

New York Printer Finds Profit in Nonprofit Work

Executive Printing & Direct Mail taps nonprofit market for strong sales. *By Howard Riell*

Andrew Dieckman, the principal of Executive Printing & Direct Mail, Inc. in Elmsford, NY, is looking forward to what 2014 holds in store: an ongoing commitment to his core niche, bold forays into new areas, and a strong bottom line.

The year just finished was “punctuated by a very slow summer,” according to Dieckman. “But it was bookended by two very excellent seasons, especially this year-end season. Most of our clients are nonprofit organizations, so we typically do a lot of work during their frantic season, during which they’re sending out a lot of mail. We are just coming into the end of that phase for 2013.”

Smooth Transition

One of the most memorable aspects of 2013, Dieckman reflects, was his company’s working to embrace changes taking place in the industry. “The one thing that I think we would highlight is a very strong realization of the strength of our digital printing department, compared to our offset. Decisions that we made prior to 2013 to outfit ourselves with a competent digital department really paid off and offered us some comfort levels for producing a lot of different work.”

Dieckman purchased the 26-year-old, seven-person firm from its founder, his father Gary, less than a year ago. “We closed on the financial end of the deal in April 2013. That was a fairly historic point in the history of the company.” As with any transition, change is part of the plan, but organic growth rather than abrupt change.

“There is a firm change taking place, not so much in direction, but more of an augmentation of what we already do,” he explains. “I have more of a goal for bringing in new clients, and have made a lot of effort in that direction, starting in the summer of 2013 on, to simply sell more.”

Dieckman’s plan to accomplish that is multi-faceted, he says. “It’s a combination of a number of different things. We are using mailing, cold calls, and focusing our prospects on exactly what it is that we produce best.” He has not, however, gone out and hired more salespeople. “No, this is an effort that is done entirely by me in the general manager role.”

Expanded Horizons

Efforts going forward will concomitantly focus on Executive’s core niche—nonprofit organizations—and explor-

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Executive Printing & Direct Mail has grown its base profitably by working closely with nonprofit groups throughout the area.

ing new market niches. “We will be pursuing more nonprofit organizations, but also reaching out to the for-profit entities within our general geography.”

Indeed, the firm’s focus in the nonprofit arena more or less evolved over its more than two and a half decades of existence, he says. “To be honest, most of our new business still comes from referrals. When we’ve done excellent work with nonprofits in the past, the referrals have gotten made, and so we found ourselves doing very well in that niche.”

The Dieckmans have been wise in pursuing what has turned out to be a growth niche. The number of nonprofits has been rising steadily, according to a Bucknell University study.

The Nonprofit Market

Nonprofit HR Solutions, nonprofits are poised for growth. Public awareness of social and political issues, plus the persistence of traditional social problems should maintain demand for nonprofit workers.

In addition, more nonprofits “are using social media—LinkedIn and Facebook, in particular—as recruitment tools. New online tools, social networks, and technological developments will also change how nonprofits work in the coming years.”

Nonprofits are different than other market segments for a variety of reasons, Dieckman explains, not the least of which is the nature of those who work within it. “It’s unique because there is a great delicacy that’s needed when working with our clients. It’s certainly not their full-time occupation to pursue purchasing of printing and mailing.” He feels his staff is well suited to meet their clients’ needs. “The biggest thing that we can offer, I think, and that makes us stand out is our ability to communicate carefully, descriptively, consistently,

and frequently with our clients. This makes each of those relationships more of a relationship than the simple client/vendor relationship.” Mailing, he adds, “is not the simplest of things. When we are able to take that burden away from our clients and take care of it for them, that is a significant part of the relationship.”

The digital part of the business, Dieckman predicts, “will be going strong” in 2014. “Printing is alive, kicking, and strong, and if there is anybody who is still doubting that, then I’m not sure where they are. There is a lot of it out there. Marketing is extremely strong in the print industry, and it just needs to be embraced.”

Whether or not the economy cooperates over the next 12 months is, Dieckman says, almost beside the point. What matters, in the final analysis, is business as usual. “Regardless of how the general economy works, the wise people are going to continue their marketing efforts and try and get out there and do business.” ■■



Andrew Dieckman bought Executive Printing & Direct Mail in Elmsford, NY, from his father last year.