



CAB Corner on Quality (graphic file logo for heading available on request)

October 2002

Cut to the chase

By Deborah Leonard, CAB Marketing-Communications Director

On occasion, I have been asked what I really do for a living. “I mean no disrespect,” is the usual preface, “but what does someone in marketing actually do?” My answer is simple and direct: We wade through the matrix of information everyone else builds to find the one key message that will inspire the customer to make a purchase.

Believe me, finding the information is easy. Convincing the creators of the tomb of knowledge that the rest is not needed is the real job.

For years marketing departments have brought in outside experts, held focus groups, searched the archives, and more recently surfed the Web for support—all to convince their own company insiders that “marketing” may have found the key.

“That’s all well and good,” answers the matrix builder, “but you forgot to tell them about this and that, and this, too, and that, also.”

Putting the seller in the buyer’s position is a key responsibility for any marketing department. Trust me, it’s like pulling teeth with string and an open door – very, very painful for both parties.

Ever been on the receiving end of too much information? Remember the time your wife tried to explain the intricacies behind the need for new window treatments when all you really wanted to know was how much it was going to cost you? Wives, can you recall any of the technical features of the new minivan your hubby was so proud to explain to you? I mean other than the automatic sliding side door, which is all you really wanted from the vehicle.

Over the past two years, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) has worked to streamline its message and unify a premium look for the consumer. The tag line rolled out early this year, *Angus beef at its best™*, serves to verbally position CAB at the top. It is the perfect compliment to the company's premium logo introduced last year. Situated for release in 2003, the new consumer campaign combines an experience we have all shared with the one fact no other branded beef can claim.

Featuring a breathtaking photo of the power and magnificence of Niagara Falls the ad simply reads, "Mouthwatering would be an understatement." The one key selling point, "Only 8 percent of all beef earns the *Certified Angus Beef®* brand."

As much as we toil on genetics and efficiencies to produce the best Angus beef available, the consumer's only concern is great taste. They have no affection or connection with the history on how CAB's eight specifications have set an industry standard so high that me-too brands envy our leadership position. The consumer only wants to trust that we deliver a consistently great eating experience. We only need to convince them to trust us.

How many of us know the exact formulation of our favorite soft drink? We simply trust that no matter where we are in the country or where we are purchasing that product, it tastes just the way we remembered.

Recently, CAB restructured itself to become a more efficient selling machine. Marketing-Communications was assigned the task of creating the company's marketing plans for increasing brand awareness at the consumer and trade levels. Retail, Foodservice, International and Value-added divisions were grouped to create a strong synergy throughout the company. The first group goal was to submit sales plans, which were part of the recently approved 2003 budget.

The next frontier for our team of in-house marketing experts is to develop supporting materials to assist the sales divisions in achieving the established goals.

We have advised our executives to buy more string and stand clear of the doors.

END