

CreativeNews

The Gate's Manifesto Heads to Bookstores

—BY KAMAU HIGH

NEW YORK Who says agency self-promotion is dead? After reading an Adweek article last month about StrawberryFrog touting its failed pitch for Hyundai, at least one agency responded with a promotion of its own.

Beau Fraser, managing director at The Gate in New York, wanted to make sure we saw an ad the agency ran in *The New York Times* in November 2005.

The ad, picturing a cow with a gun pointed at its head, talks about how The Gate wants to kill off the “sacred cows” in the advertising business, such as “It’s okay to act like a jerk if you’re talented” and “No one reads body copy.”

In the ad, the cow stands next to a lamppost with a Madison Avenue sign. At the top, written in Ransom Note Helvetica, are the words, “Death to all sacred cows.”

The slogan serves as the rallying cry of the agency, whose clients include CFA, Colonial Life and Unum, and is also the title of an upcoming book.

Death to All Sacred Cows will be published by Hyperion Books next March with Fraser, along with David Bernstein, ECD, and Bill Schwab, CD, listed as authors.

The Hyperion offer stemmed directly from the ad, Fraser said.

“The book is about the cues, standards and criteria against which decisions are made,” said Fraser. “They may have been created 30 years ago and had relevance

DEATH TO ALL SACRED COWS.

“Never say something offensive in a headline.”
BANG.

“Clients should be charged based on hours worked.”
BANG.

“It’s okay to act like a jerk if you’re talented.” BANG.

When you think about it, there are a lot of sacred cows in the advertising business. And we think it’s high time someone shot them. Dead.

We’re The Gate Worldwide and we were born with an itchy trigger finger.

First of all, we believe people are less likely to buy when they think they’re being sold.

Little wonder direct mail is called junk mail. Email blasts are considered spam. And guerilla tactics are written off as graffiti. Or worse.

The problem, however, isn’t with the media. It’s with the advertising agencies. Too much of what our industry creates either chases, harangues or interrupts the very people we’re trying to seduce.

Which naturally leads us to this conclusion: true success comes not from selling to customers, but by attracting them.

How do we get paid to attract customers to you? By killing another sacred cow.

Sorry to be difficult, but we don’t believe in being paid an hourly rate.

After all, what if a great idea takes thirty seconds to invent? Does that mean we should charge you \$1.50 for the idea?
Of course not.

That’s why we split our compensation in three units. Brainpower (the highest price) for generating the ideas. Arms and legs (a commodity price) for executing those ideas. And a bonus structure based on the results of our work. In short, the more money you make, the more money we make.

A perfect segue to what is arguably the most famous sacred cow: “A good idea sells itself.” BANG.

Having a good idea is one thing. Selling it is another. And that, young grasshopper, has cost implications, too.

If you approve our work and sell it into your management, it saves us time. Which saves us money. Money we can then cheerfully return to you in the form of a nice discount. Or some frilly lingerie. Your choice.

Truth be told, there are many more sacred cows we’d like to sacrifice for the greater good.

If you’d like to hear about them, call 212-508-3400 and ask for Beau Fraser, David Bernstein or Bill Schwab.

Trust us. It’ll be a fun conversation. Almost as much fun as killing this sacred cow: “No one reads body copy.”
BANG.

the gate

then, but now that category or product has changed they are no longer relevant.”

The book is aimed at a general business audience, but Fraser hopes younger executives will take particular notice. “The tone of voice in the ad is a little sarcastic

and a little snarky and that’s what we did in the book,” Fraser said.

The Gate will handle advertising for the book, with a Web site and book tour already planned. “The meetings should be really short,” said Fraser.