



Deirdre Bigley
Vice President, Worldwide Advertising & Interactive
IBM Corporate Marketing



Content Comes First

Why marketing directors need to become brand journalists

IBM's Deirdre Bigley spoke at a recent meeting of the Business Marketing Association in New York. Afterwards, she and Deborah Malone, publisher of *inter national ist*, had a chance to talk about a new role for marketers. Here is some of what she had to say:

"As a multinational advertiser, IBM is always grappling with how to break through in a world of media fragmentation. And as a leading technology company, we also want to embrace many of the new media options.

"Recently we realized that as a marketer, we had forgotten how to tell a good story — the kind of story that is compelling enough to engage any one of us for a few minutes in the midst of our busy lives. Of course, the IBM value proposition and a message about why people should care about the company are embedded in the story.

"What does this mean in the evolution of our business? Marketers now must become content builders, dramatically changing the way they produce creative. In the past, an advertiser created a TV spot or a banner ad; the type of medium determined the creative execution. I'm suggesting that content comes first.

"A marketing director needs to become a brand journalist. We have to determine the good stories we want to tell. Then the possibilities for how to use these stories are endless. In fact, one is able to overcome much of the debate about media fragmentation by simply editing your brand content for the web, for the latest mobile

device, for presentation at an event, or for television.

"This causes you to look for partnerships with the media. Instead of making 30-second spots, you work with a TV show to come up with a two-minute break to tell your story. Rather than creating a simple web banner, you work with a site to build portal to house your story library.

"For IBM, a great story is often a mini-documentary. It is something compelling enough to make you pause to listen and learn something interesting. In doing so, you'll also understand more about the IBM ethos."

What may be most radical for many marketers, Bigley says, is that the brand is not shown in these IBM vignettes. Instead, the company focuses on creating a good story, typically a challenge. Stories include the New York Police Department's role in creating a virtual crime lab, how understanding traffic patterns in Norway can help to solve congestion in other cities, and the intricacies of mapping the human genome (*photo*). IBM software creators and thinkers are interviewed throughout to show how they worked with these organizations to help create solutions.

CONTACT: dbigley@us.ibm.com



OLLY COMYN

The Economist



" In Burgundy terms, if 2000 was a Premier Cru, 2006 was a Grand Cru, a year of exceptional growth in both circulation and advertising for *The Economist* "

CONTACT: ollycomyn@economist.com

ANDY BUSH

FORTUNE MAGAZINE



" 2006 was a year of solid growth for pan-regional media. Not only did we experience new advertisers, many also embraced more creative, multiplatform programs featuring higher levels of integration. Pan-regional media has continued to successfully evolve and adapt to the new reality of modern communications expectations. "

CONTACT: andy_bush@fortunemail.com