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## Narrowcasting Your Audience and Understanding the "Real" Stakeholders in the Modern Business World

February 4, 2009

John Volkmann, corporate vice president of brand and communication at AMD (once called Advanced Micro Devices), knows he has contrarians as customers. He was keynote speaker recently at The Conference Board's Corporate Image and Branding Conference in New York.

Volkmann said, "We try to get people to think in a different way." He talked about brand differentiation at a time when AMD is going up against Intel for customers, and struggling to do so successfully. His audience includes the computer manufacturer, the home enthusiast or tech geek who actually builds computers, and ultimately consumers. Volkmann added he relishes "taking on one of the biggest giants."

Denis Riney, executive VP with BrandLogic, noted that AMD likes the David vs. Goliath marketing strategy: "AMD likes playing the role of the upstart or second guy fighting against Intel," said Riney. "We have done some branding and positioning work for AMD."

The media relations strategy for a brand refresh included business management publications (New York Times, Forbes), technology management like CIO or InfoWorld, and even daily news in key markets like the Austin Statesman to reach employees and Dell management.

Volkmann has found a total target audience of 20 million people to reach. AMD stakeholders include: shareholders, of which 300 institutional investors buy a lion's share of AMD stock; 20,000 enterprise customers like IBM and Dell; 5 million enthusiasts and DIY'ers who build PC units; plus AMD retailers and consumers.

"Our customer is completely unimpressed with hype," he said. "They are the rationale heretics." He added that while many consumers are not impressed with processing technology, "there is about 15% of the market up for grabs."

Brand loyalty is not the driver so themes such as: innovation, smart choices, and those who care about having a choice comprise AMD's target.

On the manufacturing side, AMD has Lenovo, IBM, Sun, and Dell as competitors. "Dell will not suffer fools in their supply chain, so we had to grow up fast as a company."

Therefore, the new tagline of "Enabling the Next Generation" has emerged in the branding effort. AMD also put forth a new campaign at the CES show in January, 2009 in Las Vegas called the "Future is Fusion." The company is now focused more on energy efficient computer microprocessors, visual computing and speed in the gaming world, and next generation technologies.

*This article was written by Mike Smith, CEO of MSBD, Inc. He can be reached at [mike@michaelsmith.biz](mailto:mike@michaelsmith.biz).*

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