

Marketing Your Stud

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Introduction

Today, you will cover four topics on marketing. They are important areas of the overall marketing jigsaw, and of particular importance to your stud.

Most of our time will be spent discussing the different avenues of advertising and promotion to achieve the desired impact on prospective customers.

This includes hands on segments and learning techniques for developing your own material.

- 1 Creating an image
- 2 Designing your logo
- 3 Designing your ad.
- 4 Display at events.

“Art appeals to our emotions, graphic communication attempts to transmit information and appeals to our logic”. You will need to use both.

Creating an Image

By purchasing alpaca you have commenced a new business venture. For it to be successful you need to create an image. This image should reflect exactly the selective market your business has decided to represent and designed to entice prospective clients.

- 1 What type of alpaca you will breed, huacaya, suri or both?
- 2 What colour you will breed?
- 3 Will you concentrate on studwork?
- 4 Are you going to offer agistment?
- 5 Will you act as an agent?
- 6 How will the farm fit the image?

Once you have established a direction it will dictate the type of image you will want to create. The best way to create that image is by a logo and a catch phrase that will appear everywhere your stud name goes. This catch phrase should be short and represent the two most important messages in your image. Write down all the words and short catch phrases you might want to use and pick the two best to represent your operation.

- *“Alpacas ... Here to stay”*
Means our industry is determined to be here for a long time.
- *“Solid as a rock”*
Our industry is safe and built on a strong base.
- *“Supreme Genetics”*
means this stud specialise in the top end of the stud market.

Be careful to project the right image, as misrepresentation could be detrimental to your business and the industry.

Designing Your Logo

A logo is used to send a brief, recognisable and constant message. It is an image that people will learn to associate your stud with. The catchier, the easier it will be to remember. It can't be complicated. People should only take a fraction of a second to imprint the image in their memory bank.

Shape and colour will be of great importance.

A good design isn't the only way to get your logo remembered. It will need constant display. If you have unlimited access to finance even a badly design logo will be remembered and often judged “good”. The “Which Bank” advertising campaign, even if you do not bank with them you know their logo and even it's colours. This logo has been forced on you by large sums of money and a clever, catchy comment.

Unfortunately we can't all own banks so we need to use more imagination.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE A CATCHY DESIGN?

Going to a good graphic designer is one way but unless well and properly informed your logo might lack soul. I strongly recommend you spend time with pen and paper – quiet evenings or early mornings are the best time to express your creativity.

Write down your thoughts, doodle and draw as much as you can – you do not need to be an artist, although it does help. With time, shapes and ideas will form from the information gathered. Take it as far as you can then visit your graphic artist. You should have enough with you for them to find your soul.

COLOURS

Colours are important but, as with design it should be simple to remember. People are most comfortable with the primary colours, red, yellow, blue as well as black and white. More than four colours will be an added cost when printing.

Whatever the design you choose to use, use it as often as possible. It should be on your business cards, letterheads, and horse float and at the forefront of all your advertising. It should become as much a part of you as your surname.

Make sure it isn't remembered for the wrong reason, such as poor taste or ugly colours.

Once again it might display the wrong image.

Designing Your Ad

Ads are not necessarily used to sell a product but also to sell your image. So, when you have something to sell, your stud will already be well known.

What will attract a reader to your ad? Firstly, you need to catch the reader's attention, and then you will need to keep them interested.

Remember keep your ad simple. SIMPLE! Once more, SIMPLE.

COLOURS IN YOUR AD

The colours chosen for your logo are to become an integral part of your image. The same colours should be used as a border or to colour your words. Now you only need a picture that will paint a thousand words. (I strongly recommend you start to develop an interest in photography and learn to take good pictures about everything that projects alpaca. Who knows, one day you will take a photo that says it all.)

You have caught the reader's attention and kept his interest with the photo. Now you only need a few well placed words to remember you. I can't stress more, as with everything else, keep your wording simple. Remember, you have a picture that already tells a thousand words. Next publication the same reader will be interested in looking at what you have to say and the third time the same reader might decide to pay you a visit. If you only place one ad your reader will soon forget. Reinforce your image!

You need to look at your advertising as if reading a book. In the first chapter you get hooked, with the second you want to know more and consequently build up to a climax in the last chapters. The same with your advertising – try to keep the reader focused on what you have to say. Tell a story.

One mistake often made is to use a great shot over and over again. You do not want to be known for one photo only – that is the job of your logo. By using the same shot the readers will believe the message to be the same as the last one. You are taking the risk of the readers not paying attention to your ad because their brain tells them, I have read this before.

Picture are not always necessary, but you need to be good with words as was the company Leo Burnett Connaghant & May for designing the "apology" campaign for Subaru.

IS IT EXPENSIVE?

Yes, but you can use your advertising money wisely.

A full colour page is expensive but you could book 1/2 or 1/4 right hand pages for the next four issues. The cost will be less as it is smaller and you will get a discount for booking four issues. The selection of a right hand page will often carry a surcharge but, as with any business, there is nothing stopping you bargaining...

You will have noticed, people have a tendency to pick up a magazine and flick quickly through it (you probably do the same). If you have a catchy right hand column the reader will stop and read.

Display at Events

I wish I were given a female alpaca for every time I have heard a breeder say "I cannot go to this promotion because I have nothing to promote and I would not know how..."

I would be the largest breeder in town. I hate to disappoint you but if you stay at home you can count on one hand the amount of clients you will have knocking at the door.

Promoting yourself might be difficult at the beginning, but don't be deterred – the sooner you start the sooner you will perfect the art.

If not confident you might want to become involved with a regional display as a helper at a few promotional sites but, in all honesty, the sooner you bite the bullet the better for your business.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO START?

Everything you have in the house related to alpacas.

- AAA magazines.
- Regional Newsletter
- Photos of your first alpaca
- Photos of your property
- Fleece
- Alpaca yarns
- Alpaca Garments
- Alpaca books
- Leads and halters
- Cria coats
- Ribbons you might have won at a show
- Stud sign stating clearly where you are (with a contact telephone number)
- ANIMALS (most important)

The amount of display material will determine the size of your display area. There is nothing a bit of imagination can't do.

For example, you could have a great alpaca shot, have it blown out larger than life, mount it on a large display board and use it as a back drop. Then build a farm yard around it with a few bales of hay, some old post rail as a pen and two animals.

I guarantee your display will attract more interest than someone showing all the trophies they have won.

Please, if you have won trophies, display only the most important. Refrain from displaying all your trophies or you might look more like a display for an engraver.

Make sure not to forget your stud name and logo on a board and include your corporate colours as part of the total picture.

Creating display should not be stressful but a lot of fun if you have spent time at home designing it. Once again, work on the basis of telling a story such as a visit to your farm; displaying the day-to-day activities. Make this pleasing to the eye by being balanced.

Always have catch phrases such as "Visit our farm", "Quality stock for sale", "Superior stud males", etc... and do not forget your image is the base for every display. Have something the visitor can take home – information about your stud, your animals, the AAA etc.... and your business card.

One important item to have is a form for people to enter their address should they be interested in visiting your stud or to be invited to your next open day. Build your own mailing list.

When at a promotional show do not stand or, even worse, sit behind your table for any long period of time. Be active and smile. Best of all, get into the pen with your animals as people always want to ask questions about your animals.

A pen of alpaca always enhances a display.

There are inexpensive promotional opportunities you might want to try.

- 1 Have an open day, charge a "gold coin" for an entry fee and donate it to a local charity. Contact your local radio station and request a community service announcement. It will be free and will promote your open day.
- 2 Contact your local newspaper and supply them with photos and editorial about your stud. Book an ad and ask if they will help you by printing your editorial to promote your open day.

It does not always work but most of the time it will. You will need to understand the editor's position and might have to be flexible with your date.

- 3 Customer relations is often an area not considered as part of a marketing plan. It is called "word of mouth", definitely the most potent advertising tool in your bag.
- 4 Source events in your community that might be happy to have you come along and bring a small display. Alpacas at their event might be a way for them to attract people.