



BILL WYNNE

CON-WAY FREIGHT, VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING

BILL WYNNE LIKES LOUD THINGS: SCREAMING ENGINES, THUDDING DRUMS AND HIS PURRING HARLEY. THE SLIGHTLY HEARING-IMPAIRED MICHIGAN NATIVE LANDED AT CON-WAY FREIGHT, THE LESS-THAN-TRUCKLOAD FREIGHT DIVISION OF ANN ARBOR-BASED TRANSPORTER CON-WAY INC., IN 2007 AFTER SPENDING 18 YEARS AT FORD MOTOR CO., WHERE HIS LAST POSITION WAS AS THE HEAD OF MARKETING FOR FORD RACING TECHNOLOGY.

Con-way's biggest brand-building effort to date is its sponsorship of Roush Fenway Racing on the NASCAR circuit, so Wynne's decibel level remains high. For Wynne, the best part of firmly installing the racing program was that he was able to demonstrate positive ROI in less than a year. "In this economy, when people [at the company] have been asked to make sacrifices, I get asked, 'Why are you blowing money on a sponsorship?' I say it is not an expense but an investment." Having grown the bottom line gives "you the right to go ask for resources," he says.

Q: In your lifetime, what was the first marketing campaign you can recall being exposed to?

A: So I have to date myself right out of the chute! It is Quisp cereal. It sucked me right in! When [the] Quisp [character] knitted the evil ball of yarn into an 87-mile-long necktie to save the universe and deliver his cereal to Earth, I was an instant fan. They always had really good in-pack and specialty items, too. Quake just didn't do it for me. Quazy stuff!

Q: What made you decide to pursue marketing as a profession?

A: My father is a marketer and I grew up around it. He worked for Wolverine World Wide Inc. in Rockford, Mich., whose flagship brands were Wolverine boots and Hush Puppies shoes. In fact, our basset hound was used in many a photo shoot, until he bit my dad's boss! [My father] later formed Wynne Marketing Inc., as a premium and incentive manufacturer's rep for about 45 different companies, which taught me how to appropriately leverage the promotional mix.

Q: What qualities make a marketer great?

A: There are two types of marketers in my experience. [First, there are] those who work in isolation and pop out of their laboratories with "ta-da" moments that may or may not resonate with the other decision makers in their organization. They think they know better than anyone else, and this arrogant isolation usually does them in.

Then there are marketers who recognize that collaboration makes for great marketing. Integrating with all internal and external publics is the key to great marketers. Marketing and brand management is not the responsibility of just one department, it's everybody's job.

You also need to use information about your customers and industry to segment, target and position correctly. Deciding what customers *not* to serve is just as important as effectively serving those you do; this idea defines efficiency.

Finally, you've got to measure to determine effectiveness. Measurement has to be designed into your efforts from the first development discussion. Failure to do so in today's hyper-competitive, global economy is essentially malpractice.

Q: What qualities undermine an otherwise talented marketing executive?

A: Being the kind of marketer I described [first in the last question], in addition to micro-managing and driving your agency nuts by trying to be the creative department.

Q: Pick your poison: Hard and fast ROI, or experiment and see what sticks?

A: Experiment and evolve to drive ROI that allows for building your brand over time. The bottom line is still the bottom line.

Q: What inspires good marketing ideas?

A: Great research and customer insight. I love riding with our driver sales representatives and our account executives every chance I get. There's nothing better than the voice of the customer as the genesis for good ideas to generate customer advantage.

Q: If—as the saying goes—you are your own brand, then what is the tagline for a brand campaign for you?

A: Strategic. Creative. Collaboration.

Q: What do you point to as your greatest single marketing accomplishment?

A: Installing the first-ever Con-way Freight marketing department.

Q: Ten years from now I'd like to be _____.

A: ... the most fiscally prudent lottery winner in the history of the planet.

Q: What profession, other than marketing, would you most like to pursue?

A: Well, I probably won't ever escape the gravitational pull of marketing. I teach marketing at Eastern Michigan University and love having the opportunity to impact the learning and development of the students who choose to take my "reality-based" classes. If there is any transition from practicing marketing in my future, it will probably be to teaching it full time. If that doesn't work out, I will fall back on my professional music career as a percussionist, and I need to figure out how to ride my Harley for a living. **m**