Trusted Heritage New Essence

1881 Creative is the next step in providing Hereford breeders with advertising and promotional tools.

by ***Wes Ishmael***

Successful brands in business represent an endless journey from unknown to remembered, to customers telling others what the brand stands for, and most importantly, what it means to them. Consequently, intentionally changing a brand — the look, the logo or even the name — requires plenty of reason and conviction.

"Rebranding Hereford Publications, Inc., or HPI as many know it, into 1881 Creative has to do with clarity and vision," says Kane Aegerter, American Hereford Association (AHA) director of seedstock marketing. "This rebranding highlights the breed's roots in the United States and captures the fact that we exist to provide creative input and high-level marketing."

Aegerter also heads up 1881 Creative, which like the preceding HPI, is an AHA subsidiary responsible for production of the organization's flagship *Hereford World* and *Baldy Advantage* magazines. It also serves as a service agency for Hereford breeders and others, helping them design marketing campaigns and the associated assets. He explains intensive strategic planning during the last 18 months resulted in the rebrand.

"Staff have long helped Hereford breeders create brand identity, along with specific advertising and promotional messaging," Aegerter says. "As the marketing and communications landscape continues to evolve, this rebrand speaks to the need for us to continually find new ways to help our clients compete. Our new strategic plan revolves around enhancing our effectiveness for Hereford breeders and other clients."

Marketing genesis

Until relatively recent years, beyond word of mouth and personal interaction, print advertising and direct-mail catalogs, fliers and newsletters were about the only way for seedstock producers to present their genetic offering to current and potential customers.

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These days, of course, digital advertising and marketing, email marketing, podcasts, geo-targeted print and digital messaging, and more have joined the arsenal of potential tools.

"Depending on a breeder's marketing goals, every one of those could have a useful place in their annual marketing plan. Figuring out which ones and how they should be weighted in the mix to maximize value is the challenge," Aegerter says. "That's where 1881 Creative and the AHA field staff can be essential partners. We have the skills, talents and experience from within and beyond the breed to help guide that decision making."

For instance, Aegerter explains one client tried a geo-targeted advertising campaign for the first time last year. For those unfamiliar, think in terms of wanting to deliver a specific message about an upcoming bull sale to digital users in a specified geographic area. In this case, the client wanted to reach commercial cattle producers within a 200-mile radius of the operation but also wanted to test market specific areas of two surrounding states.

"Bottom line, our client, who is long established in the Hereford business with a high percentage of repeat customers, sold bulls to a number of new customers, producers he was unaware of," Aegerter says. "Keep in mind that this particular breeder had already established a well-earned reputation for superior genetics and customer service, which enabled attracting new business. But there is no question in the client's mind that this new approach offered a huge return for a minimal investment."

Leveraging marketing investment

Moreover, Aegerter explains this example also illustrates how AHA field staff and 1881 Creative can work with clients to develop and execute annual customized marketing plans, rather than merely the next magazine ad.

"So many times in the seedstock business, and the cattle business in general, there are so many demands on time that it can be easy to keep putting marketing and promotional efforts lower on the to-do list," Aegerter says. "Our clients appreciate the fact that once we learn about their marketing and operation goals for the year, we can develop a customized marketing plan for them to achieve those goals. With the plan in place, that portion of their marketing efforts is taken care of for the year."

Planning ahead can also save marketing dollars. For instance, 1881 Creative offers several marketing bundles that cost less than purchasing the assets within the bundle separately.

"Once we know the client's goals, we can find ways to package the required products and services in a way that's more economically advantageous than piece-meal purchases," Aegerter says. "We're able to do that for the same reason more clients are embracing an annual marketing plan — it prevents duplicating effort and saves us time."

Explore the opportunities

Hereford breeders can find the new 1881 Creative media kit at *Hereford.org* under the marketing tab. It offers an overview of specific products and services, from print advertising to radius search and mailing services to geo-fenced digital marketing to Herefords on Demand.

Aegerter emphasizes 1881 Creative offers opportunities beyond those in the media kit.

"Our partnership with clients is an ongoing conversation," Aegerter says. "Even when we have an annual marketing plan in place, that doesn't mean we won't offer new ideas as they come along. Likewise, we encourage our clients to share new ideas that arise."

Whether or not Hereford breeders utilize 1881 Creative, Aegerter encourages them to consider their brand identity, their story and how they share that story.

"Every operation has a story," Aegerter says. "Telling that story in a compelling way, building upon a program's brand and keeping it in front of customers and potential customers year-round — establishing and maintaining visibility — is essential in today's ultracompetitive seedstock sector." HW

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