Experiential Marketing that Creates Live Real Experiences
For Consumers, B2B and Government Agencies

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- Henry Rischitelli

Henry Rischitelli
President & CEO
Next Marketing

CEO/CFO: Mr. Rischitelli, your site shows that Next Marketing delivers marketing solutions with a strategic approach, flawless execution and a continual focus on generating results. Would you tell us how those elements work on a day-to-day basis?

Mr. Rischitelli: At Next Marketing, we define ourselves as being “strategically tactical.” What I mean is that we understand how to bridge the gap between a high-level strategic plan or creative concept and the tactical realities associated with turning that plan and/or concept into a real go-to-market campaign that is actionable and affordable. To achieve this, it is critical that our experiential strategy and design teams work hand in hand with our account and production teams throughout the lifecycle of each campaign. This integrated approach provides us, and our clients, with the checks and balances necessary to make certain that our solutions are designed, executed and measured with a high level of detail and a clear focus on success as defined by our client’s goals and objectives.

CEO/CFO: Would you give us an example?

Mr. Rischitelli: Since 2012, we have supported the U.S. Air Force’s recruiting efforts by operating five unique mobile marketing tours. For this engagement, we are hired by and work for the Air Force’s Agency of Record, GSD&M, who leads strategy, creative and measurement. In addition to the “heavy lifting” associated with deploying, managing and
maintaining several million dollars-worth of equipment and more than a dozen dedicated field personnel, our role is to provide strategically-tactical guidance to GSD&M and the Air Force on how to bring their strategic plan and creative concepts to life – on time and budget.

From an execution standpoint, we can't image a client who could have higher standards for presentation, pride and professionalism than the U.S. Air Force so flawless execution is a must. We achieve this through several steps including, but not limited to extensive staff training, performance incentive programs and meticulous attention to detail from our dedicated program team.

Lastly, marketing is a performance-based industry and experiential marketing, in particular, is highly measurable. As such, we take great efforts to understand our client's goals and objectives and develop our experiences to encourage outcomes that will support those goals and objectives. In the case of the Air Force tours, GSD&M has been very transparent with us on how they define success. As such, we've worked very closely with the GSD&M team and the Air Force client to ensure that we are moving the needle in the right direction – and if we are not, we analyze and adjust our tactics quickly and decisively.

CEOCFO: What are challenges in these hands-on live experiences that people might miss?
Mr. Rischitelli: While it may seem cliché, the number one rule in creating and executing experiential marketing campaigns and live events is, plan for everything. From weather to politics and everything in between, having an experienced team in place is critical to saving time and money.

CEOCFO: Everybody has been to a store where either salespeople do not know enough, are not enthusiastic, or they are pushy. Rarely, do you find someone with the right blend. How do you assess that in people so they have the knowledge but they are not over the top?
Mr. Rischitelli: One of the most compelling benefits of any well-executed experiential campaign is for the participants to have the opportunity to engage one-on-one with a brand representative in a low stress, non-sales environment. To ensure that we are maximizing this benefit for our client programs, we follow the four E's. Embody: Each Brand Representative must positively embody the brand and be authentic to the target audience. Engage: During the recruiting process, we look for candidates that are engaging, approachable and friendly but never over bearing. Educate: Once hired, our staff members are subjected to significant training protocols that cover everything from brand and product to how to deal with emergency situations. Empower: Lastly, we only hire and retain staff members that can handle the significant responsibility of representing our clients' to their target audiences and as such we empower those staff members to make real time decisions that will seize opportunities and overcome challenge when they present themselves.

CEOCFO: You are successful at what you are doing. You work with name brands and you are on the Inc. 5000 list six times. Are you able to utilize technology to put many of the pieces together or is it difficult to find a system that will coordinate?
Mr. Rischitelli: We look at technology from three very distinct vantage points. The first, is running the business of Next Marketing and in this
case we have invested in Microsoft Dynamics GP which allows us to actively manage our finances from both the overall agency standpoint as well as the down to an individual project basis through one integrated system. The second, is utilizing event technologies to enhance engagement and measurement where we are constantly reviewing, testing and deploying emerging technologies from Virtual Reality and RFID tracking to Social Media Aggregation and Motion-based Recognition. The third is stakeholder communications which primarily is our client-based planning and reporting for which we employ an online event scheduling and measurement portal.

CEOCFO: How do companies find you? Can you be found through an internet or smartphone search? If so what terms would they use?

Mr. Rischitelli: Of course, they can call us or visit www.nextmarketing.com. In fact, we are very close to re-launching our website to be a bit more dynamic and informative. Typically, clients who find us through a web search are using tactical terms such as, “mobile marketing tours,” “event staffing,” “event management,” “event or retail sampling” or “sponsorship activation” which are all core services that we offer to our clients.

CEOCFO: Why choose Next Marketing?
Mr. Rischitelli: As an independent agency, we operate with a focus, flexibility and nimbleness that is hard for our larger competitors to achieve yet we also bring the experience and resources necessary to support the ambitions of some of the world’s largest brands. Ultimately, no one is better at turning ideas into an experiential reality and our strategically-tactical approach ensures that we are delivering real, measurable results – on time and within budget.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine