
THE PROPER WAY TO PROMOTE

Having a great portfolio with client work is one thing. Sending out press releases with samples and photos of client work is another. Technically the client now owns the design, so before you use it in promotions you should get approval from the client. And approvals are best handled if they're done up-front, according to Todd Hays, principal of Todd Hays Group, a public relations firm in Pasadena, Calif., that regularly works with design firms. But, he doesn't have a hard-and-fast rule when it comes to client consent and promotions. "It tends to be handled on a case-by-case basis," he admits.

"We identify a certain project that has potential to promote, and the first question we ask is, 'Will your client be cooperative and allow us to do this?' I have the design firm go to their client and, in a very casual way, query them as to whether or not it would be okay for them to get some press for this," Hays says. In many cases the client gives the go-ahead, but sometimes they'll ask what kind of press you're targeting.

"I try to get as much of a blanket approval as I can so we aren't limited to just the design trade press," Hays explains. He also encourages designers to get written approval. "If it's possible, I get the client to approve a press release — usually by fax. However, there have been cases where the client is busy, but there's no doubt in my mind that we have the approval, so we've gone ahead and sent out a press release. It really depends on your relationship with the client," he says. "The bigger issue is that you don't want to alienate clients."

Hays also warns that there could be legal recourse if you don't receive approval before promoting clients' products or services. "The client more than likely will benefit from any press the design firm gets, but if there's a company that's reticent and not very accepting of it, I advise against promoting the work at all," Hays says.

ONLINE PAPER RESOURCE

Potlatch Corporation has launched a new web site loaded with humor and information to help designers and printers with paper selection, answer printing questions, and more. The site is divided into five easy-to-use sections — *Service*, *Paper*, *Hot*, *Archive*, and *Us*. Each section offers useful information presented with tongue-in-cheek humor.

The site includes merchant and sales office guides, a paper selector and "paper to pounds" calculator, a list of available Potlatch publications and promos that can be ordered online, and a help line staffed by former printers.

The paper selection feature on the paper section of the web site is a useful tool for designers. Users input their requirements for a particular project by specifying their printing needs such as clarity and color snap, and the paper selector lets them know which of Potlatch's quality coated papers best suit their needs. Visit the site at www.potlatchpaper.com.