

The Red letter



I Give You My Words

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NDPC: My, But It's Been Good To Me

For the third straight year, I've been fortunate to earn the top Individual Sweepstakes award in the North Dakota Professional Communicators (NDPC) communication contest. This is my fourth career Sweepstakes win.

The award is based on a point system for the number of individual category awards and the number of entries in each category. My entries earned 11 first place awards, four second place, four third place and four honorable mentions. They recognize a range of materials completed for clients in 2007, including trade publication print advertisements and campaigns, annual reports, brochures, media kits and releases, newsletters, Web content and billboards.

The materials were created for Clay County Public Health, Dawson Insurance, DMI Industries, the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation, Otter Tail Corporation and Wanzek Construction. Jubae Design was the lead agency on materials created for DMI and Wanzek. Brad Clemenson did amazing work on the GFMEDC materials, as always. Genuine thanks to you all.

The annual contest recognizes excellence in communications among NDPC members. NDPC is a state affiliate of the National Federation of Press Women (NFPW), a professional organization of men and women from around the country employed in communications fields. First place entries are automatically entered in the NFPW competition. National awards will be announced during the organization's annual conference Sept. 11-13, 2008, in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

The honors are great, and I am honored to receive them. However, the big question today is, what am I doing for my clients right now? With that in mind, I return to work...

Give and Take at The Red letter Blog

Let's have a conversation. The newest writing, advertising, marketing and all-around communication forum on the Internet is The Red letter Blog. To visit, click the "redletterspot.blogspot.com" link above. I'll be posting stories from The Red letter, weekly tips from the FredComm website, as well as other tips and musings on effective communication. To participate in the give and take, please visit and leave comments, good, bad and ugly.

Scary Correction

It – meaning the egg – is on my face. Several readers reminded me, very shortly after receiving the April issue, that Cousin It was a member of "The Addams Family," not "The Munsters." My heartfelt apologies to fans of both fine programs, and thanks for reading so closely.

Writing, when properly managed...is but a different name for conversation.
– Laurence Sterne

The Good Word

Excuse Me, But I Do Exist

Customers who have not purchased anything within a year or some other arbitrary and internally defined timeframe no longer exist.

Consider the language commonly used to exclude them: "...our existing customers contact us..." By extension, previous customers

would be "nonexistent," right?

No one literally suggests customers disappear from the face of the Earth. But language is powerful. Labeling people in certain ways can shape the way we think about and behave toward them.

Suggest they no longer exist and risk implying they aren't valuable, either. Your people might start thinking that

way. Worse yet, previous customers might return the favor to your business.

Yesterday's customers are today's best prospects. Try referring to them as "previous" and customers as "current." Better still, adopt the "once a customer always a customer" philosophy.

Whatever you do, never imply they aren't important to you.