

Tape 17 Brad and Alan Antin

Gary: There was one seminar, actually this was in LA, and they had this company come down, and they were on the hot seat. Let me tell you what their problem was. Their problem was that they were in the housing industry in a city that was a suburb of Chicago, and 80% of that city was employed by Sears-Roebuck. Sears-Roebuck moved out of the city which meant that approximately 80% of the homes in that city were up for sale at distressed prices. What they wanted to do is build and sell more homes. They came down to Los Angeles to find a marketing magician who could teach them how to do that. I said, "Your game is over. It's finished."

One of the big secrets of life, I believe, is to know when the game is over. There's a lot of games you got to know when they're over. Brad and Alan Antin I met at a seminar in Provo and they were in the electronics business. They sold VCRs and porno tapes and televisions. No seriously, they sold all the normal electronic – I don't think they sold the porno tapes. I think they just watched them. They sold all the electronic equipment. They started describing the problem and the problems were that the businesses had been taken over by discounters who were selling them at no margins whatsoever, and I don't remember what all the problems were. They may mention them, but the problems were almost insurmountable. I said get out of the business, and they did, and they went on to create a successful business.

Some people get mad at me when I say, "Do not do this thing," because there is nothing in the world, I think, that has done more damage to people than the concept of positive thinking. Now, I believe in positive thinking, I do. I'm a positive thinker, but I think of myself as a cheerful pessimist. It isn't the things that can go wrong might go wrong. They will always go wrong. Positive thinking has got people to the point where they jump off the Empire State Building and flap their wings and say, "Hey, I'm a bird. I can fly. I can fly." Well, God's got news to you. He doesn't care what Norman Vincent Peale says, you can't fly. You're going to die.

Anyway, the Antins are people that I talked out of a business, who got into a new business. They are both excellent marketers. They're my favorite illustration of that. Would you welcome them with a big hand? Wait just one moment before you do that. Is Robert Armstrong here? Would you meet me outside, please? Okay, and would you now give the Antins a big hand?

Brad: Thank you, Gary, I think. I didn't watch that many of the porno films. Not that many. Well, first thing I want to say is hello, and it is really great to be here with so many brilliant people.

Alan: Yeah, it's great to be here with Gary, too.

Brad: You had to listen to a lot of speakers. They had a lot of really great information. I know some of you, your hands are a little tired from writing notes. You feel like human tape recorders. What I want to do now is do a little bit of a stretching exercise. Now I don't mean physical. I want to stretch your most important muscle.

Alan: Oh, come on, guys. We're talking about the brain. Get with it.

Brad: Now I want everybody to get their pens ready. Everybody have a piece of paper? Okay, I want to tell you a little story. There was an eccentric king, and this king was getting very old and he wanted to pass his throne along, and he had two sons, and he couldn't figure out which son to give his throne to. He decided one day okay, we're going to have a horse race and the son whose horse runs the slowest race will inherit my throne. The two sons quickly figured out that the other brother could cheat by just

not having his horse race as fast as he could. They went to the court wise man and said, "Can you help us? We have a dilemma." The court wise man rubbed his chin and in about three seconds, he said two words. Go ahead and write down what those two words are.

Alan: Where's Evan? We need the Jeopardy theme here for this.

Brad: Time is up.

Alan: We said a few seconds.

Brad: I don't think anybody wrote anything. Show of hands somebody who wrote something. Write something down. I'm serious here. Joe, what'd you get?

Alan: Said two words.

Joe

Do it.

Alan: Do it?

Brad: Oh, that's good, yeah.

Alan: How does that prevent one from cheating and holding the horse back?

Audience: (Off mic)

Brad: Did everybody hear that? What are you saying?

Audience: Don't race.

Brad: No.

Alan: Don't race.

Brad: Stand up, turn around, and yell the answer out to everybody. Switch horses? Are we awake, people? Does everybody get that? Am I the only one that thought that was funny?

Alan: Yeah, okay.

Brad: All right, well let's try another one, then.

Alan: We won't quit until you laugh.

Brad: That's right. The only way you get rid of us is to laugh and clap at the right time. Now if you've already heard this one, don't blurt it out if you've heard it. How can you place a single sheet of newspaper on the floor such that two people can stand on it face-to-face and not be able to touch each other? Now, you cannot tear or cut or rip the newspaper and you can't tie the people up or immobile them. Paulette, you have to leave the handcuffs at home. Gary said you had those golden handcuffs. Anyway, so you can't immobile them. They have to stand on a sheet of paper and as such that they cannot touch each other. Okay, take a couple of seconds, not too long, and I only want people who

haven't already heard this. They just figured it out just now to raise their hand.

Audience: How about you put it under a door?

Brad: Oh gosh, we got a sharp group. Any other suggestions? That's it.

Alan: That's the answer. You put the newspaper in a doorway and there's no way they can touch each other.

Brad: We need harder riddles.

Alan: We'll save that one for the end. We've been accused of being creative geniuses, but I want to let you in on a little bit of a secret.

Brad: We are?

Alan: Everybody here is a creative genius. A lot of you just don't know it yet. One of the things we like to do when we have a problem is not stop when we come up with the first solution. You never know what's going to be around the corner. When we come up with an answer, we always say to ourselves okay, that works. What else can we do? When we do this, we want to make sure we always use our imagination and we always try and have some fun with it.

Brad: Having fun is what I do for a living. I turn it over to him. He has to organize it and figure out a way we can make money while I'm having so much fun. Let's have fun right now. Let's solve an age-old problem. We all know that relatives and fish have a lot in common. Isn't that right? After a few days, they both start to stink. What is with this group.

Audience: It's Monday morning.

Brad: That's it, you're right. It's Monday morning. That's what it is. We can't help you with your problems with your relatives, so let's all work together on the second half of that. We want to come up with some answers on how do you keep a fish from smelling? Okay, now an easy answer could be you could just cook it. Another answer could be you could throw it in the freezer.

Audience: Hold your nose.

Brad: Hold your nose. There's one. Come on, I want some answers. Come on, wake up, people! Shout them out!

Audience

(Inaudible)

Alan: Cut off his nose. He can't smell that way.

Brad: I like that one. Creative, come on.

Audience: (Inaudible)

Brad: Joe, walk away from it.

Audience: Leave it in the ocean.

Brad: Leave it in the ocean. What else?

Audience: Eat it.

Brad: Eat it. Yeah, that'd work. Spray it with Right Guard. Freeze it. How about switch to chicken?

Audience: Smoke it.

Brad: Smoke it.

Alan: What have you been doing? Who said that?

Brad: Feed it to a cat.

Audience: (Inaudible)

Brad: Yeah, but at least you're putting it off for a while. Okay, here's my favorite. Send it to Halbert. Let him deal with the problem. Okay, we all came up with a lot of really creative answers here, but a lot of times, the solution is in how you phrase the question. It can have an awful lot of impact on what you come up with. I want to tell you another little story. A long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away -

Alan: That's "Star Wars." That's copywritten. You can't do that one.

Brad: Once upon a time?

Alan: That'll work.

Brad: About 100, 200, 300, 500 years ago, there was an old village in Europe, and this village had a problem. There was a plague going around and this plague was a very strange but deadly plague. See, what would happen is people, on the day they would catch this plague, would go into a deep sleep-like coma and usually they would die, but a few hearty souls actually survived. Now back then, the medical technology was not such that they could tell whether the people were alive or dead. One day, the townspeople found out they had buried someone alive and this really shook them up. They called a big town meeting and they wanted to come up with a solution.

Now one group of people said, "Okay, here's what we do. We put a little food, a little water in the casket. They can survive on that. We'll drill an air hole up to the top so they can breathe a little bit and we can rescue them." They said, "Well, you know, that's pretty expensive." Another group came up with a completely different solution. They said, "We're going to take a very sharp, 12-inch spike and put it in the lid of the coffin, right over where the victim's heart would be, and when we shut that lid, there'll be no doubt about it." Now the whole angle here isn't what question you're trying to answer. The first group wanted to say, "Oh my God, what can we do in case we bury someone that's alive." The second group wanted to find out the answer to the question, "What can we do to make absolutely sure everybody we bury is dead."

Alan: Groan.

Brad: Okay, the point is we're talking about creativity. Creativity is not necessarily rational. It's not necessarily logical, and when it happens and when you're working in a creative mode, you've got to let

it flow. It's like a wave. You just want to ride the wave. Don't stifle it. Often when you're working on a creative project, it will take on a life of its own. That's what you want. See what it can develop into. A perfect example of that is our book. We wrote a book. You probably figured that. We gave Gary a copy yesterday. He was supposed to stand up here and go, "The book," and tell you how wonderful it is, but I think Gary went brain dead a couple of days ago.

Gary: The book is wonderful, though.

Brad: What the hell is this?

Audience: (Inaudible)

Brad: That's what I said. Is this Marie? Maurice Hannel? You're the next contestant on the – oh, no, that's not what it was. Is that all you wanted? Okay, Vince, you can pay me later.

Anyway, so the example of when a creative process takes on a life of its own is when we started to write the book because we really did not set out to write a book. Originally, it was going to be nothing more than a little lead-generating special report to be able to give away as – well, like I said, a lead-generator for our newsletter that we were launching. We started writing it, and the more we got into it, the more the creative process started going, the more we realized how much we wanted to teach people or how much there was to teach people and frankly, we were having a lot of fun with it.

About the third or fourth day, we're on the phone and we decided hey, we've got to make this a whole book. We just got to ride this until it's done and turn it into a real book. The key is when you do get that creative process, ride it to the end because the results will typically be phenomenal whereas if you stifle it, you're only going to end up with half a job because the book came out terrifically. We're real proud of it.

Talking about books, let me take a second here.

Audience: What's the name of it?

Brad: The name of it. "Brad's Book." Alan had absolutely nothing to do with it. I'm the only part of the partnership that has an ounce of sense and I've been carrying him for all of my life.

Alan: I'm a heavy load.

Brad: Trust me. The name of the book is *Secrets from the Lost Art of Common Sense Marketing*. Now, that reminds me. I want you all to tell Gary Halbert what an absolutely phenomenally great title that is because he hates it. He loves the book but he does not like my title.

Audience: Say it again.

Brad: "Secrets from the Lost Art of Common Sense Marketing," because I think you guys have already learned just since you've been here and probably before that most good marketing is common sense. Heck, most good of anything really is common sense. If somebody's trying to convince me of something or tell me something and they can't explain it in a rational, logical fashion, i.e. common sense, then I tend not to believe them. I think most things in the world can be explained using common sense.

We're talking about books. You guys have had the opportunity to listen to a lot of the very best people

in the entire country, probably on the planet, in the respective fields and specialties in marketing. Most of them have books, tapes, newsletters, seminars, and they've given you an opportunity to purchase them here or make commitments to get them later. The best advice I can give you, and it's not just self-serving because I want you to buy my book, too, is buy it all, every one of them. Granted, a lot of the topics, a lot of the concepts that we're going to talk about, that Ted Nicholas talks about, that Carl Galletti talks about, that Bill Myers talks about, David Deutsch, Dan Kennedy, all of them, a lot of the concepts may overlap. A lot of them may be the same, but every one of us has our own angle, our own slant, our own presentation, and you never know which one of them is going to handle which topic in such a way that it strikes that responsive chord. It just gets right through to your soul so you can use it. That's when you get the million dollar idea and all you need is one of those and you'll pay for buying the entire library 10, 20, 100, 1,000 times over. Don't shortchange your education.

Okay, enough plugging everybody else. We're going to go back to plugging us. Here's our book. Here's what it's about. I'm just going to kind of go over the chapter headings because I think you'll recognize most of them.

Alan: Okay, the first thing we talk about is don't answer your own questions. Relatively obvious. If you want to know what your market wants, ask them. A lot of times when we take on a new client, Alan and I'll fly in from our respective different cities and we'll sit down. In our first meeting with the client, they typically are going to sit there and they're going to say, "I don't know what to do. I need your help, guys. Things are floundering. Sales are down, profits are down. We need magic." We say, "Well, what have you been doing?" They'll go on to describe one promotion after another, one sales thrust after another, one training system after another, and come back and say, "But none of it worked." Chances are they've had several different consultants come in and one consultant tell them do this thing. They do it. Flop. Another consultant tells them to do something else. They do it and flop. By the time they get to us, they're pretty frustrated. They look at us and say, "Hey, what do our customers want from us, anyway?"

This happens almost every time. Usually Alan and I'll just kind of sit up a little straighter in the chair, maybe straighten up a little bit. We'll put on our wisest, most guru-like expressions, kind of like Gary Halbert, the old sage. We look at them and say, "What the hell are you asking us for? Ask your customers. They'll tell you what you want and all you have to do is provide what they already asked for, and that's how you'll be successful."

Brad: The next thing we go over is every business needs an SOB. Now we're not talking SOB like you think we're talking about an SOB. We came up with SOB. I believe it was Rosser Reaves and Carl Galletti could correct me if I'm wrong if he's in here, but I think it was Rosser Reaves who first coined the expression unique selling proposition, USP. Most of you've probably heard that. Well, maybe I'm the only dense one in the crowd but I've been in marketing a long time and that really never struck a cord with me. Unique selling proposition just didn't make a lot of sense. I look at it more from the point of view why do people buy? They buy because of benefits. Instead of a USP, I would call it a statement of benefit, and in all your marketing, that's what you want to carry through in everything you do. If you have a retail store and a customer comes to your store or if it's in your advertising or on TV or on radio, in your mail, you always want to have that clean, clear-cut statement of benefit. That way the customer will always identify you with that.

Alan: I feel like Ed McMahon up here right now. Here's Brad.

Brad: Why talk to just anybody when you can be selling somebody This one goes to Gary's thing about

don't advertise to the dogs if you're looking for the foxes. It's the same thing. Don't just broadcast willy-nilly some sales message that's real white bread and isn't going to hit home with anybody. If you decide that a certain segment of a market or a population is your best target, then go for them. Go for the jugular and don't worry what anybody else is going to think because anybody else isn't going to buy your product anyway.

Alan: The next one is don't let your advertising be all show and no go.

Brad: Image advertising versus direct response advertising. You're not paying money to put on a show. You're paying money to get sales.

Alan: The value of a good education.

Brad: This one I believe is becoming more and more important. It's been around forever. Claude Hopkins used it incredibly successfully back in the '20s. Educate your customer, and with all the skepticism and distrust and all the scams out there, especially in the direct mail industry, it becomes more and more important. Before somebody is going to be comfortable giving you their money, you have to make sure that they've explored all the options and that they thoroughly understand. If they're interested in your product, the more you educate them, the more comfortable that they're going to be, and they will typically favor you with their business.

Alan: Tell them why and then they'll buy.

Brad: You all know that you need to make an almost irresistible – not almost. You need to make an irresistible offer in every marketing thrust that you do. Well, if it's going to be irresistible, that probably means that in some people's minds, it's almost too good to be true. You run into the believability thing. Well, always tell them why you're doing this. What's your motivation? Why can you sell it cheaper, better, more times? Why do you carry more inventory? Why is your product more exclusive than your competitors? If you tell them why and tell them the truth, even if you think it may be negative or hurt your ego.

A perfect example of this: Shortly after we went to that seminar where we met Gary Halbert, and this is where his crack about the adult tapes came from, we were in a situation where we needed to A, raise some capital quickly, and B, our stores were all in Kansas City, right in the middle of the Bible Belt, and there was a major, major grassroots anti-porn movement. We were catching a lot of heat because we did have a library of adult tapes. It was what our customers wanted. We provided it. We made a lot of money on it, but it had pretty much run its course. It just wasn't doing a lot at that point and we did need the cash. We wrote a full page newspaper ad with the headline, "Why Would Antin's Sell \$100 Movies at \$14.95?" and went on to explain about the whole First Amendment issue and that there're these big heavyweights in Congress that wanted to take away your right to watch whatever it was you choose. However, we didn't have the capital or energy to fight it. We didn't agree with it, but we've decided that we needed to liquidate. We told the whole reason why. At \$14.99 a pop, we generated \$100,000 in ten hours. Tell them why. They'll buy.

Alan: Put your money where your mouth is.

Brad: Guarantee, guarantee, guarantee, guarantee. All the risk of the transaction is on the shoulders of the customer. As long as he perceives that, a lot of them are going to be afraid to do business with you. You've heard us all say it. If your product's worth a darn, guarantee it and put the strongest, longest guarantee you can on it. Put your money where your mouth is.

Alan: The next one's appropriate for this year. The only votes that count are the ones that are bought and paid for.

Brad: No, we're not talking about stuffing the ballot box. Test, test, test. Another one you've heard everybody say and most of the people that've done it, most of the people who have had stellar successes in this field at one time or another tend to get a big head. They tend to think hell, I am great at this. I'm a marketing genius. I know what works, and then you run a porker ad like Gary did and throw all your money away. Always test, test, test, no matter how good you get, no matter how big you get.

Alan: Life in business is a big parade.

Brad: The concept of the moving parade. It flows from the testing concept. You're going to test, test, test, and you're going to come up with a campaign or a thrust that is very, very successful that really, really works. You're going to run it and make a lot of money. You're going to run it again and make a lot of money and after a while, either your friends or your family, your wife, your spouse, your employees, somebody is going to come to you and say, "You know, that ad's really getting tired. I'm sick of hearing it. I'm sick of seeing it," and you're going to say, "Yeah, you're right." You're going to go to a whole new ad that's going to fall on its butt. If it's making money, keep doing it.

Not everybody's in the market for your product at the same time, and if you have a campaign that was very successful and the people that were looking for your product last week bought because of it, chances are very good that the people next month or in six months or possibly a year that finally come into a need for your product – they're going to react the very same way to that same campaign. As long as it's working, don't change it.

Alan: Everybody likes the circus but nobody likes to jump through hoops.

Brad: You have to make doing business with you fun. Make it easy. Make it convenient. Take all the work out of the transaction. Do everything for them and make sure they know that you are the one business of your type that will do everything for them. If you make it fun, easy, and exciting, especially exciting, you got a lock on it.

Alan: The after-dinner mint.

Brad: Have you ever noticed, you go to a fine restaurant, you finish your meal, the server brings the tab, and more often than not, there's a mint, the after-dinner mint. When people are doing business with you, especially for the first time but you should probably do it all the time, you want to make sure that at the end of the transaction, they have a good taste in their mouth just like the restaurant does it with the after-dinner mint. You should always acknowledge the sale. Thank them. Make another offer, or something that we like to do is even after they buy, send them some little bonus or premium that they're not expecting, that you didn't promise, and when they get it – Bill Myers does this and makes a fortune doing it. When they get the extra little oomph that they know you didn't have to give them, you didn't promote it, so it wasn't fulfillment, it was out of the graciousness and goodness of your heart, they're so excited about doing business with you, you can bet they're going to want to do it again.

Alan: My personal favorite: You can't move forward without your back end.

Brad: That must be quite a chore. The back end is the most important thing that you'll ever develop. It costs many, many times more in marketing and in administrative cost, for that matter, to generate new customers. If you do everything that we just talked about and do it right or even close to right, these

people are going to be rabid customers. They're going to be biting at the bit to buy more stuff from you because your service, and that's what really is doing it. It's the service. These all revolve around that. Your service is so good, they're going to be predisposed to buy from you again. All you got to do is ask them to. You'd be amazed at how many people don't.

Alan: Where are we? What are we doing?

Brad: We're right there. Oh, right here where it says great book.

Alan: That's right.

Brad: I wrote that.

Alan: Yep.

Brad: See what a copywriter I am? Anyway, the book really is good. It's a terrific book. We finished it. We got real excited. We printed up or had a printer make up, about 35 advanced copies kind of in a manuscript form, and we put them out to people, a cross-section of people that we wanted to get input from. Some of them were the people you've listened to this week already, top marketing experts in their field, because we wanted to get their read on it from an expert point of view. Some of them were small and mid-sized businessmen and women which is who we wrote the book for that were not necessarily tuned into marketing because we wanted to see hey, is our message being received by the people that we wrote it for?

The results were absolutely overwhelming. We were just so pleased, we decided to go ahead, print up a bunch of them, and we're going to figure out some way to move this book.

Alan: How many of you people out there have a product? The hardest part, moving it, right? But we're in the same position. We had this great book. What are we going to do with it?

Brad: We're wrestling with this problem and we're thinking about it and a couple goes by. Like I mentioned earlier, Alan and I do not work out of the same office. Our long distance bills are horrendous. It could choke a horse. He's in Kansas City. I'm in the Tampa, Florida area, and we're on the phone three, four, five times a day. It adds up to about a couple hours a day. One day, he calls me up, says, "Brad, I just took a shower." I said thank you. Not for the reason you guys are thinking. See, you have to understand. Alan gets all his best ideas in the shower, so on days that he takes a shower, we make money. On days that he doesn't, his wife doesn't like it.

This was one of his famous shower ideas. He says, "I got it. I know what we're going to do. This is going to be great. The book is just going to take off like a shot." I said okay, tell me. Well, Alan can't just tell me anything. I know it seems like I'm the long-winded one here. It's because when I'm with him, I never get to talk. He can't just tell me anything. He's a born teacher, so he has to kind of drag it out. He says, "Brad, who do we want to get our book?" I said, "That's easy. We want small and mid-sized business. That's our market." He says, "Where are they?" "They're all over the damn place." He says, "No, no, no, where can you reach them? What do they need? Where do they all go? What do they use?" I'm thinking about it, said, "Well, they all need a telephone." He says, "Yeah, what else?" I don't know, letterhead, business cards, pens, pencils. Oh my holy mackerel, office supplies! He says, "Bingo." All small to mid-sized businesses, or business at all, needs office supplies. He says, "Brad, this is what we're going to do. We're going to find out who is the largest supplier of office supplies in the country. We're going to bring them our book. We're going to tell them what a great book it is, ask

them to read it, and convince them to buy our book to give to all their customers as a premium because their customers are our perfect customers.” I was blown away. I couldn't believe it. I've never seen my brother that smart before. I said, “Alan, that's absolutely brilliant. That's terrific. I see what's in it for us, but why would they want to do that? What's in it for them?”

Alan: Let me ask you a question How many people out there have been to an office supply superstore? An Office Depot, a Bizmart, and Office Max, a Workstation, any of those? Do they all look alike? Are they all exactly the same? You walk in, big tall ceiling, the racks and racks of 8,000 of each type of thing, the low warehouse prices. Their advertising even looks the same, just items and low sale prices, right? What would make you want to go to one instead of another? Is there anything that distinguishes them at all?

Audience: (Off mic)

Brad: This guy's sharp. No wonder he's sitting in the front. He doesn't miss a trick.

Alan: We decided okay, we're going to set them up with a special SOB. We're going to set them up with their own business persona. We want to set one of these office supply companies, and we decided on Office Depot because they're the biggest. We're going to set them up as being totally different than all the others on the premise that where would they be if it wasn't for small businesses? So if all the small businesses didn't succeed, they'd have no customers. In order to help their customers, they were going to be the office supply superstore with a heart. They were going to help educate their customers so that their customers could continue to do more and more business. We wanted to convince them to use our book as a premium to make their customers want to do business with them. That was the SOB we're going to establish for them. So Alan?

Brad: What?

Alan: That's my line.

Brad: Well then say it.

Alan: You're doing all the talking. I get to talk.

Brad: Well then say it. Say it. What was that movie? Say it, say it, say it!

Alan: So I did the typical thing. I'm the brains in the operation but Brad does all the writing. So I says, “Okay, Brad, we have got to write them a letter, and this is what we've got to do.” Go, Brad.

Brad: He's the brains. You all believe that, don't you? I don't think so.

Alan: Was that for me or for him? You guys get our newsletter. It comes from my office, not his. Be careful.

Brad: Okay. Alan and I are brothers, very close, and as you can imagine, there's just a tiny little bit of sibling rivalry, not too much, just a little bit. I mean, I've got a lot of years to catch up on because he was always bigger than me and as kids, he used to always beat me up.

Alan: You think he's older, don't you?

Brad: Shut up. Anyway, my favorite thing on earth to do is to take one of Alan's brilliant, dynamite

ideas and then humble the hell out of him by making it better I like putting the icing on, so I said, "Alan, we're creative people, and you have to remember when you're creative, you have to keep your eyes open. You have to keep your ears open. Look for what other people have done successfully and then adapt it to fit your needs. The only thing original has to be how you adapt it to solve your own particular problem. You know, steal Gary's best stuff.

Alan: Okay, so we had this problem. Here's this giant \$1.10 billion company. They were the target. They're the ones we wanted to hit. We didn't have a mailing list of thousands. We had one. We had to hit them, we had to hit them hard, we had to get their attention. We had one shot and this is what Brad came up with.

Brad: By the way, we did get a 100% response. The power of editorials, as Gary's talked to, is far better than the power of advertising, and I remember the story of how Gary got the Borgnine account. So I got on the phone. I called *Miami-Herald*, which is the local paper for where Office Depot's headquarters is, and I said we're going to do this fantastic promotion with Office Depot. You should write a full page article about it. That's what they did. They laughed at me. They told me to go to hell, so I wrote it myself. Now Alan is passing out some copies of it. We don't have near enough for everybody. He's just going to pass a whole bunch of them out. You can look at it, read maybe just a little bit of it, but don't take too long because I want everybody to get a chance to see it. What we did is we took Gary's concept and did it exactly the way he taught us.

We created the front page of the *Miami-Herald*. We even borrowed their masthead. Does anybody here subscribe to the *Miami-Herald*? Joachim, does that look like it? You bet it does. When it was delivered, we wanted there to be no doubt in people's mind, the people that we targeted, that this would be it. Now the *Miami-Herald* frequently has some little teaser copy things up at the top. We did that. Okay, then of course their masthead, and then the story. Now the lead story was "Common Sense," tying back to the name of the book, "Secrets from the Lost Art of Common Sense Marketing." "Common Sense' Profits Office Depot," and in this story we go on to explain in past tense how this promotion made Office Depot so much money.

Now we did some call ups. We had gotten the names of the CEO, the President, and the Director of Marketing of the company. Now, for example, the CEO of Office Depot is a guy named Dave Fuente. The call out here is such that he couldn't miss, even if he didn't read the whole article. "Fuente pleases sales, reports huge gains generated by hot new promotion. Industry insiders dub the Office Depot CEO the Sam Walton of office supplies." Now if you ran a big office supply company, wouldn't that make you feel good? Well, it made him feel good. Over here, the President of the company is Mark Begelman. Over here, we got "Fuente and Begelman to be honored at a thank-you banquet." Everybody likes to be honored, and we've got some quotes here from some local Miami businessmen. In fact, we even went to the detailed point of using ethnic names. People like to identify with those of the same origin, so I used the Cuban name of a guy in a restaurant business that just was gushing over how the secrets he learned from this book have expanded his business.

Alan: Dave Fuente is Cuban.

Brad: Begelman is Jewish. We used the name of a Jewish guy who is a retailer talking about how much he learned and how much he appreciated them doing that and how he could never thank them enough.

Alan: The third person we went this to was the director of marketing. His name is Mark Clark. He's kind of an asshole, so we filled the rest of it up with caca.

Brad: Paulette, I want you to write it down, Alan said that. I did not because I know how you feel about those things. Anyway, so we took the newspaper article. All the articles on it, and there's, I don't know, probably half a dozen, relate to some facet of the promotion that we wanted to do. I framed it under glass, had it professionally matted and framed. It was gorgeous. In fact, I had one done for my office because I was so sure it was going to work.

I wrote a very persuasive sales letter that I taped to the top middle of the glass. We took a copy of our book and I even went so far to invent a little sticker that we put in the lower right corner, right above my name, with the Office Depot logo on it that said, "Compliments of Office Depot, your 'Common Sense' source for all your office supply needs." The book was taped to the lower right, left corner of the frame. I had it wrapped in conservative wrapping paper. I put a banner around it. We did three of these; one for the CEO, one for the president, and one for the director of marketing.

Alan: Lowest circulation newspaper ever. A circulation of three.

Brad: Of three, and put a banner around it, personal and confidential, to be opened by whichever one it was to go to only, and we had them delivered by a special delivery courier to these people.

Alan: I should butt in here. Let me butt in here a second.

Brad: What's going to stop you?

Alan: Absolutely nothing. We had called up all their secretaries and found out a day right around when we were printing this that they would definitely all be in their office, so we knew they were going to get it. We even went so far as to date the newspaper that day that they were going to get the actual front page of the newspaper.

Brad: That's right. The date on the front page was Tuesday, May 5. It was delivered Tuesday, May 5. Oh, another thing we did – we got kind of an ego thing here. We autographed the books, for example, to Dave. Remember it all happened Tuesday, May 5, 1992. It was all tied in together. It was delivered as scheduled at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. At 4:32, I got a phone call from Mark Clark, the director of marketing. This was followed up by several other phone calls. Eventually, I guess it was 10 days or two weeks later, we flew down, we had a meeting. The end result being we laid out a solid gold promotion for them and laid it in their lap and they committed to buy, print, distribute 250,000 copies of our book. Thank you.

Alan: Now wait a second. We've got to share the downside, too, okay?

Brad: Tell them what happened.

Alan: Okay. I love the people here because nobody here is big business. Anybody here big business? I was going to ask you to leave. I didn't want you to hear what I was going to say.

Brad: Are there any entrepreneurs here?

Alan: I love it. This is a billion seven corporation. We're obviously talking about big business, and when you deal with big business, you have to kind of watch out because I don't know, sometimes they just don't think really well. I don't know if it's these committee things or what.

Brad: No, it's Gary's carbonized caca theory. Is that okay?

Alan: When we laid out this promotion for them, we didn't just lay out, give away this book. We wanted to set up, like we talked earlier, this whole persona of how to be the office supply store with a heart. One of the things we did is we designed a postcard for them to send to all their small business customers. They had all the names on file, and the postcard would say something like, "Okay, we're going to do this promotion. We think it's fantastic. It's a great book. You ought to read this book, but you're special to us and to make sure that we don't run out before you have a chance to get yours, the promotion's going to be next week, just bring this postcard in and we'll be happy to give you one right away." How's that for getting the customers in the store quickly?

Another thing we came up with, there's a beautiful POP, point of purchase poster, with the president, Dave Begelman, holding the book and explaining why people should read this book and why Office Depot's doing it. They didn't do the postcard by the way. They didn't do that, either. Another thing we did is we wrote a wonderful press release. Office Depot is in about 70 different markets and every one of the press releases we did was individualized to that market. What was the headline on it, Brad?

Brad: On the press release, it was "Office Depot To Give Tampa Customers Free Copy of Hot New Business Book," or Miami customers or LA customers or whatever.

Alan: A press release like that normally would get a ton of play. They sent it to the press five days before the ad broke, gave them a whole lot of time to do something with it.

Brad: Guess how many times that was picked up? What happened was we called the stores to find out how the promotion was going and the first few days it was going fantastic. We found out later that they had not done any training with their sales managers. In fact, I was talking to someone here who got a copy of the book and had a friend, and the friend went down there and picked up a whole case of the book. So there was no training of anybody in the stores. They did not set up any displays. All they did is run one ad. Thank God it was the ad that we wrote.

Alan: I was going to say, thank God it was a good ad. In fact, it was a killer ad. The headline on the ad was, "If you own, run, or have anything to do with a business, you simply must read this book." Thank you, Ted. Is he in the room? Thanks, Ted out there.

Brad: Okay, so in spite of all the downside, in spite of how they totally trashed the promotion, it was still tremendously successful. We even got one aspect of it that was totally unexpected and a bonus. In the last three weeks, the phone's been ringing off the hook, and we've actually sold thousands of copies of the book. It seems that people got the book, some of them, read the book, and loved it such that they called my office and it wasn't an 800 number, either, and said, "How can we get some more copies of this? I want to give them to relatives, friends." Some people wanted to give them to all their associates or their managers. Some large chains bought hundreds of them to give to their managers. Others wanted to give them to their preferred customers. All of a sudden, we're selling books like crazy. The book is really good.

Now we should explain something about it. When you set out to design an information-based product, you have to keep in mind how you're going to use it. For example, we knew that we wanted to go to some big hitters, almost corporate types, and in fact in this case, it was a corporate type, to get the distribution of our book. Well, to them, the thing that would be impressive, the format that would be impressive, would be a more conventional-looking book with a more conventional-type price tag. If we went to Office Depot and said we have this fabulous marketing course that we want you to give away free and it's got a cover price of \$99.99 which could easily carry as far as the information, it wouldn't have suited their purpose. The credibility isn't there for a \$99.95 free lead-generator. Remember, you

got to tell them why. How do you explain why am I giving you something for \$100 unless I'm going to hit you up really big time afterwards? People will believe that you're going to give them something for \$15. We went ahead and printed the book and designed it in a conventional, credible – because this looks like the books you see in the bookstores, right? - format with a \$14.95 price on it.

Alan: It easily could've been in a three-ring binder, punched 8 1/2 by 11 with a \$95 price. After all, I want to ask you a question. Who wouldn't pay \$14.95 for a great book like this?

Brad: Is there anybody in this room that wouldn't pay \$14.95 to learn all that?

Audience: (Inaudible)

Brad: I'm real glad you said that, but I'm going to let you off the hook. We're not selling the books here, are we?

Alan: Nope.

Brad: However, we would like to give you a book, but there's one little string. We call it a golden thread.

Alan: Hold on, Brad.

Brad: What?

Alan: We really should go into something else here real quick a second.

Brad: What?

Alan: You know, all the speakers have come up here and they have really spilled their guts. They have shared with you -

Brad: I missed that, didn't I?

Alan: That's okay. I can handle it.

Brad: Okay, you can do it.

Alan: They have really spilled their guts. They have shared with you all their best secrets, the best things that they know, and the reason they're doing this is for the Hurricane Relief Fund that Gary has set up, right? Isn't that the purpose of this? You didn't have to pay to come? But you're going to write a check.

Brad: Now that you've got us on track, be quiet. This is my favorite part. I didn't want him to steal all my thunder. You all are going to be writing a check probably today, I think, at noon today. You're going to be writing a check for an extremely important and worthy cause, the whole reason we're all here, the whole reason that Gary was able to get these world-class speakers here to work with you. Now you probably have in your mind a figure already that you're going to write this check for. Am I right? Do you most of you already have some idea what you're going to write it for? Hopefully it's got a lot of zeros in it before the decimal point. What we want you to do if you would like a copy of our book, I want you to see Alan and/or I. We'll be in the back where we've got the books there.

Alan: We don't have to be there. We've got boxes of book back there.

Brad: Just help yourself. Please only take one and if you would like a copy of the book, I want you to simply add \$14.95 to the check that you're going to write to the Red Cross. Is that fair? Is it? Is it fair? Are you all going to do that? So when the Red Cross lady is here, she's probably going to be adding up all these checks and she's going to say, "What's going on? Why do all the checks end in \$14.95, right?"

Alan: We got your word?

Brad: Do you promise? Okay.

Alan: One more thing, Brad. I got another great idea.

Brad: Okay.

Alan: The book, as we said earlier, was written as a lead generator for our newsletter. It is a fantastic newsletter but I don't want you to take my word for it. We've got a sample issue of the newsletter. In fact, the introductory issue of the newsletter back there. There's at least a copy for everybody. Please only take one. Take it, read it. I think you'll really enjoy it. In there, there's also a sales letter for the newsletter. We want you to subscribe, obviously. We want to go one step further. Anybody that sees Brad or I while you're still here, fills out the coupon on there to subscribe with a check, credit card, whatever, we will donate 10% of the proceeds from us to the Hurricane Relief Fund, also.

Brad: Okay, now you guys really, get a copy of the first issue of the newsletter and read it. We don't want you to give us money just because you've heard that we're brilliant or this or that. Read it. You will like the information. You will want to subscribe, and if you do it now, it lets us write a big check to the Red Cross, too.

Okay, now, let's do one last brain exercise. This is one of my favorite little stories. You're in a very strange land walking down a wandering path. Now you know this land is inhabited by two races of people. One race are called the liars for the obvious reason. They always, always lie. No matter what you ask them, count on it, they will lie. The other race of people are the truth-tellers, and as you can imagine, they always, always, always tell the truth, like Gary Halbert. You're wandering down this beautiful path. It's a serene, wonderful day. You come across a fork in the path. There's a sign by the fork, and the sign says, "Choose your way carefully. One side of this fork leads to slow, excruciatingly painful death. The other side, however, leads to instant fame and fortune." There's a guy standing by the sign, and the sign, continuing to read the sign, says, "You may ask the sign keeper one question and one question only before you make your choice, and you must travel down one side of the fork or the other." What do you ask the guy that's standing there?

Now, I should tell you the two races of people – if you've heard this, don't you say it, Frankie. The two races of people look alike, sound alike, and at times they even talk – no. You watched a lot of TV as a kid, didn't you?

Audience: (Inaudible)

Brad: There's no way to tell them apart. You have no idea which of the two races is the guy standing by the sign. You have to ask him one question. You have to choose your way. Now, we're not going to give you the answer to this one right now.

Alan: Nobody shout it out.

Brad: Nobody shout it out if you've heard it. This is one of those let it kind of gel. Let it sit around a little bit. If you get stumped and you give up, see Alan or I when you come by to sign up for the newsletter. We'll be happy to share the answer with you.

Alan: Okay, I want to leave you with one parting thought. Life is like a poker game. It involves luck. Sometimes you bet. Sometimes you raise. Sometimes you check. Sometimes you bluff. You learn from the people that you're playing with. Sometimes you can win with a low pair. Sometimes you lose with a full house, but no matter what happens, you got to keep on shuffling along. Thank you.