

*Compliments of Your Technical Communication Experts at Freund Associates***NJIT**

New Jersey Institute of Technology

Greetings from all of us at Freund Associates! We hope you're having a productive spring by avoiding the avalanche of writing chores you are either too busy or too understaffed to handle yourself. Let Freund Associates help. We have the expertise and the resources to manage technical writing and communication projects for companies of all sizes. Over the past several months we've been privileged to work with the New Jersey Institute of Technology's Enterprise Development Center, an incubator of more than 60 start-up companies, many of whom require brochures and other collateral to get their message to their markets. This issue of Ask Dr. Freund will answer some of the questions we've received from these companies.

Question 1:

My company is just getting started. I know I need a brochure, a web site, and some logo or image to create an identity and begin my marketing campaign. But I have a very limited budget and even fewer technical writing skills. Right now, the thought of planning, designing and producing all of this is overwhelming. What do I do first? And how much will it cost?

...A one-page, two-sided product sheet can be professionally written, designed and printed relatively inexpensively, often for less than \$3,000.

Question 2:

I know the tremendous benefits my product will provide my future customers, but I have never written them down in a way that sounds very convincing. Everything is in my head! How do I get something onto paper so that everyone else, including my employees, can begin to share my excitement?

...Our solution is a Planning Brief, a step-by-step, question and answer document that helps us get the information we need to craft your unique value proposition.

A: While many advertising and marketing companies begin by developing a logo and some promotional materials to support and promote it, many start-ups simply do not have the budget to afford such a costly undertaking. Fees for this kind of "creative" work can quickly run into tens of thousands of dollars. Before you are even able to develop a brand, you have to know who you are, what you do, and how you will tell your prospective customers why yours is the company that will meet their needs. This usually begins with a tri-fold brochure or something as simple as a one-page, two-sided product sheet, which can be professionally written, designed and printed relatively inexpensively, often for less than \$3,000.

A: Freund Associates can help with a proven method of extracting information from you and anyone else in your company. Our solution is a Planning Brief, a step-by-step, question and answer document that helps us get the information we need to craft your unique value proposition. We begin by asking how the brochure or document will be used. At trade shows, as part of a direct mail package, or something that can be displayed at the local Chamber of Commerce? Then we need to know about your audience. Domestic or international? Technical or general? Of course, we need to know about your product or service and its key benefits to your future customers. We'll also ask about your company, your competition and your market assessment for your product or service. Once we have all this information, we can go to work writing your brochure or product sheet.

Question 3:

But what about graphic design? I need more than black words on a white page, don't I? And what about that logo that will get my company noticed?

... You will be surprised and impressed at what can be done by simply using fonts and colors with your company name.

Question 4:

What about printing the finished piece? I'm afraid I'll have to spend a fortune getting my product sheets printed only to throw many of them away when my company or product information changes.

... Digital printing can be done quickly and affordably, while allowing you to make easy revisions if your company or product information changes.

Finished products:
Two product sheets
for two companies in
NJIT's incubator.

A: As a new company, you don't necessarily need the eye-catching, intricate images used by international conglomerates or other companies who can afford to retain high-priced ad agencies. You will be surprised and impressed at what can be done by simply using fonts and colors with your company name. Our graphic designers can help you choose appropriate colors, if you don't already have them. They can also ensure that your new "look" will be consistent with other marketing and promotional materials you may wish to create, including your web site. Photographs or other images of your product can also enhance your professional image and improve your chances of recognition...and success.

A: True, you may end up trashing many of your printed pieces before you get to use them all, but only if you use traditional offset printing, whose economies of scale kick in after you have thousands of pieces printed. This method is wasteful and unnecessary for many new companies. Freund Associates recommends the wonderful flexibility of digital printing, which allows you to print as many or as few pieces you need, in remarkably crisp, 4-color splendor. Digital printing can be done quickly and affordably, while allowing you to make easy revisions if your company or product information changes (which it probably will), without having to throw away thousands of offset-printed pieces.



Question 5:

What about an Internet presence? Since I've started, I've only been using a Home Page with little more than basic product and contact info. I plan on adding pages as my company and budget grows. Any suggestions?

... If you've already done a brochure or product sheet, Freund Associates has virtually all the information and design elements needed to create your web site.

A: If you are a technology company with a focus on global marketing, then you will certainly want to invest in a professionally written web site, one that is strategically designed for search engine optimization. Good news! If you've already done a brochure or product sheet, Freund Associates has virtually all the information and design elements needed to create your web site. We would start with a site map and design navigation that will make your site a pleasure to visit. Generally speaking, an 8-page web site can cost less than \$4,000, assuming much of the information and style is consistent with your brochure or product sheet. The cost will rise if you want to build in e-commerce capabilities, add music or flash, or purchase Customer Management Tools, which can allow you to write and distribute newsletters and make changes and updates to your site.