


## MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR THE UNION CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

By Sarah S. Berman, President, The Berman Group, Inc.



I recently spoke at the National Labor & Management Conference and shared my thoughts on marketing strategies for the unionized construction industry, and how to build a brand in the new economic reality currently facing the industry.

I began by highlighting case studies from some of the world's leading global organizations such as Apple, Geico, Coca Cola and Disney. I also shared the top 100 list of best global brands of 2010 and took a closer look at the top 12 brands from 2010, which include (in order of ranking), Coca Cola, IBM, Microsoft, Google, GE, McDonald's, Intel, Nokia, Disney, HP (Hewlett-Packard), Toyota and Mercedes-Benz.

### CREATING A RECOGNIZABLE

Brand One of the shared similarities between all of these brands is the symbol or icon they use to represent their company, and how recognizable these brands are. Well-known brands immediately trigger a thought when consumers see their icons in an advertisement, even without a company name. When people see Ronald McDonald, they automatically think of a Big Mac or a Happy Meal. According to one survey, 96% of all school kids in the United States of America recognize Ronald McDonald ([stunning-stuff.com](http://stunning-stuff.com)) as a symbol of the iconic fast-food restaurant. Mickey Mouse is an icon known around the world – children realize Mickey Mouse and Disney are synonymous before they can even read.

When consumers see one of these top brands, they see a brand they can trust. If an audience views an ad with the Coca Cola polar bear, they perceive a high-quality beverage that they know will be consistent. All of these top brands and products stand for trust, value and quality.

### UTILIZING MARKETING TOOLS TO PROMOTE INTEREST

While many of the top-branded companies have unlimited budgets for advertising, there are several cost-effective tools at our disposal to convey the value, trust and quality delivered by the unionized construction industry, including YouTube,

Facebook and Twitter. These marketing tools can produce traffic to your website and increase your visibility.

Advertisements were originally created to develop interest in a company's products. More recently, ad campaigns have created trust in time-honored companies that typically have not advertised. They have also used humor to increase interest in the advertisements themselves – some ads are as sought after as the games and shows during which they are aired. I noted that Budweiser and Logitech have millions of YouTube hits for their popular commercials.

### DEVELOPING A TARGETED APPROACH

In the unionized construction industry, we can leverage the same approach as the world's leading corporations. By developing and utilizing an icon on all materials, we can create a brand that represents trust and value. The Real Milk campaign is an example of a trusted brand. As one of the most successful print advertising campaigns, people recognize the milk mustache and what it represents—and with the "real" icon, we trust the product. The unionized construction industry should follow in the footsteps of all of these campaigns to develop an image icon or tagline that connotes the idea of a "build union."

### CREATE YOUR CAMPAIGN

To assist unions in creating these campaigns, in 2010 The Berman Group developed the Union Construction Marketing Kit in cooperation with the National Building and Construction Trades Department. The Kit is currently used nationwide by labor and management organizations in remote parts of the country who don't have access to professional marketing capabilities. A consistent voice must be created, and our Kit has assisted national organizations to create that voice.

*About Sarah S. Berman, President, the Berman Group, inc. Sarah S. Berman serves as President of The Berman Group, a full-service marketing, public relations and special events firm based in New York City. The firm specializes in serving business-to-business clients in the real estate, construction and professional services industries. The firm's website can be found at [www.bermangrp.com](http://www.bermangrp.com).*