

“IBU” and the Rise of Niche Marketing.

Information has empowered the marketers, too. The computer gave companies the power to collect, store, access and manipulate data, to turn that data into information, and then use that information to create the most effective strategies.

So now, agencies first must learn about the customers’ *desires* – primarily based on *behavior* and secondarily on other sources like surveys, anecdotal information and customer service reports – and then craft the communication.

Howie Cohen, of The Phelps Group, coined the acronym *IBU* – meaning “I *be* you.” Or, “I am you,” which expresses the idea that a message has a better likelihood of being noticed if it communicates the thought “I understand your needs because I *understand you*.” This is an update on the industry’s former creed, coined by Rosser Reeves in the 1950s, that the first step in determining the message is to find the product’s USP (Unique Selling Proposition). The USP is still important as a point of differentiation. It simply must be in answer to a customer-driven desire.

We must know what the consumer really wants – then be the one they think of for that feature.

Comprehensive, reliable information about the customer is now readily available and accessible as never before. We can look much closer at customer behavior. Demographic, psychographic, and lifestyle information is abundant. Focus groups and other qualitative research devices get more sophisticated every year. We can measure “emotional affinity.” This enables niche marketing to replace mass marketing.

The downside of all this is *information overload*. The objective is to turn the information into knowledge that is actionable. Zeroing in on which data to analyze is increasingly important.

Finding out what the consumer wants and claiming the clients’ products have it, raises the subject of Truth. At The Phelps Group, our *highest value* and our *mission* keep us on course.

We commit to *Truth as our highest value*. Our work influences millions of people daily. Therefore, truth must be our guiding light.

The Case for IMC

Our mission is to do great work for *deserving* clients. We define a deserving client as one whose products enrich the lives of those who buy them.

So, our job is somewhat simplified. We simply need to find the *truth*. And then clearly articulate that truth in a memorable way.

It's a good thing we have great clients, because that challenge alone is plenty taxing!