

# connect

ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

MAY/JUNE 2021

## GROWING ROOTS

DEEP CULTURAL LEADERSHIP RESULTS IN SUCCESS





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# NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

**S**eeking truth has seemed a bit elusive these days. We hear so many messages from so many different players that we never know what is fact or fiction. As digital noise overwhelms consumers, many marketers are realizing that real truth exists within us and is unique to each person.

Technology is an unstoppable force that is not likely to be regulated at the pace that it evolves in the market. While there are remarkable innovations in healthcare, transportation, and construction, we must make technology serve us, rather than us becoming its servant. When we flip the digital script we can seek our own truth and our own prosperity.

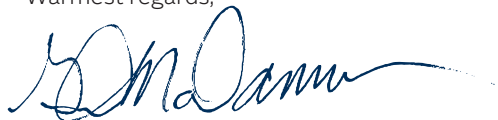
Success, like truth, is the peace of mind that results from giving our all, and being confident that we put forth our best efforts. Keep in mind, though, that not every successful person has significance, but every person of significance is successful. Success is something we define for ourselves and significance is the view of your brand that is held by others.

The reality is that today's marketers have a remarkable opportunity if they realize how they can help others with accomplishment, which is usually a derivation of their truth. In other words, success is all about getting and significance is about giving. Brands that strive for success are likely doing things for themselves, while brands that strive for significance are focused on serving others.

In our latest issue, we hope to provide some truth serum of our own. The cover article, "Growing Roots," reminds us all that building deep cultural roots is necessary in order to connect with our clients. And our second feature, "The Healing Power of Print," discusses the fact that print will play an enormous role in customer engagement and filling the emotional gap that exists today. Print provides something that we can touch in a touchless world, and engages all of our senses.

We hope you enjoy the issue and wish you success and significance. And that's the truth.

Warmest regards,



Gina M. Danner, CEO



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**TODAY'S MARKETERS HAVE A REMARKABLE OPPORTUNITY IF THEY REALIZE HOW THEY CAN HELP OTHERS WITH ACCOMPLISHMENT, WHICH IS USUALLY A DERIVATION OF THEIR TRUTH.**

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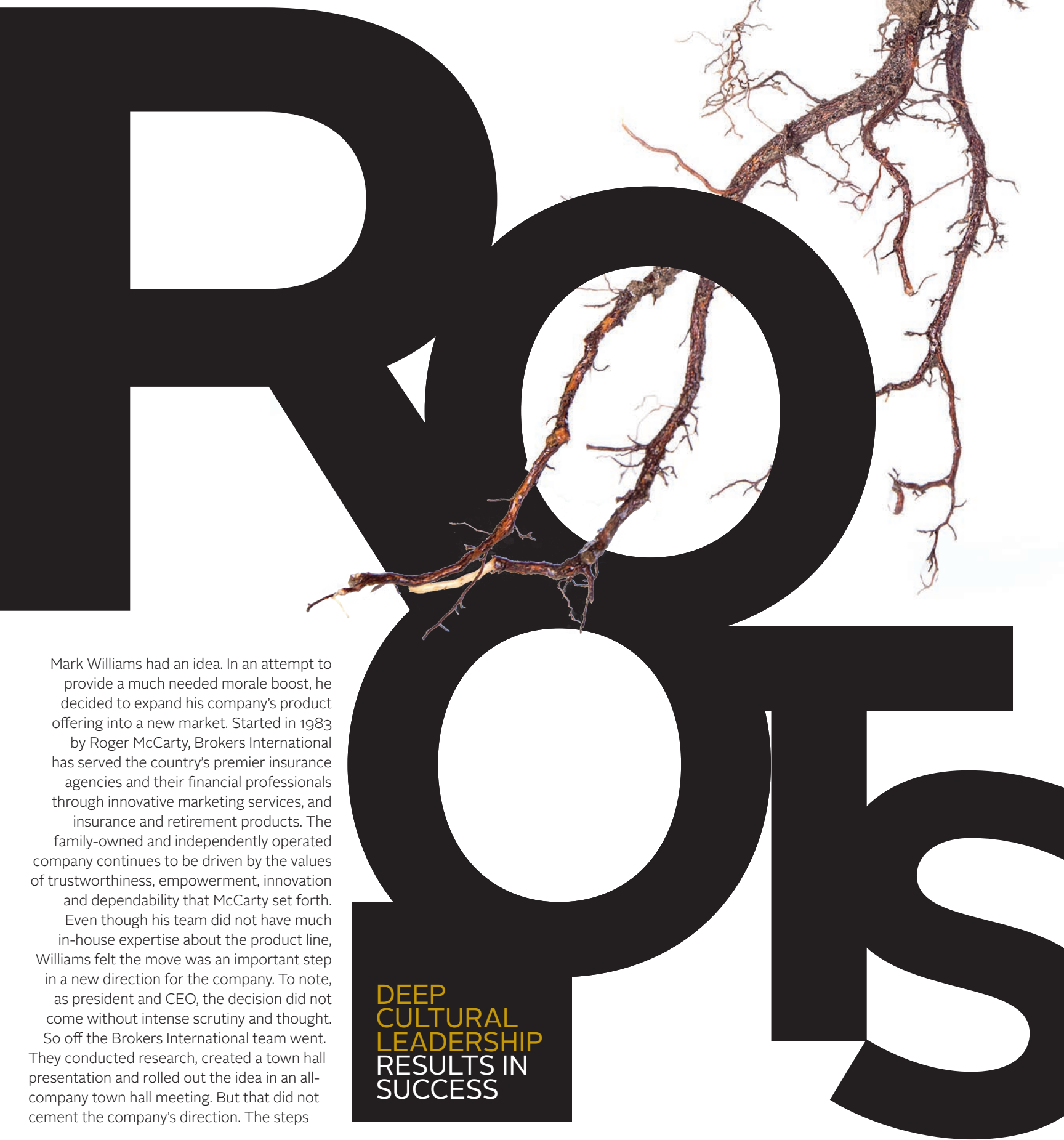
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# GROWING



Mark Williams had an idea. In an attempt to provide a much needed morale boost, he decided to expand his company's product offering into a new market. Started in 1983 by Roger McCarty, Brokers International has served the country's premier insurance agencies and their financial professionals through innovative marketing services, and insurance and retirement products. The family-owned and independently operated company continues to be driven by the values of trustworthiness, empowerment, innovation and dependability that McCarty set forth.

Even though his team did not have much in-house expertise about the product line, Williams felt the move was an important step in a new direction for the company. To note, as president and CEO, the decision did not come without intense scrutiny and thought. So off the Brokers International team went. They conducted research, created a town hall presentation and rolled out the idea in an all-company town hall meeting. But that did not cement the company's direction. The steps

**DEEP  
CULTURAL  
LEADERSHIP  
RESULTS IN  
SUCCESS**



**THE MORE WE CAN OFFER OUR EMPLOYEES THE ABILITY TO VOICE THEIR OPINIONS ON PROJECTS, PROCEDURES, COMPANY GOALS AND INITIATIVES, THE MORE THE ENTIRE COMPANY ‘BUYS INTO’ THE VISION AND WORKS FOR A COMMON OUTCOME.”**

**— MARK WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT & CEO,  
BROKERS INTERNATIONAL**

simply laid out the foundation for the expansion, along with supporting theories of why, when and how. Each member of the Brokers’ team was expected to provide their thoughts and opinions on the idea.

“It was a great exercise,” Williams recalls. “We took great notes and learned how several different demographic groups from within our own 115-employee base viewed the product and the way it is perceived in the marketplace. We compiled the comments and feedback, built an even stronger case and re-presented it to the company. Both the new expansion and the process we went through to make the decision were very well received.”

But something else happened—something that Williams had privately hoped would take hold. People loved the collaboration aspect. They were driven by the fact that their voices were heard. Win or lose, they were all invested in how the company was entering the new space. “It

created a much-needed boost to morale and got people feeling like a team again with one more common goal.”

As the sixth largest company in its space, Brokers International’s mission is to continue that climb up the ladder. With a goal to serve at least 10% more customers than it did the year before, the expansion plan was a unified attempt at hitting its mark. It is just the kind of exercise that Williams says captures all facets of its company’s core values: Customer Service (Vow to wow); Integrity (Do the right thing); Work Ethic (Get it done); and Teamwork (Less me and more we).

“Each of the values represent a part of what I stand for in my professional life,” Williams says. “Taken separately, each of our core values represents the way I would like to be treated as a customer, employee, vendor or contractor.”

From a cultural standpoint, it is Williams’ responsibility to maintain the vision mindset

that McCarty set for every employee who honors the Brokers International code. For example, each year the company conducts an employee culture survey. As part of that survey, it asks every employee directly, “Do our current core values express the values of the company? If no, please describe how they differ.” It also asks if the core values need to change—and if so, how?

In addition, the hiring and employment process is aligned to the core values, which includes a Rewards and Recognition program that enables employees to nominate their peers, managers or vendors for public recognition. The nominations must be aligned to one of their core values. “I am a firm believer in collaboration,” Williams says. “The more we can offer our employees the ability to voice their opinions on projects, procedures, company goals and initiatives, the more the entire company ‘buys into’ the vision and works for a common outcome.” ■



# LEAD. FOLLOW. OR...

I

n his latest book, “You Lead: How Being Yourself Makes You A Better Leader,” award-winning author, podcast host and thought leader Minter Dial argues that business leaders deliver superior results, communities of engagement both inside and outside of the company and true values-driven success when they are themselves and come across as genuine.

Dial says the book delivers a call to arms mindset into the leadership process—one that relies on bringing one’s whole self into the process and engaging in human ways. If leaders can stop pretending to be who they are not and play on their uniqueness and strengths, they will enable others to do the same—culminating in a reignition of their company’s culture of authenticity and purpose.

“People tend to gravitate toward quick solutions and practical tips,” says Dial, who worked as a top executive at L’Oréal,

where he was a member of the worldwide Executive Committee for the Professional Products Division. “I am more inclined to look at teaching people to fish, rather than directly handing over a fish to the hungry. There is a school of thought that a leader is responsible for injecting energy and motivating the team. But the ability to rally the

troops time and again correlates to the groundwork established in advance.”

The secret sauce that Dial has been applying during these difficult times is

to encourage meaningful conversations and to spread the power of deep listening. To do this, he runs Empathy Circles—structured dialogues that not

only give people the ability to listen, but afford them to meet in a novel way that ignites energy. “At the end of the day, each person must be responsible for generating his or her own energy.”

As a Hispanic and architect in an industry where only a small percentage of executives are women, Maria Guerra-Stoll understands the important part cultural awareness plays in selling a message. The CEO of GSB Architects works hard to make sure this awareness is prevalent in the healthcare facilities she helps design, including making sure there is multilingual signage, and that her designs use color palettes that make people of various backgrounds feel welcome.

“I practice a multicultural approach to all clients that I serve,” Guerra-Stoll says.

For example, she hires multicultural employees who can bring a variety of perspectives, styles and varied expertise to the design process. She also works closely with her clients to get to know the audiences she is designing for. “By validating my recommendations and designs with a focus group of various patients with varied backgrounds, we make the process more concise and keep everything on point.”

Dial says that the challenge of keeping everyone on board with a company’s mission is that it is easy to get knocked off course. The degree of difficulty also varies according to the governance model in place. “The real key to keeping the sense of purpose on track is to make sure that each employee is doing things that matter to them, especially when the environment is challenging like it is now. It’s important to keep an eye on everyone’s energy levels. You must make room and time to dial into each person’s context and feelings, and to check in on how they feel and what is meaningful.”

It is just part of the strategy that keeps everyone and everything on the same page and drives your success forward.





## PRINT'S ROLE IN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND FILLING THE EMOTIONAL GAP

**IN MAY 2020**, Lidl quietly opened a new location in Suwanee, Georgia. The store, part of an aggressive expansion for the German discount supermarket chain, became the 100th location in the U.S. But because the pandemic was just hitting its stride, a number of extra precautionary safety measures meant there would be no ribbon-cutting ceremony—no fanfare.

With seven more stores opening in the Peach State alone last year, Lidl was making good on its promise to build new stores, create job opportunities and expand its network of distribution centers to even more customers in the years ahead. These days, when more people than ever are seeking value, Lidl's mission to move from a relatively small player to a more prominent one remains priority number one. This year, it plans to open 50 new stores.

“WITH PRINT, YOU GET THAT SUBTLE SENSE OF CONTROL THAT HELPS CONSU

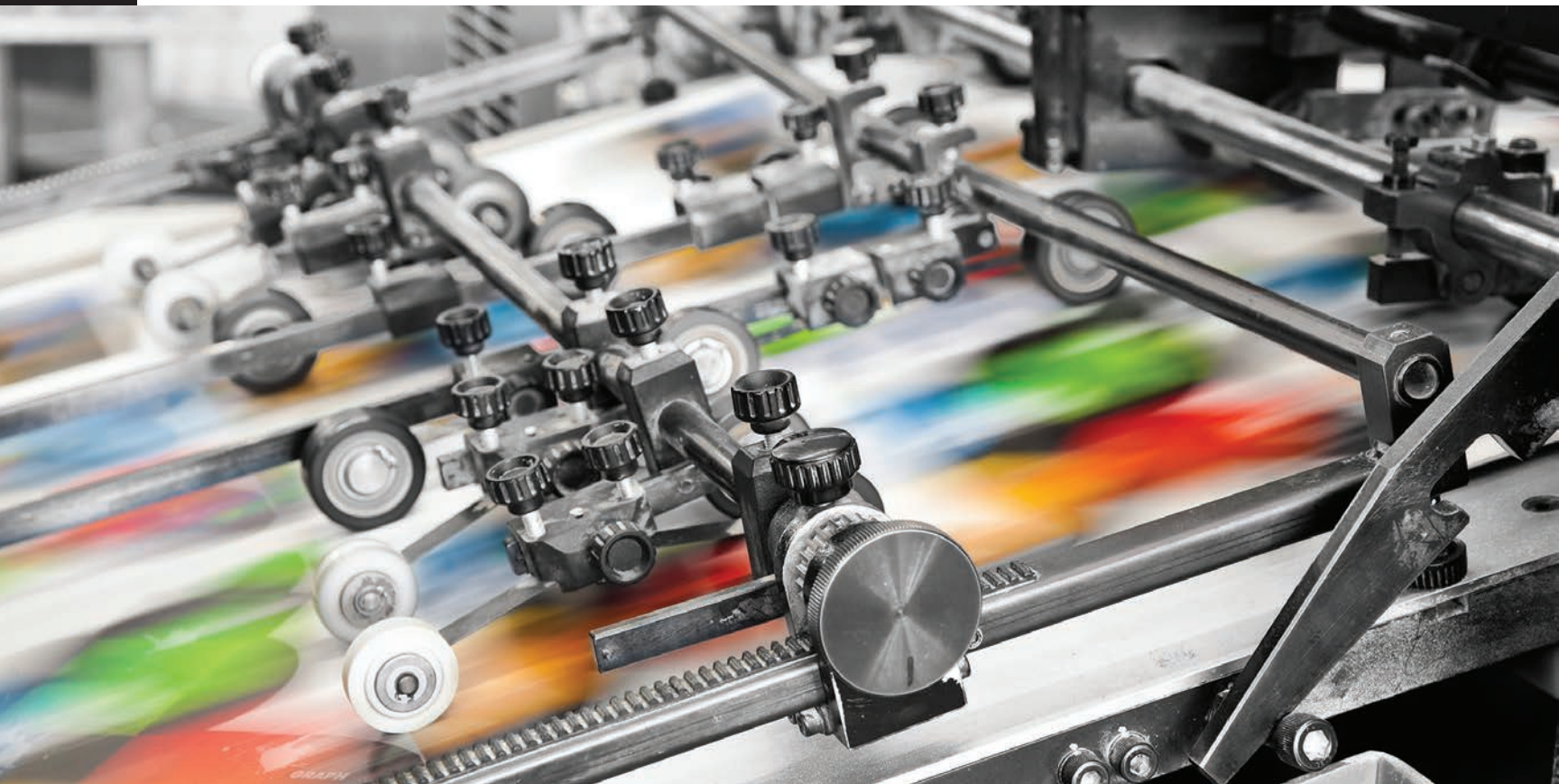




**MERS FEEL EMPOWERED—A RARE AND VITAL EXPERIENCE AT A CHAOTIC TIME.”**

— MARGOT BLOOMSTEIN, AUTHOR, “TRUSTWORTHY: HOW THE SMARTEST BRANDS BEAT CYNICISM AND BRIDGE THE TRUST GAP”





Lidl marketing director Claire Farrant pronounced that if the brand communicated its strategy right, it could encourage shoppers to buy more from its chain than competitors like Aldi, Dollar General, Walmart, etc. With the pandemic stripping away one of its key promotional tools—the grand opening—Lidl leaned heavier on an initiative driven by 60-second TV ads supported by an integrated marketing campaign that includes activity in radio, digital, social, cinema and print.

The core essence of the campaign was to succeed where other brands sometimes fail—i.e., that what is played out above-the-line also resonates in stores. “The campaign’s core value will bring with it an exciting environment to shop for our customers and work for our colleagues,” Farrant said.

One of the customers the Lidl campaign happened to attract the attention of was Patricia J. Royak, CEO of Atlanta-based Royak Consulting and a long-time senior executive in the retail, fashion, and health and wellness industries. During the initial lockdown, one of the only pieces of mail hitting the Royak household was direct

mail snapshots that inspired food-related purchases.

“After days spent reading emails, Zooming for meetings and keeping up with other social media like LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, the Lidl spots got noticed,” says Royak, who also recently joined the team at Ascension, a management consulting company where she help to design, develop, and execute integrated multi-channel digital and traditional customer communication programs. “Print allows us to rest our eyes and touch the pages by interacting with our sense of touch. We can easily markup pages or make notes. An eye-catching flyer included in packaging sent to our homes is an example of leveraging a promotion that encourages repeat purchases when consumers buy online.”

Royak says that print is an important complement to many of the campaigns she directs these days. Take the “Workout Wednesday” fitness classes she helped organize for Atlanta-based nonprofit TurningPoint Breast Cancer Rehabilitation, where she serves as Board Chair. The telehealth educational programs help women and men recovering from breast cancer. Along

with the virtual classes was heightened interest in programs that motivate, educate, and recommend strategies to eat and exercise to prevent cancer or its recurrence.

“A flyer or postcard like the invitation, like the one we used for TurningPoint’s Pink Affair gala, sits on the counter for a while as a silent salesman, urging you to take advantage of promotions or upcoming events,” Royak says. “It serves as a visual disruption as we clean our counters. As consumers stayed home during the pandemic and found time to open mail, there were brands that returned to direct mail or messages in terms of billing and marketing collateral.” ■





# Something to hold on to

Noted brand and content strategist Margot Bloomstein says that amid so much upheaval today, printed media offers a kind of tangible permanence—quite literally. Brands that understand the comfort gleaned from consumers being able to take in information at their own pace are finding success with the printed piece.

More importantly, print serves as a healing-type contrast to the barrage of information coming from television advertising, pop-up ads and ever-scrolling social media feeds. “It is the kind of control people need right now,” says Bloomstein, who also is author of “Trustworthy: How the Smartest Brands Beat Cynicism and Bridge the Trust Gap.”

In her book, Bloomstein discusses the actionable framework brands need to focus on their voice, volume and vulnerability. Honing in on these premises, including the trust that a medium like print builds, will help brands employ the



kind of concrete tactics that help regain trust, respect, and customer loyalty.

“With print, you get that subtle sense of control that helps consumers feel empowered—a rare and vital experience at a chaotic time,” she says.

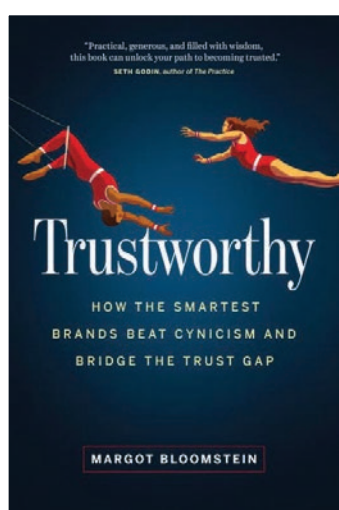
Effectively used, print enables consumers to pause, consider and validate new information that may fit into their existing mental models. And while digital experiences can be memorable, it still pales in comparison to the haptic experience of holding a printed piece and flipping through the pages. By engaging people in a more complete sensory experience, print helps build stronger memories, aid retention and support decision making.

Consider how an audience engages a brand in an omnichannel experience. At first, they may reach out on a social channel like Twitter, follow up on information from a magazine advertisement, then look for consistency on product packaging. “If content

creators or teams are siloed, they can't effectively support a consistent, cohesive experience for your end user,” Bloomstein says. “That's where an omnichannel content strategy can help. Ensure your editorial style guidelines address the varied constraints of different channels to effectively meet the needs of both your audience and content creators.”

Bloomstein says that inconsistency can undermine a brand's messaging even in relatively less stressful times. “As consumers navigate the pandemic, the challenges of remote schooling and childcare and economic uncertainty, they have little time or patience for inconsistent messaging and policies from the brands around them.”

Print, with its power of touch and feel, can help provide square messaging that too often can get lost in today's digital world—enacting an engagement of senses that cannot be rivaled by other mediums.





# TACTICS



## GOT YOUR BACK

### REPORT SHOWS SUPPORT DURING COVID-19 IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DISCOUNTS

Price, value and quality may seem like the perfect triad of what consumers are looking for in a brand. However, GlobalWebIndex's latest "Connecting the Dots" report showed that consumers are

looking for more than a discount—they are looking for brands that have their back during COVID-19. Due to the pandemic, they want brands to put more focus on the following:

56%

Supporting  
people during  
COVID-19

51%

Being  
eco-friendly

49%

Offering value  
for money

49%

Producing  
high-quality  
products

44%

Treating  
staff fairly

41%

Supporting  
social causes



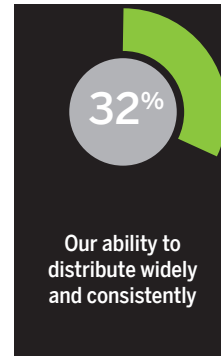
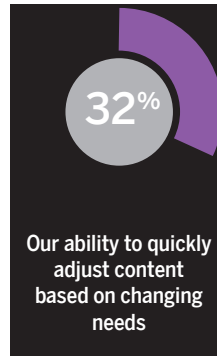
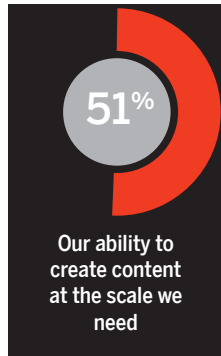
# ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

## WHERE MARKETERS ARE POLISHING UP THEIR CONTENT EFFORTS

Are you striving for good, or great, with your content? The majority (77%) of marketers agree that their content

marketing is effective, according to Skyword's "2020 Content Marketing Trends" report. However, there is

always room for improvement. Here are the areas in which they are focusing.



# 82%

OF CREATIVES SAY THAT 2020 HAS FOREVER CHANGED HOW THEY CREATE

Source: Adobe's 2020 "State of Creativity" report



## 5 TYPES OF LEADERSHIP NEEDED TO SUCCEED THIS YEAR

A year of pandemic life has taken its toll on the world. The best leaders will rise above the adversity and provide a guiding hand through the uncertainty. Here are the five types of leadership needed from the blog at Adobe.

### 1. Empathic

Check in with your employees. Your team should know that they are not alone in their difficulties, and that you care about their health and happiness.

### 2. Creative

Creativity is more important than

ever in every facet of business. Focus on these key areas: culture, skills, technology, data and experience.

### 3. Agile

Constant change requires agile leadership. Let go of perfection and focus on the big picture.

### 4. Collaborative

Navigating the uncertain landscape ahead will take multiple areas of expertise and teamwork. No one person has all of the answers.

### 5. Flexible

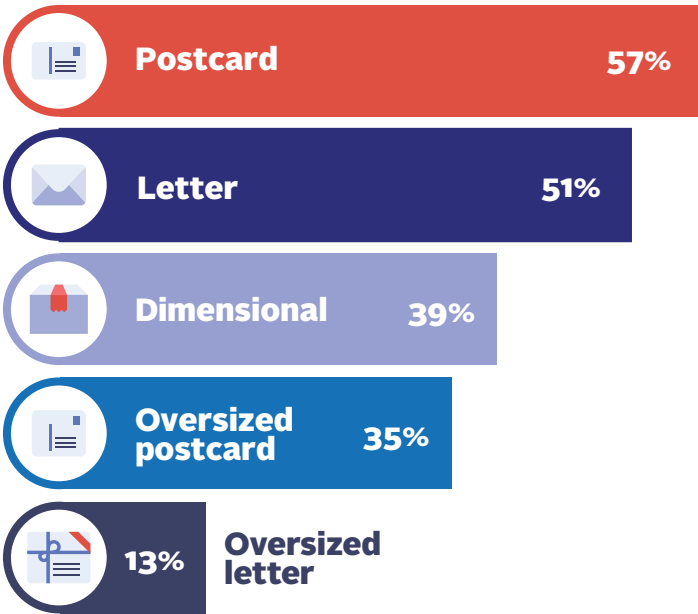
Be aware of the differing needs of your employees. Don't be afraid to adapt your leadership style or plans to the situation.



# YOU'VE (STILL) GOT MAIL

## REPORT SHOWS EFFECTIVENESS OF DIRECT MAIL

You might be six feet away from your customers, but that doesn't mean that you can't engage with them. Digital communication channels have been paramount, but overcrowded. That's where print steps in. Direct mail reported the most significant gains in overall effectiveness when it comes to reaching the target audience, according to PFL's "The State of Multichannel Marketing" 2020 report. For the second consecutive year, Demand Metric and PFL partnered to understand how nearly 600 marketers use multichannel marketing and the power of intentional, coordinated marketing efforts. Here are the most frequently used types of direct mail.





# QA

## CEO & CO-FOUNDER, SAGE EXECUTIVE GROUP **JERRY ROLLINS**

EXECUTIVE COACH ON STAYING  
AHEAD OF THE GAME



**You grew up at a different time with some concrete experiences. What are your thoughts on the next generation of workers?**

I'm a student of history and I think we shortchange every generation. I believe the kids today are going through something that's never happened in our history since probably 1918 or the great plagues of Europe. And I think they're going to learn some significant lessons. They are technologically advanced for sure. But if they're raised with good values, nothing else matters. I have a lot of faith in the next generation.

**How did you transition from hockey to business?**

I have always loved reading. Your reading and comprehension skills are important. I know people that don't read books and I can't understand how they gain knowledge. Listening to a podcast and watching videos are fine, but there is just something about the visualization of reading a printed piece that ingrains it into your mind.

**What are you telling your consulting clients these days?**

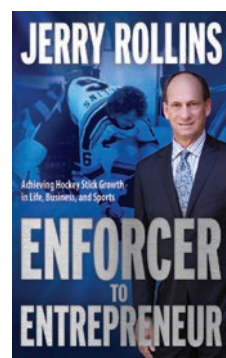
I believe everything is simple. I was lucky to have a wonderful junior hockey coach and I was a student of the great John Wooden and Vince Lombardi. Those three guys had simple game plans. They took average players, put them in simple game plans, repeated the hell out of them, and they were successful and they never varied. So, when I look at teams that are confused in pro sports or teams that are confused at business, it's often because the business doesn't have a plan. And if you don't have a specific,

Jerry Rollins, author of the upcoming "Enforcer to Entrepreneur" and former professional hockey player, was a high school dropout who made his name as a "tough guy" in the ice rink. He rubbed elbows with the greats like Gordie Howe, Bobby Hull and Wayne Gretzky. He took everything that he learned on and off of the ice and became a successful CEO, running five companies and mentoring hundreds of executives. Rollins believes you have to keep fighting, learning and clawing your way to success.

actionable plan every day, which most small-to-medium businesses don't, the results will be accidental.

**As people get back to work, how do they manage both the average person and the superstar?**

Anybody who says that they treat all of their employees or players the same are delusional. You don't treat a Wayne Gretzky like a Jerry Rollins. That is obvious, but I always told my team to be hardworking and humble. Superstars can certainly put up big numbers, but they can also be onboard terrorists. Just because they produce revenue doesn't mean they are good for the company. You need the courage to correct their behavior or even fire them.



**How do values tie into employee engagement?**

Thirty-seven percent of employees are truly engaged. It is leadership's responsibility to be vigilant in upgrading the team, but they need to upgrade themselves first. If you're not a constant learner, and not constantly improving, and you're not staying ahead of the game, how can you expect the team to do better? You must lead by example. As a leader,

you need to actually practice what you preach.

**What other thoughts are on your mind in regards to teams?**

I think there will be more change in people's careers through this two or three year period than there has ever been in history. Part of it is going to be caused by companies. And part of this is going to be caused by employees.

Employees are going to say, "This is not what I want to do or who I want to be. I'm going to be something else." There's going to be a giant evolution of people in business and a huge migration of people out of certain areas to other areas because of remote work ability.

**With engagement down, how do we motivate teams?**

To be honest, you can't. You can certainly de-motivate people. You really cannot motivate them. People need to be around other motivated people. We are a product of the company that we keep. So, if you want high performers, you need to hire high performers and let them flock together.



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