

A Holiday Blog From The Good Doctor...

Friday, 11 January 2008

At the end of the year I think those that feel compelled to blog also feel compelled to write something profound . . . a testimony to the past or some insightful revelation about 2008 or the world to come. I fear I have nothing that sweeping to offer - but do want to share a recent thought with our readers. I am driving across the country - from Austin to San Francisco enjoying the "green" feeling at the gas stations that only a Prius can give - and listening to books on CD. I love doing that - I mean, show me a kid that doesn't like being read to! (OK, so I'm just an old kid.)

Thomas Friedman's "The World Is Flat" has taken me from Texas through Arizona - and I found it stunning. Beautifully written and well read by Oliver Wyman it's long -- something like 20 hours - but you feel a lot smarter after listening than you did before. And, if you're part of this global nation called The Experiential Marketing Forum you see the implications of Friedman's convergence treatise for experiential advertising and global brands. He sees three major trends shaping the future; a truly global supply chain and attitudinal shift based upon world-wide, real-time, collaboration and communication; the rapid adoption in nations like India and China of new technologies without the restraints of an existing infrastructure coupled with entrepreneurial desire not only to be on the playing field but to dominate; and the addition of several billion new people into global marketplace.

Open source and rapid advancement of what we had called "3rd world" countries reminds me of the writings of the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky where he pointed out that "a backward country assimilates the material and intellectual conquests of the advanced countries" - and as we now know, can in some cases surpass them. In any case Friedman tells us that when nations become an important part of the supply chain, their economy improves as does the global economic outlook as well. He also points out that being a part of a vibrant and competitive global supply chain serves as a deterrent to war since the reallocation of a country's resources for weapons and warfare clearly take that nation out of the global economy during the period of conflict. And, once it has lost its "place" it may well take years for that nation to regain its supply chain position and stature. Effective messaging and communication - with businesses as well as consumers - is central to the 'flattening of the world' and serves to actually strengthen local and regional identities as well as develop international knowledge of capabilities, products and services.

So, guess what? That's where we come in! It is the open systems that The Experiential Marketing Forum provides that will accelerate this process. When questions are asked concerning how a new bank was introduced - or what was done to support the viral spread of a new application and those of us who have been there provide some advice or a case history the discipline of experiential advertising jumps forward a notch or two - just as Trotsky and then Friedman suggested. The global community being built by The Experiential Marketing Forum is still in its infancy but maturation of that service is taking place rapidly. Soon the impact of those who have led the experiential discussion will broaden and the innovations being introduced in other nations will contribute to the level of service of all practitioners. In advertising - as with technology and commerce - the world is flat.