



Step one of Moser's unique marketing campaign: a sardine can filled with an accordion style "brochure" of 16 images (below and opposite page, right). Step two: a box containing a tiny robot with another accordion card, this one with new images (left). Moser then follows up with an email blast featuring one strong image (opposite page, bottom) to direct viewers to his home page (opposite far right).

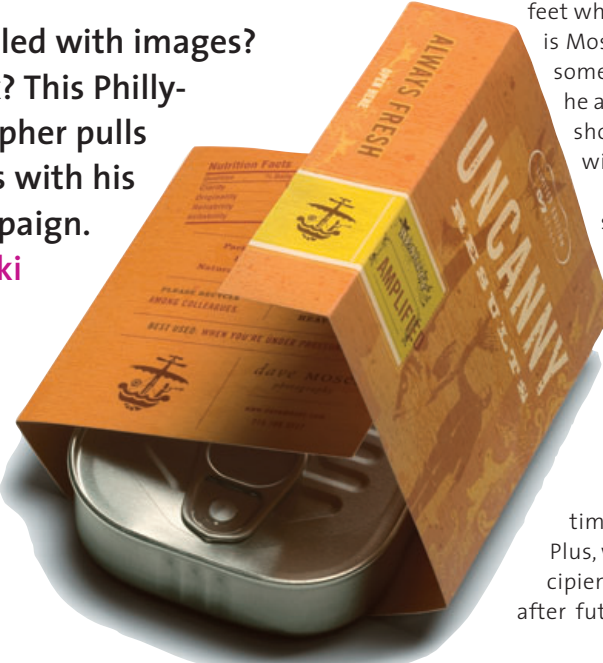
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right stuff

David Moser's Packaged Promos

A sardine can filled with images? A robot in a box? This Philly-based photographer pulls out all the stops with his direct-mail campaign.

By Mindy Charski



THREE YEARS AGO DAVE MOSER, WHO, SINCE 1994 HAS SPECIALIZED IN PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE ON location, had what he calls "kind of an awakening." Though the Philadelphia-based photographer was happy with the work he was getting—many of his clients include pharmaceutical companies in his region—there was so much more he wanted to do. Marketing could be a catapult, and he wasn't envisioning any small-time effort. "In a way, I felt like I couldn't sleep at night if I didn't go for it," he says. "It had gotten to that point."

What materialized from his fervor is an unconventional, expensive, multi-phase and door-opening promotion that even Moser calls "kind of ballsy." His goal was less complicated: "My primary goal," he says, "is to have my name in my top prospects' heads when [they are] calling in books and estimates."

Back in April 2007, Moser began sending out sardine cans (4 x 2 3/4 inches x 1 inch) via the U.S. Postal Service. They are packaged in a sleeve of orange glossy cardstock and are shrink-wrapped. The outside of the wrapper is where the addresses and postage go, along with phrases like "Uncanny Results," and "Never Stale." Inside, in addition to Moser's contact information, are lines like, "Best used: When you're under pressure."

When prospects pop open the tin, they find a strip-folded accordion-style brochure that measures 4 1/2 feet when fully opened. On one side are 16 business-card-sized images and on the back is Moser's client list, as well as a tear-away business card at the end. "I wanted to do something that someone felt compelled to open," Moser says. The humorous feel, he adds, is meant to project that he's fun to work with. Within four weeks, prospects should receive two copy-heavy e-mails that continue the "Uncanny Results" theme with links to his Web site, <www.davemoser.com>.

About a month after receiving the sardine can, prospects get another shrink-wrapped piece. It's a white cardboard box (8 1/2 x 3 1/4 x 3 1/2 inches) that has a cardstock sleeve stamped with phrases such as "Nothing Robotic" and "Robots are Wired Humans Inspired." Tongue-in-cheek copy inside include such lines as "Contact Dave Moser. There's nothing artificial about his intelligence."

In the box, protected by clear bubble wrap, is a thin metal "robot" about 5 inches tall. Two tentacles hold a strip of images that are different from those of the first round. The gizmo jumps around wildly when one winds the handle, upon which Moser's number and Web site address are printed.

Next come two e-mails and a phone call from Anna Adesanya, who works part-time as Moser's marketing coordinator and owns Atlanta-based Positive Exposure Plus, which assists professional shooters with targeted marketing. Adesanya asks recipients for feedback, if they want to see more of Moser's work, and if it's okay to call after future mailings. At press time, Moser had not yet begun sending the last two



pieces, but he says the third mailing features his images with a "trippy kind of scope" and the last has a "reality amplifier," which plays off the new tagline for his business: "Reality Amplified."

By the time Moser's targets receive the entire promo—that's four mailings, eight e-mail blasts and four follow-up calls—they will have been inundated with his communications. "People will know my name by the end of this campaign," he says. "It's saturation marketing."

Moser hopes the vehicles he's using to display his 64 images—about 42 of which were commissioned—will spread virally. That's already happening: After art producer Kat Dalager received the robot, she showed it to nearby art producers. "It was a conversation piece," says the manager of print production at Campbell Mithun in Minneapolis, who has not worked with Moser before.

At press time Moser had a list of about 300 people he had hand-picked to receive his promo. He began sending the sardine cans out in April, but they weren't all mailed at the same time. Rather, since Adesanya follows up with each recipient, the packages are sent in waves of ten. And instead of targeting agencies Moser picks specific creatives whose work he likes and with whom he hopes to build relationships. "Where they're located and what categories they're in are unimportant to me," he says. He sends his promo to individuals at BBDO Atlanta, Cahan & Associates, and The Martin Agency, for instance. He also mails to "decision makers" at magazines, including those who work at *BlackBook*, *Fast Company* and *Vanity Fair*.

His list continues to grow, however, and Moser expects that 150 to 200 additional prospects will receive the sardine can and the subsequent elements. (He printed 550 of each mailer, so he has room to expand.) The effort has gotten behind schedule, and it is likely that the initial 300 will be getting their final mailer in January 2009 and the rest will receive their last one by April.

It's worth noting that there are 1,330 people who receive the e-mail blasts but not the mailers. The e-mails for these prospective clients, whom Moser has had contact with over the years, mostly have the same content as the messages Adesanya sends to the others.

Adesanya isn't the only one who has had a role in the promo. The awakening Moser had three years ago prompted him to hire Ian Summers, a creative coach based in Easton, Pennsylvania. "I really needed someone to hold me to task," Moser says. "The main, core thing was marketing. We started deciding: Who do I want to work for and what do I want to shoot?"

Then, last year, the shooter began looking for a graphic design firm and hired Partners Design in



Bernville, Pennsylvania. He later brought aboard David Samson, creative director of the AdVile Agency in Los Angeles, to handle copywriting. The creatives, including Summers, helped not only with the promo but also with Moser's branding. "Looking back on my career, I had left marketing to myself and it never got done," Moser says of the reason he worked with a team. Indeed, aside from his Web site and advertising on source sites such as *Workbook.com*, the shooter had not done much marketing before.

Not surprisingly, this effort hasn't been cheap. Moser doesn't wish to disclose the total costs of the promo, but says they are "extraordinary." Some specific expenditures: It cost \$4,500 to print three portfolio strips and two sleeves. The wind-up robots cost \$7.50 each and printing his contact information on the handle added \$1.50 per piece. The 550 sardine cans and assembly cost \$1,563, and postage for each can was \$1.36. The 550 cardboard boxes for the robots totaled \$258.

Meanwhile, over at Campbell Mithun, Dalager has hung Moser's images on her wall and says his work is solid enough for her to consider him for future projects. "Now I'll remember Dave Moser," says Dalager, who receives about 30 mailer promos a week and 30 e-mail promos a day. "I'll remember his promo. I'll remember the fact I went to his Web site. If I'm having to think of people for different types of projects, that's all recognition, the same way branding works when I go to the grocery store."

The promotion piece has already yielded assignments. Moser says 12 to 14 jobs are in the works, prompted by the effort. Another project, shooting portraits that a commercial bank can use for external collateral, emerged after someone with that undisclosed client received an e-mail from Moser.

But since his promo is all about cultivating relationships, Moser says he's not expecting large returns just yet. "I see all of this as a long-term investment," he says. "I'm in this for the long run. I run a strong business without marketing. The idea is: how could this not bring more business to the table?" □