HOW TO PUT PIZZAZZ IN YOUR TRAINING AND OTHER SECURITY MATERIALS

By Steven R. Keller, CPP

Every Security Department, no matter how small, issues--or should issue-- written materials to staff and other people. Some of the material is seen by people outside of the security operation and some is seen only by department members. Some is even seen by members of the public outside the company or institution.

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How well we protect our assets and employees depends in part on how good our security operation actually is. But it also depends, to a great extent, on how our programs are perceived. Our security image serves as a warning to those who might try to harm us in the same way that a medieval fort presented an image of strength to those who might attack it. If our image is one of weakness, we can become a target. If it is seen as less than fully professional, we face the possibility that we will be seen as weak.

There are many ways that we present an image. One way is through the materials we publish. Training material for our staff can be perfectly acceptable in content but may appear unprofessional. While it is not fair or just that very good material should be less acceptable than material with "pizzazz," it is a fact. Material we present to the public such as "Visitor Sign-In Sheets," "Incident Report Forms," as well as other instructional materials like employee security manuals show our professionalism to the public. Items we provide to other staff such as property passes, orientation booklets, key control materials, ID cards and forms, and staff training materials present an image to staff. The training manual, workbook, and other departmental materials we provide to our own security personnel instill confidence in our leadership and professionalism and provide "legitimacy" for our programs.

So what can we do to maximize our image? One thing we can do is to put some "pizzazz" in our issued materials. That's not hard to do. Let's assume that you have a small operation; that you have no professional assistance like an artist or a graphics expert on staff. No problem. Anyone can improve on his or her materials. Let's assume that for

purposes of this program we are referring to an "Employee Orientation Manual," which you intend to give to all employees telling them what you want them to know about working in your facility and following your procedures. Here are some hints:

CONTENT

Garbage in. Garbage out. That's a computer term, but it's appropriate here. Before you can improve your written materials, you need to make sure that they are complete, orderly, clear, concise, and appropriate. It must be organized in a manner which makes it readable to people at various levels in the organization.

TYPEFACE

Let's assume that no matter how bad your materials look and no matter how little you know about this topic, your materials are not handwritten. If they are, stop! Please! A basic element in any written communication is the typeface. "Typeface" refers to the type style or "font" in which the document is written. Type is measured in "points," not inches. Some typewriters have type styles or fonts which are more readable than others. Some even have changeable typestyles. If you don't have a typewriter with a typeface which is readable, consider renting one. Better yet, consider having your draft retyped by someone with a word processor who can print it on a laser printer. Few companies lack a computer and laser printer these days so this should be your goal as well.

Avoid using "fancy" typestyles (Ex. London, Avante Garde, etc.). You aren't trying to win a contest to see how different you can be. Avoid script, italics, huge type, etc.

REPRODUCTION

You will need to reproduce your materials, and the most common way is to have them printed at a print shop. You have a right to expect that your materials will be neat and "clean." If they are not, find another printer or have them print them over. Virtually all printing today is lithoprinting where your copy is photographed by the printer, a "plate" is made, and the press prints from the image burned into the plate.

You can photocopy materials, but there will be a loss of quality. Nevertheless, many forms and other materials can be successfully copied. Be certain that your copy machine is properly serviced and is making good copies. If it is not, invest in a service call to have it's quality improved.

There is little that detracts more from a departmental image than poor photocopies of training and other materials. If your machine is not working well when you need copie s, go to a speed copy shop and pay the price for a supply to tide you over until your copier is producing quality copies.

Sometimes, within a limited budget, you can have the best of both worlds. Let's say your "Orientation Manual" is acceptable if it is photocopied on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. You can still prepare

a nice cover for it using slightly heavier colored paper and have it printed in colored ink. Staple the sheets in the upper left corner and you have an attractive product. Most copy machines will accommodate many types of paper.

BOLD TYPE

Bold type, such as on the headings in a booklet, can really dress up the final appearance. Don't mix typestyles. If you use a plain type for the body copy, use a plain type for the headlines. Stick to one "font" within a document or group of documents.

There are several ways you can get bold type. The easiest is to have it typeset by a printer or graphics house if you don't have a word processor. If you pay to have one word typeset, you pay approximately $15 set-up, plus the cost of the time involved to set the one word, and this is usually a minimum of one half hour. If you have a whole page typeset, you pay the $15 plus an hourly rate, usually the half hour. So be efficient. Do everything all at once.

Another, less expensive way, is to use pressure sensitive letters such as "PressType." After a little practice, you will be able to do it relatively quickly.

PICTURES AND LINE ART

Unless you have a bigger budget, don't try to reproduce pictures. They won't reproduce well. But line art will. Line art is the artwork you see in ads in the newspaper or places like the phone book's yellow pages. Pictures have shades of gray. Line art is usually black or white or the artwork has been screened, i.e. a dot or line pattern has been put onto them so they will reproduce.

There are several places you can get line art. You can buy it. Good bookstores and graphic arts stores have books of copyright free "clip art." Ask for it by that name. You simply cut out what you need and paste it up. (See "Cut and Paste.") Clip art books are relatively inexpensive. Or, you can buy electronic clip art for use with your computer. There are many inexpensive programs with this type of art. But if you really need "security oriented" clip art, you may not be able to find it on disk. So, if you want to use a computer to set your type, you may have to take any non-electronic clip art that you find to a computer service bureau and have them "scan" it onto a computer disk. Then you can use it with your page make-up program.

You can get your own clip art by cutting out artwork from magazines, yellow pages, etc. Don't infringe on anyone's copyright. Let's say you want to place a small piece of artwork next to your section of the manual pertaining to "First Aid." Check the yellow pages, and I'm sure you'll find some acceptable artwork pertaining to a medical cross. It won't reproduce in red, but it will reproduce. Actually, the yellow pages are not the best source of artwork because of the quality of

the paper used, but you can find a lot of nice clip art in magazines, etc.

Cut and Paste

How do you get the "copy" onto the paper? You cut out the clip art and type and paste it up where you want it on a sheet. You end up with a sheet of "camera ready copy," that is, copy that is ready to be "shot" by the printer's camera so a printing plate can be made. The "paste" is actually rubber cement. Cut and paste is still commonly used, but is quickly being replaced by computer set type and graphics.

You may have noticed that copy machines and printer's cameras are "blue blind." Most very light colors of blue won't show up when copied. Graphic arts stores sell blue pencils which you can use to draw straight level lines to help you keep your copy straight when pasting it up.

When creating a cut and paste camera-ready copy, be as neat as you can. The edges of the pasted up sheets won't show if they are pasted down properly. The printer's camera won't show edge lines like a copy machine will. If you intend to photocopy the sheet, your edge lines will show. So take some "White Out" typewriter correction fluid and paint the edges so they won't show when the sheet is copied.

You can't just paste things up at random. Your work must have some artistic merit. Don't crowd your copy. Use white space in margins and between paragraphs. Look at some magazines to see how their copy is laid out. Try to copy their layouts until you get the hang of it. If you buy page make-up software such as "Pagemaker" or "Newsroom," you can also buy "templates" that you can follow for newsletters, manuals, etc. in case you lack experience in page layout.

The classroom session will provide examples of cut and paste and give more detail on how it is done.

Tools of the Graphics Trade

Some tools of the graphic arts trade that you should have are: a non reproducible blue pencil, a "C-thru" grid ruler, a bottle of rubber cement with a brush on applicator, "Press Type," several rolls of "Chartpak" pressure sensitive graphics tape for making borders, a good typewriter, typewriter correction fluid, and a clip art book.

For those wanting to use a computer, "Pagemaker" is the best page make-up software. Clip art is available from a variety of sources. Go to your software store or find hundreds of programs in mail order ads in computer magazines.

Training Materials

Once you have a paste-up sheet, you can use it to make overhead projection cells for training your guards. But what about slides? If you photograph the paste-up sheet, you end up with a black and white slide? Worse yet, the paste up lines will show.

The best way to make slides is to send your black and white art to service

bureaus like Visual Horizons, located around the country and have them photographed in the colors you specify. Of course, if you have a computer, you can use programs like "Persuasion" (for Macintosh) or "Harvard Graphics" (for MS-DOS) to make slides. Send the disk to the service bureau or send the data via modem. A number of programs are available for making forms.

Workbooks can be put together quite easily. They don't have to be of high quality, and they can be bound at print shops or copy shops using the plastic spiral binders at a cost of about $.50 each.

Of course, there is often training materials available for free from vendors or even the government. Fire extinguisher companies, for example, produce handouts on operating the equipment.

CONCLUSION

The next time you do a "Visitor Sign-in Sheet," be sure that it is professionally typeset or typed in a nice typeface. If you photocopy it, be sure to protect the original and make new copies from the original only. To preserve the quality of the reproduction. Paste up a logo. You'll have a very good quality product.

Visit an art supply store and look through their catalog. Look at the products on sale. You can do just about anything if you have the right tools. You'd be surprised how many inexpensive tools are available to you.

Experiment with all of the graphic arts tools available to you. Use tasteful colors when selecting colored paper and ink. Remember that neatness counts!

You'll be proud of your creations!

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