

*Marketing the Ball State ORIENT*

*An Honors Thesis (ID 499)*

*By*

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When one begins a discussion concerning the marketing, that is the selling, of the Ball State yearbook, the *ORIENT*, he is talking of one or both aspects of marketing this product. The first of these is the book as an entire entity. The other is the space within the *ORIENT*. This includes organizational, individual and advertising space. As this paper will show, many times the latter has a direct correlation on the former. That is, once a person buys space and gets his picture in the *ORIENT*, he will consequently buy the book when it comes out. This paper will concentrate on this approach.

Through my experience at the *ORIENT* the past two years, I feel well qualified to speak at length on any aspect of the book. Educational training in the area of advertising, marketing and public relations will also be drawn upon in the completion of this project. However, since our 1976 *ORIENT* does not contain advertising and I have no real experience in this area, it has been deleted from this paper.

Before one can get too far along, common marketing sense tells me it is necessary to examine thoroughly the product involved.

The Ball State yearbook, as with any yearbook, has two basic purposes. To most of the college populus, it serves as a memory

book, examining the past year in detail. It thus serves as a benefactor for the student body.

However, to a few people in the Journalism and other departments on campus, it serves as a laboratory tool for which the student-journalist can practice and perfect his talents.

In my opinion, one of the basic problems with the ORIENT in the past years has been the emphasis by the staff to prove they can put out a good product. As a tribute to this fact, the ORIENT the past two years has been rated "ALL-AMERICAN" by the yearbook judging services.

One can see by this that the yearbook has fulfilled its one purpose, but how about the other. Records show that the yearbook has not received increased circulation during this period. The quality of the product is good, but why will it not sell? Could it be the subject content is not catered to the students' wants?

Who knows? I can only hypothesize which I will do during the remainder of this paper.

It is my feeling that the book has not received this increase in circulation due to the fact that the editor and his staff have been too busy putting the editorial aspects of the book together. It is the staff's main job to put out a yearbook, not to sell it. However, if someone were to market the book correctly, I feel circulation could be increased tremendously.

Hopefully, the remainder of this paper will prove to be an asset in this respect.

Before I get into the meat of this paper, one point should be made on the point on catering to the students' needs. At the present time I have no concrete evidence that the book is catering to the students' needs. However, if the staff were to include a short survey (much like the one used this year), they can insure that they are meeting these needs. (Addenda 1)

Marketing of the Ball State ORIENT is accomplished by use of several selling campaigns run throughout the year. Rather than try to break these campaigns down into campaigns for individual aspects of the book, I will present this paper in a chronological campaign of the entire year, taking individual aspects of each campaign when they come during the year and combining them when possible.

An effective sales campaign on campus must be initiated early in the school year. Just as important, it must be thorough in its coverage and continuous through the year. (let those last minute deadlines for the editorial staff!)

These campaigns must provide the student, the prospective buyer, with all the information that he may need. They should be planned and executed with the student in mind. The campaigns should be fashioned to express the sales message to the students, not to impress them.

The first concrete promotions effort should be planned in early summer and executed approximately two weeks prior to the students' return to campus. It should be used to sell both the book itself and the space within.

In the past years, this effort has taken the form of a mailer sent to the students' home. This past year's product, the ORIENT Express, was a very good promotional effort for several reasons.

First off, students get a load of mail, especially letters, from Ball State prior to the beginning of school. If a letter were to be used, as it had for many years in the past, it would be very likely that it would be lost or ignored by the students. However, by using a newsletter, there is a better chance that it will be noticed and not lost.

Also, with a newsletter, a lot more copy and pictures can be included. This way, instead of making a general appeal to all students to buy a yearbook and get their pictures taken, the staff can make a sales pitch to each student group on campus who will be pictured in the book - seniors, graduate students, associate candidates and underclassmen. On the whole, it is a very good promotion, but I do suggest some changes.

If the staff were to place the order blank in a spot on the newsletter that would be saved by students for a period of time, this would be a tremendous advantage. Anything like a

calendar, list of important campus phone numbers - something that the student may hold onto until they get back to Muncie or possibly longer. After all, the more the students look at the coupon, the more chance there is that they will use the order blank.

Depending upon finances, the *ORIENT Express* could be a monthly or quarterly publication, each time including current news on the book and each time including an order blank.

The next big sales campaign occurs during the first week back to school. In past years, traditional methods of promotion have included a table in the talley, phone calls to seniors and the Student Center Governing Board (SCGB) Night.

During this first week back, senior and possibly undergraduate picture appointments start to be taken. To avoid any confusion with two or three people scheduled to get shot at the same time, past *ORIENT* editors have found it very beneficial to use one master schedule rather than have two or three in use. I stress continuance of this practice.

The use of a table in the talley serves several purposes, but has some shortcomings. While at the talley, you can sell the *ORIENT*, but due to the necessity of having the master list at the *ORIENT* office, no picture scheduling can be done at this time. However, students can be informed and reminded to call the *ORIENT* for a picture appointment. The table also serves to acquaint the freshman and re-acquaint the other students to the *ORIENT*.

In order to help acquaint new students with the campus, SCGB sponsors an Activities Night the first weekend in September. This, in the past, has been an excellent time to introduce the new students to the ORIENT. The only suggestion I make concerning SCGB night is to institute a sales campaign directly at the new students to buy the yearbook to "orient themselves" to the BSU campus. After all, where else but in the Ball State ORIENT can a student get a chance to see what goes on at Ball State during the year?

Returning to the headache of scheduling senior pictures, I have several ideas which can help to make this task somewhat easier.

In order to get an increased turnout for senior (and undergraduate) pictures, the campaign must be promoted effectively. In the past years, newspaper ads have been used effectively, but all they can really do is acquaint the student with the fact that pictures are being taken. Personal contact is a must in order to insure success in this venture.

To handle the increased number of people who may be calling in and to make sure there are no foul ups, I strongly recommend that the entire staff be trained on how to take a picture appointment at the staff's first meeting of the year. Nothing makes a person more perturbed than to call the ORIENT five straight times and having the person on the other end suggesting that they call

back later when someone who knows how to take the appointment is there. There is really nothing to taking an appointment, it can be learned quite easily.

With that taken care of, the business and organizations staff can employ two efforts besides newspaper ads to substantially increase the number of degree candidates shot. The first of these has been used in the past two years to great success. It consists of obtaining from the computer center a printout of all people and their phone numbers who could possibly graduate during the coming year. (Those with over 130 hours at the beginning of fall quarter.) Now the staff members from business, organizations and others can contact these people and ask them whether they have or would like to make an appointment to have their picture taken.

The new idea that I propose is to have a table set up outside the three senior placement meetings held in University Hall during September. Several members of the staff could attend the meetings and bring the master scheduling list. Before and after each meeting, pictures could be scheduled by the seniors attending the meeting. (It is advisable to use the reminder cards to assure that they show up for the picture.) Addenda 2

Concerning undergraduate pictures, an increase from this year's promotional effort is necessary. Since this past year was the first time they were shot in several years, new methods of promotion were

utilized.

With the undergraduate pictures, I feel that it would be quite a hassle for the staff to try to contact each person via the phone. Several other methods are more reasonable.

Most importantly, the entire staff must feel very excited about the undergraduate getting their pictures taken. Since the majority of the staff are underclassmen, they must inform their friends of the opportunity to be pictures in the ORIENT and persuade their acquaintances to become a part of the ORIENT.

It is my personal feeling that, based on past performances, students will not take the trouble to go out of their way to schedule a picture setting. Many times a student will be exposed to a promotion, be it an ad in the Daily News or a poster in class, when they do not have access to a phone. By the time they get to a phone in the dorm or apartment, they forget about it or it is after the ORIENT office has closed. Therefore, I feel it very necessary to bring the scheduling directly to the student. This could be done by several methods.

One idea concerns the placing of reminder cards on the tables in the dining service. On the card would read a message which would remind the student to make his appointment by calling the ORIENT office. To insure the success of this venture, the office should remain open that night to take calls for appointments. This fact should be mentioned on the cards along with the three

office phone numbers. I'm quite sure the office will have their hands full that night.

A table could also be set up at the scramble light to take appointments. Here you would be able to catch the majority of the flow of students throughout the day, however they will be in quite a hurry. It would be absolutely necessary to have the appointment cards there.

One item that would take a lot of planning but I'm quite sure it would be well worth it would be to set up a table at each of the dorms. Permission would have to be secured from the dorm directors, but if executed correctly around the evening meal time, I'm sure plenty of people would take advantage of it. Again lots of manpower and the reminder cards would be necessary to insure its success.

Besides reminders in the Daily News, numerous other promotional means may be used to broadcast the message to the students. Posters, signs and the like could be plastered all over campus. Announcers at the home football games would probably broadcast it to the crowd at the home football games if they were asked.

Another idea that has never been tried is to use the local campus radio stations such as WSAS, WAGO, WLAF or WBST. Possibly they might announce it over the air for free or in exchange for one-half page of space in the book. In fact, I have discussed the idea with one of the radio personnel on campus and he seemed very favorable to the idea.

*The next major headache that the organizations staff will encounter is that of group pictures. The most important thing about this campaign, like the senior picture campaign, is to start it early. If the personnel will warrant it, it should be run at the beginning of the year with the picture appointments.*

*The first task in organizing the campaign is the initial contact of all possible organizations on campus. This can be done by acquiring the directory of campus organizations from the Office of Student Programs in September. Using this list, the organizations staff can contact the people first with an introductory letter (Addenda 3) and then with a phone call to answer any questions and get possible page commitments.*

*In the past years, there has been quite a mix-up in this contact of groups. Since I feel personal contact is the only way to sell group space, it is imperative that this contact be executed without a hitch.*

*This mix-up would occur when people on the organizations staff would contact a group twice in one day while forgetting to contact other groups. For this reason, some sort of record should be kept on contacting these groups. (Addenda 4)*

*Using this form, the entire process of getting groups to buy space could be made a lot easier. Once the group has committed itself to buying an allotted amount of space, a certain number of pictures would be necessary.*

The method used in the past years have been if a group bought one-half page of space, one picture would be necessary. If the organization bought one page of space, two pictures were needed. If the club purchased two pages of space, four pictures were utilized.

The problem then arises, How do you take four pictures of one group? In the past years, the ORIENT staff have always used pictures of the group sponsoring or participating in some event on campus, usually one that has already been covered in the book. I feel it would be a real benefit for the yearbook to picture the small, but significant events that the group sponsors throughout the year. With a little early planning, you can cover all the events of the year and keep the groups happy.

One area of group pictures that needs to be mentioned is that of informals. In the past two years, sales in this area have been very low, yet I feel there is a definite market here.

In the past two years, the pictures have basically been those of bike teams from Bike-a-Thon, because that is when it has been promoted the most. With a little help, I think they could be used to get teams from Greek events such as Tug-o-War, Sigma Switch, Watermelon Bust, Circus Feed and AOPi Marathon. Also more intramural teams could be represented.

I should note that the best possibility for these pictures are the winning teams. There is a little bit of show off in

everyone of us and the ORIENT should take advantage of it.

As far as definite sales campaigns go, one of the best ways to promote informals is to inform the people who are sponsoring the event to tell the teams and captains that space for teams is available in the ORIENT. The sponsoring group should put up no objections since the ORIENT is already doing them a favor by covering the event.

Of course, winning teams should be contacted after the event to make sure they know about the informals and possibly buy space.

Thus concludes my ideas on selling space within the ORIENT. I feel that the next job, selling the book itself, will be much easier if the students' pictures are in the book.

When the selling the ORIENT, I must admit that my colleagues were right. At the beginning of my year as editor, Dr. Ingelhart and Mr. Wellnitz insisted that a direct sale to students was the best method. This is fine if you can find enough high pressure salesmen among your staff. If the yearbook enjoys a large staff, have the staff sell it to their friends in the dorm, on their intramural teams and in their fraternities and sororities.

Several years ago, the 1974 editor, Dwayne Gott, had his staff members who lived in dorms post a sign outside their door informing residents that ORIENTs could be purchased within. Some of the staff members balked at this idea, but it did work to some degree.

Another idea that has been kicked around is the idea of paying a salesman a flat commission for selling the book. This idea will work if you get a good salesman who is willing to work cheap.

One method that has been kicked around but needs more research is the idea of selling space to organizations at a very reduced rate if a certain percentage of the group's members order the *ORIENT* in advance. It still needs more research, but I feel it could be successful.

Selling the book on an installment has reaped good benefits. Students, especially if it is not after payday, have a hard time scraping up over \$5 for a book they haven't seen. I must admit that the business people hate the additional work that is involved, so I would limit the payments to two installments, with the first payment being smaller and the second not due until the book comes in.

The above has been ideas, some proven, some untested. They are other people's ideas with my revisions and my ideas totally. Regardless, their result will be an increase in *ORIENT* sales since it seems Ball State students need quite a bit of coaxing before they will buy an *ORIENT*.

ADDENDA 1

Dear ORIENT Subscriber:

We would appreciate a few minutes of your time to fill out this short questionnaire. Your honest responses will enable us to further improve your yearbook to meet your expectations. Please return it within a week.

What was your overall impression of the book?

What did you like most about it?

What did you like least about it?

If you were editor, what would be the first thing you would change?

What changes would you like to see in next year's book?

Why did you buy the book?

Do you think the price was too low?

Will you buy next year's book?

Thank you for helping us to put out a better ORIENT!

ADDENDA 2

**IT'S A DATE!**

**FOR YOUR YEARBOOK PORTRAIT . . .**

<hr/>	
<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
<hr/>	
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>COST</b>

**Arriving five minutes early will enable you to check your grooming.  
Please bring cash or your personal check payable to CASH.**

**S M I L E . . .  
YOUR YEARBOOK STAFF**

7/75-10M-C/B

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ADDENDA 3

*Dear President:*

*Each year organizations play an important role in campus life. Why not let the ORIENT preserve the memories with a group picture in the ORIENT.*

*The time to order space is now. The book looks very promising and will again serve as a great public relations tool for any organization.*

*We shall be contacting you in the near future. If you have any questions prior to this time, call 285-6394 or 285-4443.*

*Sincerely,*

ADDENDA 4

Name of Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Person to Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Contacted: \_\_\_\_\_ Results: \_\_\_\_\_

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Amount of space bought: \_\_\_\_\_

Pictures will be taken:

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

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Copy has been assigned to: \_\_\_\_\_

Contract has been sent: (Date) \_\_\_\_\_