

CONTACT

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**Marketing
Jewish Life**



STEINHARDT FOUNDATION

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Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation is dedicated to strengthening and transforming American Jewry to ensure a flourishing, sustainable community in a fully integrated free society. We seek to revitalize Jewish identity through educational, religious and cultural initiatives that are designed to reach out to all Jews, with an emphasis on those who are on the margins of Jewish life.

Photographs in this issue appear courtesy of contributors, Photos.com, Jack Pinto and Dave Phouff.

Marketing Jewish Life

For the past dozen years, many American Jewish institutions have tailored programming towards that elusive yet abundant breed: the unaffiliated Jew. Millions have been spent on new programs that promise to reach Jews who lie outside the community's orbit. Unfortunately, we have often neglected perhaps the most crucial area of focus: innovative marketing of programs and offerings. Instead, many of us have relied on perfunctory marketing plans that place the message of outreach and engagement in the media of the already-affiliated.

Such logic is counter-intuitive. If our target is the unengaged, then by definition they exist outside the range of Jewish media. The competition for their attention is fierce. Like everyone else, Jews in the open society are subject to seemingly limitless avenues of identity exploration and a whirlwind of information. The deluge of messages and options is equivalent to spam – unless it is found to be immediately compelling, it will be deleted. In such an atmosphere, strategic message creation and placement is crucial for the success and vitality of Jewish programs.

This issue of Contact explores effective ways to market Jewish life and Jewish programs. Since successful marketing hinges on a clear understanding of one's audience, articles in this issue offer strategies on reaching particular bands of the Jewish spectrum. It becomes clear that superior marketing is inexorably tied to the creation and refinement of high-quality programming. As we understand our target audience more thoroughly, it often becomes necessary to fine tune the program itself so that it best meets the audience's needs.

We have our work cut out for us. Large segments of the Jewish community currently associate Jewish institutional life with ossified structures and atavistic attitudes incompatible with contemporary American life. Ultimately, for marketing to succeed, it must be linked not only to enhanced programs, but to a clearer understanding of the spiritual and cultural needs of Jews today.

Eli Valley
Eli Valley



Tips For Marketing To The Jewishly Unengaged

by PAUL GOLIN

Effective marketing and effective programming both begin with the same step: understanding your audience. Who are you trying to reach? Why are you trying to reach them? And, what are you offering?

We are all good at tuning out commercials or other marketing noise when we need to, but on those rare occasions when we find something indispensable through an ad—a great new camera, a better job, even a significant other—we’re glad those marketers found a way to deliver the message into our consciousness. Marketing Jewish programs to the unengaged requires the same kind of persistence, innovation and excellent end product, and it can be just as rewarding for both parties. So where do you begin?

TIP 1 Don't Promise What You Can't Deliver.

The Jewish community has much to offer those searching (actively or otherwise) for meaning. However, many unengaged people have had uneven experiences with the organized Jewish community. After being promised a safe

space, or a spiritual transformation, or a meaningful encounter with welcoming folks, they are often met with tepid content, cliquish social circles, apathy and, in the worst cases, hostility. After a few negative “tastes,” it’s difficult to bring these people back to the community. This might be why today *less than half* of all Jews participate in institutional Judaism. Even the best marketing can’t save an organization that needs to completely revamp its programming or “corporate culture.”

Luckily, effective marketing and effective programming both begin with the same step: understanding your audience. Who are you trying to reach? Why are you trying to reach them? And, what are you offering? Marketing can help attract people to your program, but if you exaggerate, and the participants come away disappointed, it becomes another negative contact with the community. Even if your program is great, and you engage many unaffiliated Jews in Jewish activity, if you fail to move them into deeper engagement with the community (or at least offer some kind of “next step”), it’s not successful outreach.

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TIP 2 Go Where The People Are.

At the Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI), “outreach” means engaging the unengaged *where they are*, rather than waiting for them to come to us. One of our activities is to help institutions move beyond their own four walls to conduct “Public Space Judaism”—free Jewish life programs in malls, bookstores, parks and movie theaters. The rationale is twofold: to find people who are not on anyone’s lists, and to offer them Jewish content in neutral, familiar settings.

Even if you are not quite ready to move your programming into the public square, you should still move your mar-

More often than not, the assumption is: white Ashkenazi and heterosexual. What messages do the images in your marketing materials send to potential participants who are Jews of color or same-sex parents?

keting there. Unengaged Jews are not reading temple bulletins or buying local federation newspapers. They need to be reached through secular venues, including mainstream media. That might sound expensive, but it doesn’t have to be. Most local papers have free events listings, especially the free city papers that reach younger crowds.

If possible, develop rapport with local newsmen. Like consumers, reporters will not be easily sold; you need to provide them with real, newsworthy content. The best way to do so is through human-interest stories. Is there an individual or couple greatly aided by your program? Also, invite reporters to your events. The process might take time, but one column about your program can be worth ten paid advertisements.

Another option is “guerilla advertising,” placing your message in unex-

pected locations at little to no cost. For example, when a JOI-sponsored program in Baltimore wanted to reach Jews in their 20s and 30s, they secured permission to post flyers in the bathrooms of popular bars and clubs. It worked because it found its audience, and it found them at a time when they may have been particularly receptive to a message that suggested there’s something better out there (than drinking in bars).

TIP 3 Identify and Lower Barriers.

Outreach is about removing barriers to participation. The programs of “Public Space Judaism” mentioned above

address the hesitancy many unengaged Jews feel about walking into our institutions. But language can be just as powerful a barrier as any physical space. While Hebrew is an integral part of Judaism and has bound our people together across time and continents, using Hebrew words in the marketing of your program probably won’t help reach unengaged Jews. By and large, they don’t speak Hebrew, and therefore have no

idea what takes place at your *havdalah* program, your *kiruv*, your learners’ *minyán* or your beginners’ *chavurot*. These terms are red flags signaling to the unaffiliated that they don’t have the Jewish education they think is necessary to access our institutions.

Even in English, inclusive language takes on greater importance in light of the growth of intermarried households and our community’s mixed results in engaging them. JOI has worked extensively with this population. One interesting trend we’ve noticed is that the programs that attract the most intermarried participation are those that offer the same to *all* Jews—for instance, a basic Jewish education or a fun family event—rather than singling out intermarried families for special treatment (even if that special treatment is positive).

For example, marketing a free Intro-

duction to Judaism course by simply stating, “all are welcome” may send a very compelling message to intermarried families, because the Jewish community is not demanding that they first self-identify as intermarried before it will serve them. The label “interfaith” might attract fewer participants, since many intermarried families see themselves not as two faiths but as a Jewish family where one parent is simply not “officially” Jewish.

Unless a program deals primarily with issues surrounding intermarriage, you should ask if there are more welcoming and inclusive phrases that can be used. JOI consulted with one Jewish day school in Tucson, Arizona, that devised the slogan, “All families raising Jewish children are welcome.” That’s a beautiful and inclusive message.

These are subtleties, but they are not lost on the target audience. Just one word can sour an entire message. For example, the marketing phrase “Keeping our children Jewish” sounds defensive, and begs the question, “Keeping from what...or from whom?” Intermarried families will recognize the implication. If the word “keeping” is simply changed to “raising,” the phrase would *include* intermarried Jewish families rather than potentially chide them.

While words are important, images can have an even greater impact. One thing to keep in mind is assumptions about what Jews “look like.” More often than not, the assumption is: white Ashkenazi and heterosexual. What messages do the images in your marketing materials send to potential participants who are Jews of color or same-sex parents?

It may seem a daunting task to get your message out there when it has to compete with all the noise emanating from the giant marketing machine, but it is possible. The tips above are a good place to start. However, they are just the beginning. Sharing “best practices” among Jewish professionals is another step, and for that JOI offers a resource called JOPLIN: The Jewish Outreach Professionals Log-In Network, online at www.JOI.org/joplin. Through this and other venues, we hope to work across denominational and institutional lines to help us all “raise the volume” of our Jewish programs to reach the unengaged. 🌟

Marketing New Bridges

Where would you hold a party if you wanted to attract 20,000 people? Try downtown, along three closed-off blocks. That's exactly what

Jewish food, performances, children's activities and Judaica artists, as well as areas for communal institutions to dispense literature about their programs. It attracts a large, diverse crowd by lowering barriers to participation and bringing Judaism to where the people are. And it tries to "bridge" potential newcomers to the Jewish community by making connections and listening to needs. For these reasons, the Walter and Elise Haas Fund asked Jewish Outreach Institute to provide programmatic and marketing consultation to help New Bridges achieve its outreach goals.

So how does New Bridges bring in the masses? The street fair's best marketing comes in the form of free publicity. The event is newsworthy, and therefore receives

happens each year in Palo Alto, California, thanks to an innovative outreach initiative called New Bridges to Jewish Community and its "Jewish Cultural Street Festival."

The street fair offers



New Bridges' marketing, much like its street fair, goes where the people are.

both pre- and post-event coverage in the local newspaper, which also co-sponsors the event. Even without that advantage, however, New Bridges would attract people to its program through its smart marketing campaign.

For example, the fair is called "To Life! A Jewish Cultural Street Festival." Two important marketing decisions jump right out. Many Jews

understand the deeper significance of the phrase "To Life," but by keeping it in English, it broadens the audience to include the unengaged who may not toast *l'chaim* as frequently. And by adding the word "Cultural" after Jewish, it neutralizes concerns about a religious agenda.

Posters advertising the Festival are clean and simple, and include only

essential information. The artwork, while distinctly Jewish, retains a "Northern California Folksy" feel. More importantly, they are plastered around town



weeks beforehand in such places as banks, storefront windows and take-out restaurants. They are even reproduced on the back of a local supermarket's brown paper bags.

New Bridges' marketing, much like its street fair, goes where the people are. That should be of primary concern for all outreach marketing.

— PAUL GOLIN



Advertising outside the box: Marketing your Jewish day school

by **RABBI DANIEL LEHMANN** and **ELI GUROCK**

Rabbi Daniel Lehmann and Eli Gurock are Headmaster and Director of Admissions, respectively, of Gann Academy — The New Jewish High School of Greater Boston.

One of the most significant challenges when marketing a Jewish day school is combating perceptions and preconceived notions. Many people imagine that Jewish day schools cannot offer the same array of opportunities as top-notch independent or public schools. They don't realize how vibrant, dynamic and exciting Jewish day schools have become. Most day schools now offer a multitude of options for competitive sports, comprehensive arts programs and a host of extra-curricular choices. For a Jewish teenager, a day school is the perfect place to discover new passions, develop relationships with nurturing faculty and form friendships with a diverse group of students who are excited about learning and interested in having a fulfilling and enjoyable experience.

There are many possible ways to explain all this to prospective families, but the best marketing campaigns are also multipurpose. A good campaign will not only attract attention from new audiences, but will also motivate and enable people in the community to promote the school by word of mouth.

Jewish education is too important to be consistently represented by a smiling kid in a big yarmulke holding a Torah. Yes, that is a tangible and easy image to draw and to use. But it's such a surface icon for representing what our schools are trying to do. In fact, that type of imagery may actually scare students away — especially when you are trying to attract kids from unaffiliated homes.

In a Jewish school, Judaism is the centerpiece of the organization's identity. When planning an ad campaign, it may therefore seem natural to have Judaism take center stage. But that isn't always the best strategy. It's a little bit counterintuitive, but when you're trying to market a Jewish day school, the most important message to communicate isn't about Judaism. In terms of advertising in particular, you have to assume that you are working with a very limited attention span. With a Jewish school, people will guess that Judaism is at the core of your mission. So take the opportunity to talk about other unique aspects of your program instead. Celebrating your championship basketball team does not detract from the excellence of your Talmud program, but it will get some people to take a closer look.

Last year, our school launched an ad campaign called "Inspiring Minds." The goals of the campaign were to show the diversity of our student body religiously, geographically and educationally, and to highlight the range of extra curricular interests. We created five different ads, each featuring a student posing with an object that represented one of his or her special interests. Each ad also included an effusive paragraph, written by the student, that



Carefully crafted and well-designed materials will not only get new people in the door. They also foster a sense of pride among your constituents.

introduced him or her and highlighted certain opportunities at our school.

Although the concept was simple, proper execution of these ads was critical. The content was good — clear, compelling and informative. But how would we get people to stop and read the ads? The visual effects needed to be fresh, clean and modern enough to grab people's attention and hold onto it. Advertising is expensive, and it doesn't pay to do it if you aren't going to do it right. We needed professional help, and we knew it. So we worked with a freelance designer, a writer and a professional photographer to get the result we needed. Then we did some serious thinking about who our audience really was for this campaign.

Before "Inspiring Minds," we thought that we should be marketing directly to the unaffiliated and to Jewish families who are not committed to Jewish day school education. But unaffiliated families don't usually read the Jewish papers and they don't necessarily shop in the Jewish stores. To reach them with our advertisements, we would have had to place multiple ads in dozens of community papers and put up posters in hundreds of locations. This would have taken thousands of dollars and days of labor. And we would be targeting such a small percentage of the general population that it would never be worth the investment. We decided that we needed a different way to approach the unaffiliated.

Through trial and error, we learned that ads alone don't sell schools. Enthusiastic students, satisfied parents, excited faculty

members and inspired community leaders — they sell schools. At the school Open House and other admissions events, we inquired about how families found out about our school. The vast majority of prospective families indicated that it was through word of mouth. Once we discovered members of the community were steering families our way, we immediately focused our efforts in that direction.

We made the decision to put the vast majority of our ads where people who likely knew about the school would see them. We advertised in the local Jewish papers, and we created posters that we put up in synagogues, JCCs, Jewish bookstores and restaurants. Why? These ads portrayed the school as exciting, creative and well-established. We realized that this was a perfect opportunity to sculpt our image — not just for the uninitiated, but for people who already know and love our school. The "Inspiring Minds" campaign created a buzz throughout the Boston community. It motivated and empowered people to talk about the school and gave them a specific vocabulary to use. People who were already involved with the school felt proud to see these ads, and influential community leaders gained a new respect for our organization.

It was important for community members to see our ads not only in Jewish locations, but also in targeted secular areas as well. We placed ads in two unique, high-profile publications that would attract attention from the Jewish community and the Greater Boston community. One ad

appeared in the "Best Private Schools" edition of *Boston Magazine*, and we are running the "Inspiring Minds" campaign in the program for the 2003-04 season of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Both of these venues have an impressive cachet associated with them, and we felt very good about connecting our school to these organizations.

At around the same time our ads started appearing around town and in the papers, we asked members of our community to help us recruit prospective students who otherwise wouldn't hear about our school. Through newsletters, e-mail lists and other internal communication venues, our students, parents and staff were called to action, freshly motivated by "Inspiring Minds" to reach out and tell someone all about our school. The community answered our call, and the Class of 2007 is 60 percent larger than the previous incoming class. What's more, it includes 30 percent more public and secular independent school students.

Carefully crafted and well-designed materials will not only get new people in the door. They also foster a sense of pride among your constituents. Successful advertisements create positive associations between the way people feel when they look at your ad and the way they think about your organization. The vibrancy of Jewish day school deserves to be promoted in the best possible way. If we all work to accentuate the innovation, dynamism and creativity in our schools, our combined efforts will eventually reshape the widespread perception of Jewish day school education. 🌸



The Unique Challenges of Synagogue Marketing

Like many nonprofit organizations, synagogues tend to be stretched thin both in human and financial resources. Their audiences include active members, inactive members and unaffiliated individuals and families, across all demographic and lifecycle stages, with different interests, perceptions and biases (both positive and negative) about Jewish communal life.

What's more, a synagogue rarely has a cohesive sense of its personality — or in marketing terms, its brand. The person answering the telephone makes a different impression than its program staff and educators. The web site uses a different vocabulary and style than the print newsletter. Flyers, announcements and the occasional ad lack clarity and a unified voice.

STAR's challenge to the Synaplex synagogues has been to absorb basic marketing principles, first in the Synaplex Initiative and then in the synagogue as a whole. We began with a more holistic understanding of what marketing is, within the context of furthering the purpose and mission of synagogue life.

"Marketing has been a taboo word in synagogue culture for a long time," notes Rabbi Jonathan Case. "It's something businesses do," he adds, making the very word sound treyf.

Rabbi Case and his Conservative congregation, Temple Beth-El of Poughkeepsie, New York, have started to break the taboo — but gently. As a participant in the Synaplex Initiative of STAR (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal), Temple Beth-El has begun using the traditional tools of marketing — press releases, print ads, professionally designed brochures and posters, giveaways and even a television commercial — to communicate its values and unique programs to an ever-widening audience.

A series of press releases executed over several weeks set the stage for Temple Beth-El to position Synaplex as something new and exciting. Brochures and posters spoke as much about the needs of the audience as about the details of the program. Synaplex planners and volunteers shared a consistent message in their personal contacts with members, non-members and representatives of the media.

The result: an overflowing, exuberant Shabbat celebration, on an otherwise ordinary Saturday. "It's never been so full, with the possible exception of the High Holy Days," says Rabbi Case. "There was something for every age

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Gather the People... Experiments and Experiences in Synagogue Marketing

by **RABBI HAYIM HERRING** and **ROBIN NEIDORF**

group, and they came out for it. Some of the alternative programs, which focused on a theme of 'Body and Soul,' were standing-room-only."

The Synaplex Initiative is one of STAR's flagship programs, designed to help synagogues create a multitude of authentic, diverse Jewish experiences in synagogues on Shabbat. Over the course of a three-year period, eleven synagogues, representing each denomination, receive grant funding and professional expertise to develop, implement, evaluate and sustain Shabbat communal experiences that build on and provide alternatives to traditional prayer.

A significant portion of STAR's grant funding and support is earmarked for marketing and communications. But the first hurdle has been to shift the thinking of synagogue leadership about the nature of marketing itself.

"We're definitely raising some eyebrows," says Rabbi Case. "But we're also seeing the impact. We're able to reach a whole new audience we never reached before."

We then identified three concepts for integrating marketing into synagogue life:

Marketing Isn't Something You Do, It's Who You Are

The taboo surrounding marketing arises from a basic misconception. Many nonprofit organizations think of marketing as crass commercialism. In fact, marketing can be better understood as a coherent expression of an organization's personality, in addition to its opportunities, resources and program offerings.

At Baron Hirsch Synagogue, an Orthodox synagogue in Memphis, Tennessee, many programs already existed prior to the start of the Synaplex Initiative. But by clustering these programs in a single package and then developing the marketing for Synaplex, Rabbi Larry Zierler and his leadership have been able to identify a unifying concept. They ultimately chose "A meaningful Jewish journey." According to Rabbi Zierler, "Synaplex has

Why Emphasize Marketing?

When STAR designed its Synaplex Initiative, it built marketing into the program. Each of the eleven Synaplex synagogues must spend \$10,000 on marketing per year for three years. STAR provides half that amount, and the synagogue must secure the other half.

Through group and one-on-one meetings with Synaplex synagogues, STAR staff and consultants provide education on such topics as:

- Synagogue SWOT — Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Building a marketing plan that is achievable and effective
- Identifying and understanding target markets
- Writing a press release, and getting it in front of the right people
- Cultivating media contacts
- Incorporating web-based communications as an integrated component of marketing

The very nature of the Synaplex Initiative presents additional challenges. Most synagogues concentrate their Shabbat experiences in the realm of prayer (*tefillah*). Synaplex enables congregations to create more participatory communities by offering Jewish experiences in the realms of social and cultural gatherings (*keneset*) and learning (*midrash*) in addition to prayer. Synaplex, with its multi-faceted programs and activities, mirrors the diversity of the American Jewish community.

STAR has developed a detailed brochure, a display poster and a ticket book that Synaplex synagogues can customize to promote their particular offerings. Many of these materials can be found on www.starsynagogue.org.

Since most Synaplex programs were launched around the High Holy Days, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions about the impact of marketing. Still, preliminary observations suggest:

- Synagogue participation increases with robust, professional marketing efforts.
- Synagogues can and should call upon members who are marketing experts to help design and execute their marketing plans.
- Successful marketing creates “buzz” in the community, and further draws participants.

WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING?

Engagement
Community
Study
Spiritual growth
Prayer
Authentic Jewish experiences...

You can find it at a Synaplex synagogue.

Synaplex: Expanding the Many Dimensions of Shabbat



given us the context for making this idea a reality and for communicating the value of it to members and the community.”

It's Not About You, It's About Them.

The most fulfilling synagogue experiences will not succeed unless potential synagogue-goers know of their existence. With limited budgets, synagogues need to use creative, targeted marketing materials.

Most of the marketing education STAR has provided to the Synaplex synagogues can be summed up in a sentence: It's not about *you*, it's about *them*. All effective marketing focuses on the *audience* — the needs, desires, fears and wants of the member or seeker.

Audiences vary by geographic location, stage of life, generation, spiritual direction, education level and all the other factors that make them unique. A synagogue marketing program needs to speak the language of these audiences (sometimes literally, as in the case of Russian or Israeli audiences), achieve press coverage in the publications they are reading, emphasize aspects of synagogue life that *matter* to these individuals, and to do all of this while maintaining the synagogue's own brand integrity.

The practicalities of audience factor into Synaplex marketing in many ways. Rabbi Zierler came to Memphis in the summer of 2003, following many years in Cleveland. In discussing Baron Hirsch's overall Synaplex marketing, he comments on the differences between the two cities. “Memphis is a smaller community, and a highly affiliated community,” he notes. “We don't have the breadth of possibilities in terms of marketing outlets or partnerships that I had previously. We have a local Jewish paper; we *have* to use it as a marketing vehicle, or we simply won't have credibility with our audience here.

“At the same time,” Rabbi Zierler continues,

“We're looking at alternative papers; we're creating partnerships to draw people in; I had a member come to me with the idea of creating an introductory Synaplex multimedia CD we can give to all our families and to others who want to know about the program. We have plans for consumer items, like bumper stickers and magnets — things that people use and handle and see all the time that will keep Synaplex in their minds.”

Creating and Sustaining Relationships

If a marketing campaign pulls in 500 people who never want to return, it is not successful. Ultimately, the purpose of Synaplex is not merely to put people in synagogues but to build and sustain relationships that enrich synagogue life and the Shabbat experience.

Choice of language can be critical. Rabbi Shira Milgrom of Congregation Kol Ami, a Reform synagogue in White Plains, New York, notes, “By structuring a program of Jewish music featuring presentation rather than participation and a dinner that we called ‘candles and quiet conversation’ [subtext: no little kids running around], we were able to bring back a large group of our founding members.”

Significantly, Synaplex synagogues report that advertising — everyone's first thought when it comes to marketing — is not nearly as effective as more hands-on (and lower-cost) forms of marketing. Word-of-mouth, partnerships with other organizations and program delivery can help create an overall “branded” experience that is satisfying to both synagogue and seeker.

“This is now a key area where we're focusing attention,” says Rabbi Case. “We opened with a splash, but now we have to sustain the energy. Now, our marketing focus is: how do we keep communicating, keep working with our members to expand our offerings, keep reaching out in new ways.” ❁

The Jewish marketing discipline differs vastly from marketing Coca Cola, Apple Computers or *The Matrix*. It also differs in many ways from the marketing of other non-profit causes — because it's about Jewish life. In their unique way, the

Marketing the Jewish Future

by GARY WEXLER

Jewish people push overstuffed baskets of marketing challenges, with issues and sensitivities spilling over the sides.

Today, millions of dollars are spent on marketing Jewish issues, causes and programs. Much of that money is being wasted. Few know how to use marketing in the Jewish world to produce results.

Jewish marketing is both an intellectual and a spiritual challenge. Our future depends upon us doing it right. As committed Jews, we must become sophisticated, savvy marketers, building a body of marketing thought, practice and knowledge specific for our community.

There are multiple nuances to understand when applying marketing to the Jewish world.

Jewish marketing has very specific goals.

A brochure is not a goal. Neither is an ad, a video, a direct mail piece or a public relations story that reaches all the wrong audiences. Marketing to *help* produce fundraising results is a goal. Marketing to *help* find either students, participants in events, or members for a Jewish institution is a goal. Marketing to *help* advocate a position in order to change community opinion is a goal. How you reach these goals through marketing becomes your marketing plan. Unfortunately, most Jewish organizations become so consumed by the strategies and tactics that they lose sight of their goals — if they ever recognized them in the first place.

Jewish marketing must involve collaboration and community organizing.

For marketing expenditures to produce results in Jewish life, the plans must call for

strategies that product marketing does not — an intense amount of community collaboration and community organizing. Collaboration means that fundraising, programming and advocacy plans must be wrapped around marketing plans like two strands of DNA.

Community professional and lay leaders should no longer be working without marketers and a professional marketing strategy.

Community organizing must also become a strategy of marketing. Marketers must work with professionals and lay activists to identify thought-leaders within either professional, social or interest groups. These leaders — be they rabbis, business leaders, authors, rock stars, or simply the most popular mother among the parents in

the day school — must be cultivated. Their involvement is more important than any brochure or ad we can produce.

Jewish marketing must speak to the Jewish soul.

Marketing for Jewish life has to speak soul to soul, from the soul of the Jewish community to the Jewish soul of the individual.

This means that the marketing messages cannot dance on the surface. Jews make decisions in Jewish life from the depth of their souls, more than from their intellect. Marketing from the soul does not mean *haimish* marketing images. Synagogues and many other Jewish institutions believe that if they project *haimish*, they have accomplished their mission. *Haimish* images and Yiddish phrases in marketing are killing us as a community. They prevent us from creating images that speak broadly, powerfully, with diversity and professionalism, cultivating the perception of a dynamic, sophisticated, relevant Jewish world. *Haimish* does not speak to a new generation. In fact, it turns them off.

Jewish marketing must involve process.

The Jewish world is built on organizational process, involving the interaction and decision-making of professionals and lay people. There must be a process to educate the organization as to what Jewish marketing is and what their marketing issues are. There must be a workable approval process while the marketing is in creation. And there must be an ongoing training and evaluation process when the marketing finally begins to be implemented. Marketing, when done well, will create a process of organizational change, which occurs over several years.

The Macro Issue of Marketing

We dabble in marketing. We keep testing the waters with one toe, fearful of total immersion. We engage marketing on a temporary project basis, rather than on a consistent basis with a serious budget from year to year. As a result of dabbling, we have, at best, dabbling results.

Why are we not allocating the appropriate budgets? Why are we not making marketing the central topic of conferences and General Assemblies? Why are we not training our professionals in a serious, ongoing manner? Why are we not funding serious marketing research and evaluation?

It is time to un-dabble and get serious.

Our society is changing. Without powerful, intelligent and creative marketing, our community will have little hope of flourishing.

How do we un-dabble and begin to pursue this necessity in earnest? By moving beyond the small ideas and investigating the big idea.

We need to challenge the status quo by considering the creation of a worldwide Jewish marketing institute. Such an institute would manifest a new era in Jewish life. It would be a creative center generating ideas,

strategies and images. It would be the center for the creation of Jewish marketing, marketing research and marketing training. It would have an Israeli component for the marketing of Israel to both the Jewish world and the world at large. The marketing institute would signal to everyone a new phase in Jewish life.

This institute would be responsible for exploring a massive, trans-organizational Jewish awareness campaign. It would not be easy. But we have to move beyond the communal paralysis we suffer at the hands of our own crippling criticism. By creating a Jewish awareness campaign, in very public spaces, we would reach Jews who are not affiliated with our synagogues and communal organizations. If it is carried out expertly, consistently and with ongoing

commitment, such a campaign would create a framework of awareness that would help all Jewish organizations.

Marketing for the Jewish world will produce an additional outcome, perhaps the most important one. It will force us to look at our Jewish offerings and determine if they are really good enough for us to spend the money on marketing. Marketing will push us to be better, to be excellent. After all, if our offerings are not superlative, then no matter how much money we spend on marketing, we will have very few takers. ✿

As committed
Jews, we must
become
sophisticated,
savvy marketers,
building
a body of
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thought,
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and knowledge
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for our
community.

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Women participate in Jewish life much more readily than men, yet men lead in far greater numbers. The statistics are stunning — and should be a cause for communal soul-searching and action.

If the Jewish community hopes to realize its potential, it must address two crucial questions: “How do we get more boys and men to be participants in the community?” and “How do we get more girls and women to be leaders in the community?”

The dilemma is easy to state, harder to solve. Women participate in Jewish life much more readily than men, yet men lead in far greater numbers. The statistics are stunning (see page 12). They should be a cause for communal soul-searching and action.

“Social marketing” provides one path-

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Male/Female Marketing: The Challenges to the Jewish Community

BY SALLY GOTTESMAN

way to address the imbalance. According to marketing management expert Philip Kotler, “Social marketing differs from other areas of marketing only with respect to the objectives of the marketer and his or her organization. Social marketing seeks to influence *social behaviors* not to benefit the marketer but *to benefit the target audience and the general society.*” (*Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*, Prentice Hall, 1991)

The Jewish community is engaged in large-scale social marketing. Like good marketers, we need to address our customers’ needs. We must put aside denial, inertia and excuses and take on the challenge of nurturing a vibrant community with equal participation and equal leadership.

Marketing to Advance Girls’ and Women’s Leadership

In the past five years, target-marketed educational programs and communication strategies have been tested to advance women leaders.

Bat-mitzvah aged girls, no matter their denomination or socio-economic class, find it a challenge to maintain self-esteem, a critical component of leadership. This phenomenon, widely acknowledged in the secular community, went largely unaddressed in the Jewish community until the development of *Kolot’s Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* — a monthly program designed to foster self-esteem, develop leadership and strengthen Jewish identity in girls.

Kolot’s Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!

American Jewish INVOLVEMENT

- Over 65 percent of the participants in Jewish youth groups are girls.
- Interfaith marriage is lower for women than men.
- Being Jewish is “very important” in the lives of 60 percent of Jewish women and 40 percent of Jewish men.

successfully employs two social marketing strategies. First, the program’s image and value are positioned so that the customer understands and appreciates what the program stands for. As Deborah Meyer, Kolot’s Managing Director, explains, “The program name clearly says to girls: You are who we care about as people and as Jews, and Rosh Hodesh is a gift from the Jewish community to you.” The name gives girls ownership of the program, letting them say to the Jewish community, “this is ours!”

A second key factor in the success of the program was the careful market research and educational testing that informed its design. Research shows that Jewish youth programs succeed if they consider developmental differences among adolescents of different age groups and involve adolescents in planning and decision-making.

And it works. In 2003, the second year of national program replication, there were 80 groups nationwide. Program sites range from Orthodox synagogues to non-denominational, Russian speaking JCCs. Kolot has been able to interest girls in the program by leveraging the reasons adolescents participate in Jewish-sponsored activities, such as providing opportunities to hang out with friends, helping youth to meet new people and helping participants to feel welcome.

Turning those girls into leaders requires another kind of marketing savvy: enabling them to picture themselves in the roles. Role models are the key to leadership development, yet when one strolls the halls of most Jewish institutions, there are many pictures of “dead white men” but a dearth of images of women. Thus, girls as well as boys believe they have few women to emulate. The **Jewish Women’s Archive** (JWA), in association with **Ma’yan**, undertook a low-cost communications strategy to address this situation.

Every year for five years, JWA designed and distributed three “Women of Valor” posters, which they suggested be framed and hung on the walls. The colorful posters featured the stories of a total of sixteen women—athletes, entrepreneurs, scientists,

American Jewish LEADERSHIP

- Not a single woman serves as the chief executive at the top 20 Federations.
- Men occupy the premier executive leadership roles in every national Jewish organization addressing renaissance and renewal.
- The rabbinical schools, rabbinical organizations, and synagogue umbrellas of each denomination are all run by men.

and politicians— each of whom overcame barriers to transform a community. JWA achieved an extraordinary level of market penetration: 4,000 schools, JCCs, Hillels, Federations and synagogues have used the posters, and, in many cases, also used the educational materials that accompanied them. JWA not only influenced the classroom, but diversified the image of Jewish role models for hundreds of thousands of people who walk through these institutions.

Marketing to Address Boys’ and Men’s Participation

What about boys and men? Ironically, but perhaps not surprisingly, this is one of the most common questions asked of people involved in marketing *Kolot’s Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* and JWA’s “Women of Valor” posters. Unfortunately, those asking the questions are generally not inquiring about how to address the different needs of the Jewish community in relation to boys and men. In the case of boys and men, the issue is not years of exclusion from leadership, but rather the new phenomenon of waning identification and participation.

Kolot, which develops provocative new ways to engage women and men in Judaism, is at the beginning of a process to address this question in a systematic way. Until now, no one has named the issue as an overarching one. Indeed, most organizations thought about the lack of boys’ and men’s participation as their particular problem to solve — or ignore — on their own, rather than one the Jewish community might address as an overall phenomenon.

In addition to the traditional synagogue-based brotherhoods, here are a few techniques that have helped encourage boys and men to participate:

- **Improve the quality of sports at camps and schools.** Jewish girls and boys participate in almost equal percentages in sports and athletics. Nevertheless, when looking at a Jewish camp or school, boys and their parents express greater

concern than girls and their parents about the sports facilities. “My son won’t attend a camp where they play softball rather than baseball” is a common sentiment and an accurate description of the reality. Thus, Jewish camps and schools could market to boys if they improved their sports programs.

- **Create and market short-term opportunities to participate.** “Mitzvah days” for boys, or for fathers and sons, was suggested on the basis of two ideas: first, that teenage boys respond to those tasks that provide them a direct reward; second, that boys and men say they are interested in social justice issues. Thus, a day in which a room is painted or a park is cleaned provides an immediate reward and a social action experience. “Mitzvah days” or “JCC Works Days” and other short-term projects that fulfill these objectives and are sponsored by the Jewish community — such as father-son weekends offered by Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute, as well as by other Jewish camps and JCCs — may be effective techniques to facilitate boys’ and men’s participation.
 - **Put secular activities into Jewish institutions.** Many boys and men are looking for participatory experiences, but these activities may be wholly secular in nature until a Jewish institution offers them. An example is a group for single men to discuss relationship issues at a synagogue. Led by a rabbi/therapist, this group discusses a secular topic, but it also allows for a Jewish exploration of this issue. Another example is Boy Scout troops. While some synagogues sponsor scout troops so that *Shabbat*-observant children can participate, Boy Scout activities can also be an opportunity to build Jewish community around something boys may already be inclined to do. Boy Scouts might be more appealing than Jewish youth groups, which are more religious or ideologically particular, or not as focused on camping and sports.
- Philip Kotler has written, “[Social marketers] deal with sensitive, hard-to-research issues, invisible benefits or benefits to third parties that are difficult to portray and that are supposed to lead to long-term change.” (*Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*, Prentice Hall, 1991) It would be to the Jewish community’s benefit — and to the benefit of individual Jewish boys and girls, women and men — if we take this challenge and work to change the image and reality of what both women and men can contribute — by leading and participating — in the Jewish community. 🌸

The 411

Everything You Want to Know About Reaching Young Adults

by DEBORAH MOHILE

They hang out at their cribs, where they IM with their dawgs. They dress in phat clothes and lots of bling bling. They think Ludacris is off the hook. They think you are wack if you are not down with Ali G. Who are these people? They are the future of the Jewish community. And while they don't necessarily talk about cribs and bling bling on a daily basis, they know a lot more about MTV, ESPN and the NBA than they do about the JCC, UJA and the UAHC.

To say that the melting pot of America has accepted Jews would be an understatement. The current generation of 18- to 30-year-old Jews enjoys access to employment, education, social status and celebrity that their ancestors could never imagine as they fled deteriorating conditions in Europe. Regardless of the intermarriage rate, which seems to vary depending on the survey, the fact that non-Jews are marrying Jews at all speaks to the premium most Americans have placed on tolerance, understanding and multiculturalism.

Today, young Jews behave much like their non-Jewish peers. Reaching out to them calls for the same techniques used to reach the larger cohort of twenty somethings, which means Jewish organizations must compete with multiple companies that have enormous marketing budgets and who are selling everything from cell phones to sneakers, credit cards and cars. You know, things that young people want. So how do we market Jewish offerings to this age group?

You can't sell sand to a camel

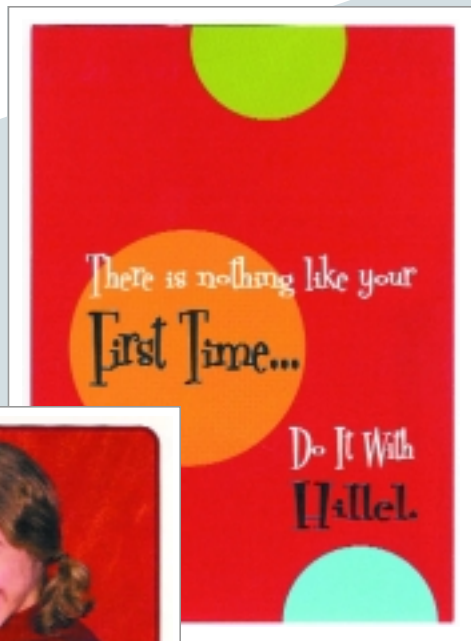
Any company will tell you that no matter how good the marketing may be, a product must be perceived as something the consumer

wants or needs. I would argue that most young adults feel that they neither want nor need much in the way of Judaism at this point in their lives. This presents a challenge for Jewish organizations to convince young adults that they need or want Judaism. Unfortunately, most of the Jewish community has missed the boat. At a time when young adults are learning about life, love, jobs, school and their talents all on their own, Judaism is rarely packaged as something to experience, learn and grow in as an adult.

For some, the Judaism of their past may be Sunday school, Hebrew lessons, youth group conventions or Passover seders at home. The Judaism of their parents may include Hadassah meetings, Temple brotherhood or going to Purim carnivals with the kids. Many may have even fewer connections to the Jewish people.

Only a handful of Jewish organizations and philanthropists have made this age group a priority. Too old for youth groups and too young to give money, this sandwich generation may have no interest in donating any future earnings to a community they have thinner ties with every year. So the need to reach this audience is an existential one for organizations that wish to maintain or grow their memberships. Times have changed; the standard offerings of poached salmon dinners and *shabbatonim* may not work with young adults.

Deborah Mohile is Director of Communications for birthright israel.



The "First Time" campaign is one example of diverse marketing efforts by Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life for birthright israel trips.

In order to reach young adults, you must speak their language, go where they are and give them (or convince them of) what they want.



Birthright israel used the “circumcision” advertisement in Rolling Stone magazine during the birthright launch in 1999. The condom campaign was devised by Eddie Cohen and Netta Ritter, two students at the University of California San Diego.



Depending upon the community, successful programs can range from community service to networking events; from beginners' classes on Jewish holidays to Jewish views on sexuality, dating and marriage; and from outdoor activities to Jewish film screenings or art exhibitions. Partner with local bars, coffee houses, book stores, art galleries, movie theaters, pool halls and other locations that are appealing venues in order to present Jewish culture in a variety of settings. Always allow non-members and other guests to attend, and always give the option of just showing up for those who don't RSVP in advance — the best problem you should have is an overflowing room! Encourage a more personal touch: ask young leaders to adopt newcomers by following up with phone calls and invitations to other events. Above all, include time in your programs for socializing, one of the main motivators for this age group.

With a few lessons from the private sector, Hillel, birthright israel, Aish HaTorah and New York City's Makor have all made inroads with this crowd with tailored programs and targeted marketing.

The cheat sheet

Assuming that your organization has surmounted the issue of what you are offering, marketing that program is your next hurdle. If you or your marketing professional cannot translate the opening of this essay, you may want to consider bringing in reinforcements. As with secular non-profits, Jewish non-profits may need to start operating like private companies in certain ways.

MARKET RESEARCH: either formal or informal focus groups with a sample of your target audience can save money in the long run if your program or marketing ideas need adjustment.

BRAND AWARENESS AND PEER-TO-PEER MARKETING: even the most consumed products in the world continue to run advertisements at a staggering rate. For non-profits, brand awareness means keeping positive word of mouth alive, getting good coverage in local papers and perhaps even having a local 'poster child' (of the same demographic you are trying to reach) who will take charge of circulating positive emails, phone calls and internet postings about your organization.

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA: if and when you resort to paid advertisements, be sensitive to the fact that most young adults are not reading their parents' newspapers. Seek out student papers, alternative/urban weeklies and youth oriented press. Many youth marketing firms have postal and email address databases that can be segmented into several different categories, including age, gender, religion, location and university. These lists can be purchased for one-time mailings (postal or email) as well as for longer terms. In addition, online and email advertising can be more specific, better tracked and less expensive. In all cases, be specific about the audience you are trying to reach.

AGE APPROPRIATE MATERIALS: humor, bright colors, smiling faces and a fresh design will test best with this age group. Hire a young designer, preferably as young as your audience, and pick a color scheme, font, look and logo that you will adhere to throughout your marketing campaign. Don't try to do too much on any one piece; convey only one message or call to action unless you are creating a brochure. Again, test a draft of your materials before printing so that adjustments can be made. Gauge your community and decide if you can get away with a two-color flyer or, if you have to compete with lots of slick advertisements, if you should pool your resources on a four-color poster that can be printed in large quantities to save money.

In order to reach young adults, you must speak their language, go where they are and give them (or convince them of) what they want. Birthright israel has made huge leaps forward with this age group by offering a quality, age-appropriate product, perpetuating positive word-of-mouth and utilizing targeted, peer-led marketing. With some planning, testing and human resources, your organization can reach further into this cohort and help secure a vibrant Jewish future in North America. 🌸

Digging Deep & Reaching Out

Marketing Jewish Community to New Parents

by BILL ROBINSON

The fabric of Jewish parenting has been completely transformed over the last two generations. While families consisting of two working parents have become the norm, the mutual support network of the extended family has frayed. In addition, new parents, who generally did not watch their cousins or their parents' younger siblings raise children, have grown up with a lack of Jewish parenting knowledge.

Within this changed landscape, entering into parenthood has become arguably the most transformative time of a person's life. When a couple approaches the birth of their child, questions of religious identity and practice may be raised for the first time. Will we have a religious ceremony to welcome our new baby into the community? What type of learning opportunities will we give our child, from the Jewish stories we tell her to the pre-school she attends? How will we celebrate Shabbat and the holidays?

New parents are clamoring for services and information. Typically, they turn to professional child care services while they are at work. Instead of turning to their parents for advice, more often they seek help from parenting classes offered by hospitals or they sit down with mugs of coffee and a stack of books at Barnes & Noble. Yet, they search with uncertainty, not knowing exactly what they want for their children and themselves. Moreover, many parents are exploring not only ways to raise their children, but also ways to nurture a Jewish identity. Instead of letting them walk alone into hospitals and Barnes & Noble bookstores, we should use this opportunity to walk with them along the path to a rich and meaningful Jewish communal life.

During this precious period, we cannot focus our marketing on advertising and free sample offerings with the primary goal of increasing program attendance or institutional membership. We need to view mar-

keting primarily as a method of building relationships and cultivating community.

When new parents first receive a basket or a packet of information, does it tell them about products and programs from which they can choose, or does it offer them an opportunity to belong? Does it

resemble the typical container of small goodies and coupons? Or does it tell the receiver that we care enough about you as a fellow Jew that we are digging deep into our pockets to assist you (for example, with free classes on Jewish parenting)? Wouldn't it be amazing if the first thing parents receive from the Jewish community is not a request for funds, but a substantial voucher toward a Jewish early childhood program or a down payment on a future trip to Israel — to use Michael Steinhardt's language, a Newborn Gift? This would create an entirely different relationship between new parents and the community.

When we invite new parents to come and see our programs, how much thinking and preparation actually goes into crafting that experience? We must begin by asking what new parents and their children see, hear and feel when they walk into our JCCs, congregations and early childhood programs. Is there someone to greet them whose primary responsibility is to make them feel at home and answer their questions? Is the entry space a comfortable, inviting and Jewishly rich place for parents and their children to observe, chat and play for a couple of hours? We must learn from Starbucks and Barnes & Noble that it is not really about coffee and books, and thus not about yoga or birthing information. It is about creating Jewish public spaces where new parents will want to congregate.

The basket or visit is just an opening to a deeper relationship that brings the Jewish community into new parents' homes, and new parents into the homes of the community. Chabad learned this lesson long ago. Imagine a community where for every newborn child, someone brought over food to that family's home and then offered to do

some shopping for them. Imagine if you invited this family and all visiting relatives to celebrate the birth of their child with your congregation (yes, on the bima) — and never discuss membership with them. What a difference that would make in their view of what being Jewish is all about!

We must not let our preoccupations with increasing membership and serving only our members hinder us from reaching out to new parents at the most opportune time and without hidden agendas. Too often, programs for new parents and their children are viewed as money-makers or membership enticements, not as valuable in their own right. Moreover, what if clergy regularly stopped by the Jewish parents of a newborn regardless of membership? This would be an incredibly uplifting and rejuvenating change not only for the parents but for the clergy — instead of sharing mainly grief and sadness, they would be sharing the joy of new life every week.

By offering a substantial Newborn Gift, by calling and visiting at the hospital, by



bringing over food and inviting new parents to celebrate in our congregations, we weave a web of meaningful interactions that will bind new parents to Jewish life as valued members of our community. This involves moving from an institutional culture of asking to one of giving, from a focus on grief to an emphasis on joy, from selling programs to hosting others in our homes, and from working as professionals to acting as family.

Of course, we will continue to market our information and services (books and coffee), but we will also offer family relations, welcoming homes and a sense of shared destiny. This, after all, is the purpose of marketing Jewish offerings. By using these strategies to reposition the Jewish community, we will attract more new parents to our programs and institutions. Just as important, we will also help them to develop deep attachments to Judaism that will make them customers for life. ❁

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ickily, effective marketing and effective
 programming both begin with the same
 step: understanding your audience. Who
 are you trying to reach? Why are you
 trying to reach them? And, what are you
 offering? Marketing can help attract
 people to your program, but if you exaggerate, and
 the participants come away disappointed, it becomes
 another negative contact with the community. Even if
 your program is great, and you engage many
 unaffiliated Jews in Jewish activity, if you fail to
 move them into deeper engagement with the community
 (or at least offer some kind of "next step"), it's not
 successful outreach.

— PAUL GOLIN

