planning and launching PR programs.

Hanser is one of only 10 PR industry leaders in the United States chosen to contribute to this book; selection was due to Hanser’s roles as global chairman of Pinnacle Worldwide and H&A president. Aspatore describes the authors as “... top PR experts on implementing a PR plan, benchmarking success and achieving client goals.”

“Public relations is a big part of the corporate CEO’s responsibility,” said Hanser. “I was honored to describe how CEOs are using PR to build their companies’ reputation, brand and sales.”

The chapter mentions organizations with which H&A has been involved, including City of West Des Moines, Coach USA, Council of Public Relations Firms, GfK

Roper Consulting, Good Samaritan Hospital, Greater Des Moines Partnership, Iowa Health System, Pinnacle Worldwide, Public Relations Society of America, Qwest, Redstone Communications, *The Wall Street Journal* and Word of Mouth Marketing Association.

Excerpts from Hanser’s chapter:

“The role of a good PR firm is to help a company manage its reputation. A PR firm works with the corporate team to nurture their best interests, support their endeavors and communicate their strengths with their constituents. PR is essential and ongoing.”

“Potential clients often ask why they should invest in public relations. That’s easy: We tell them PR is an essential component to any successful business. Why? In short, it is all about reputation. How do you want the public to understand who you are and what you do? A good reputation brings top-qualified customers and employees to you. A bad reputation keeps them away.”

H&A clients had this to say about Hanser’s chapter...

“PR for People in Corner Offices reflects Ron Hanser’s decades of experience in helping CEOs and other organizational leaders through scores of tough times. The common sense and PR advice offered in Ron’s chapter is certain to assist many

others in similar situations. It’s easy to see why leaders around the world value his advice.”

– **James M. Zahnd, Partner, OnPoint Advocacy & Strategic Communications, Hot Springs Village, Ark. (former VP of Public Affairs, Iowa Health System)**

“Ron offers an impressive summary of PR philosophies, especially market engagement through ‘conversations.’ CEOs are well-advised by Hanser to recognize the value of creating trust and advocacy through online conversations, word-of-mouth, and other dialogue-based marketing.”

– **Bill Lindstrom, CEO, Association Film Commissioners International, Cheyenne, Wyo.**

“Like the book says, the integration of PR strategies by Hanser & Associates was essential to the successful introduction of Coach USA’s new megabus.com intercity bus service brand in the United States in 2006. PR strategies made it possible to take a product category with a somewhat conservative image (intercity bus transportation) and give it one of being value-added, convenient, urbane, contemporary, even hip and cool! The domino effect of stories about megabus.com’s consumer benefits and competitive differentiation greatly increased brand awareness within the market area as well as throughout the USA at a significant media cost savings.”

– **Michael Alvich, VP-Sales & Marketing, New York Gray Line / New York Sightseeing, a Coach USA Company, New York, N.Y.**

The book can be purchased by visiting www.aspatore.com/store or retailers including Amazon.com, BN.com and Borders.com.

Awards and Recognition

Awards for National PR

H&A received three awards at the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Central Iowa Chapter's 2007 PRIME awards ceremony April 26.

- PRIME award in the Integrated Communications Campaign category for "Go for \$1," the PR-driven national campaign that launched New York, N.Y.-based Coach USA's megabus.com intercity bus service in the United States in 2006.
- PRIME award in the Special Events category for communications, planning and execution of "Cut the Hose – Increase America's Energy Independence," the dedication of Algona, Iowa-based Hydrogen Engine Center's corporate campus in July 2006. H&A's work, which gained nationwide news coverage for Hydrogen Engine Center, was also a finalist for the PRIME "Best of Show" award.
- Merit award in the Audiovisual category for a video news release created

for Coach USA's 2006 launch of megabus.com.

We are honored by these PRIME awards, which recognize public relations' measurable results produced for our clients. H&A has won more than 40 international, national and local awards for its PR work, including two national Bronze Anvils - the "Oscar" of PR.

Telly International Award

H&A won a 2007 Telly Award in the TV news feature category for a video news release created for New York, N.Y.-based Coach USA's launch of megabus.com in the United States in 2006.

H&A in National Report

New York-based Council of Public Relations Firms spotlighted H&A in its new white paper, "Relating to the Public – the Evolving Role of Public Relations in the Age of Social Media," published in May 2007. H&A is among a few CPRF-member firms mentioned

who have created Word of Mouth (WOM) capabilities and practices during the past few years. H&A's WOM practice was launched in June 2005.



H&A received two PRIME awards and one merit award at the 2007 PRSA Central Iowa Chapter awards ceremony.