

Mission-Critical Marketing

For finance firms, the trade comes second. First come the customers

At Empire Trust, an up-and-coming investment house specializing in financial risk-management, they call it "mission-critical marketing." Sure, Empire's trading operation takes advantage of the rapid development cycle of NEXTSTEP to offer innovative financial instruments ahead of the competition. But Empire is on the vanguard of firms that have taken the advantages of NEXTSTEP one step further by applying it to a function that may be the most critical of all – acquiring new business and servicing existing accounts.

For Empire's brokers, traders, and salespeople, mission-critical

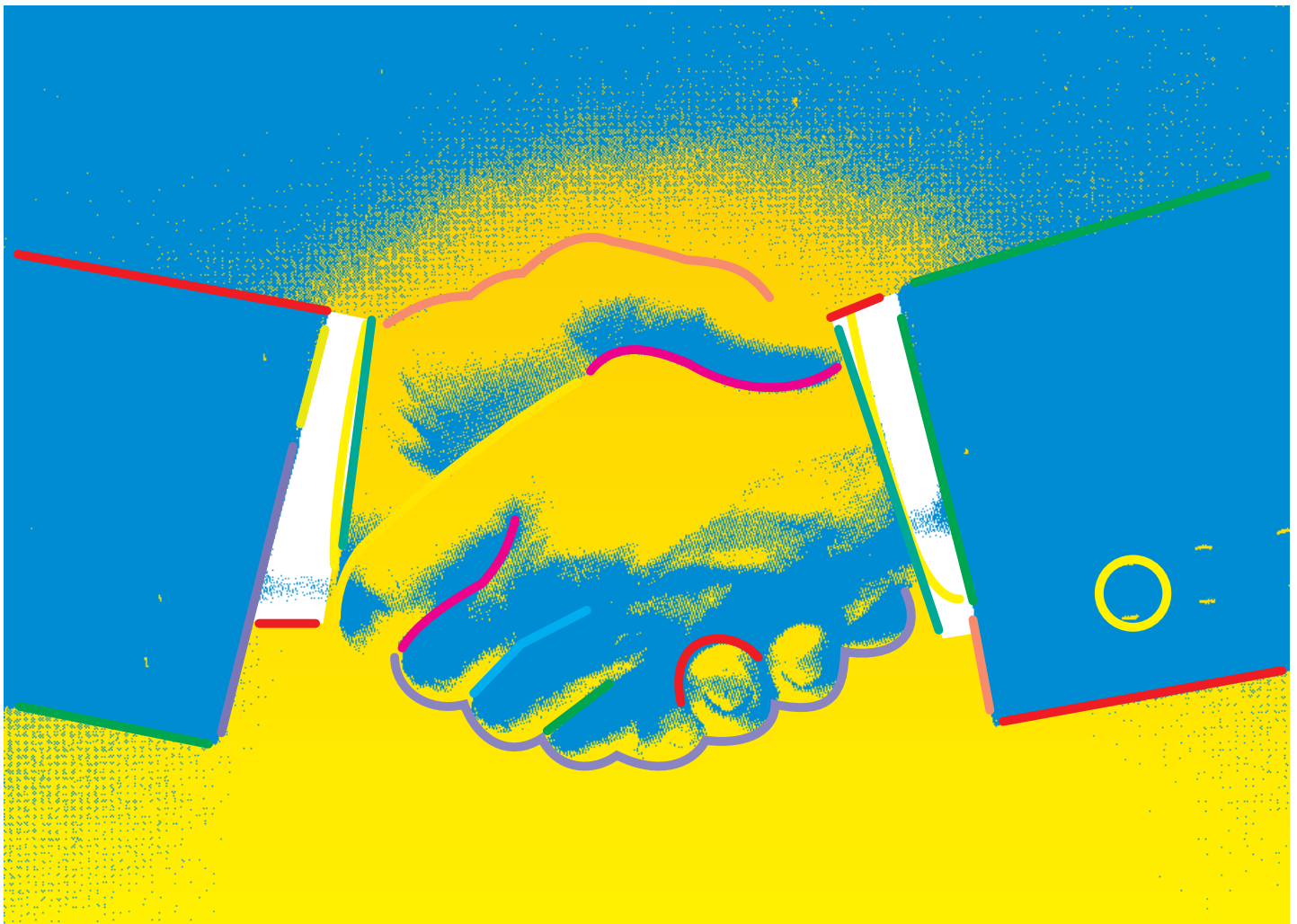
marketing means staying in front of the customer with information-dense presentations, reports, letters, and routine customer communications. As much as its specialized financial expertise and advanced trading technology, effective customer communications serves Empire as a strategic weapon in today's highly competitive financial markets.

Empire knows that business-process reengineering does not begin and end in the data-processing department. It covers all aspects of the business, including the sales and marketing functions that are instrumental at the front end of the process in generating new business. By applying powerful graphics tools with the collaborative environment of NEXTSTEP to leverage the resident expertise of the company, Empire Trust and other financial services firms have discovered that improved sales and marketing programs can lead to a more robust bottom line.

Financial services firms have traditionally maintained a low profile in their customer documents and communications for two reasons. Because they need to project a solid, conservative image, they have shied away from anything that looks flashy. Also, since their revenue comes from executing trades, traders are not motivated to spend time developing new methods for customer prospecting and service.

After all, if Tony Trader can make \$1 million a day for the firm by processing transactions, why should he fool around making his documents look fancy?

The result is that banks and investment firms have relied on a combination of impersonal documents for customer prospecting and expensive direct contact for customer service. These approaches



may project a sober image and clear time for traders to do what they do best, but they are not efficient and impactful forms of communications in an age where a host of aggressive financial firms are all chasing the same pool of investment dollars.

By focusing on improved customer communications through the use of NEXTSTEP's rich set of graphical publishing tools, Empire has gained competitive advantage by leveraging its institutional knowledge and expertise, reducing the costs of person-to-person customer service, and encouraging cross-discipline entrepreneurship throughout the firm.

Some examples:

- While most financial services firms go to client meetings with overly general, prepackaged sales presentations, Empire's slide shows are highly graphical, timely, and customized to the specific opportunity. By selecting from a library of financial tables, charts, and document formats, Empire's salespeople can quickly produce presentations that specifically target a prospect's needs.

- As a mid-sized firm without the resources of its bigger competitors, Empire's marketing department can produce materials that give it the presence of a bigger firm without the use of expensive outside marketing services. For example, the company now stays in contact with its customer base by mailing a monthly newsletter of financial news and investment advice. Producing this highly visual document represents a part-time job for a couple of mid-level marketing associates.

- Individual brokers, traders, and officers throughout the firm produce their own customer communications incorporating graphics and up-to-the-minute financial analysis. These documents may be as routine as a faxed trade confirmation, but they give the appearance of personalized customer service – important for generating repeat business. While very few of the financial specialists at Empire would consider themselves computer experts, they find it very easy to generate impactful customer communications.

- Empire's training department was one of the first groups within the firm to catch the NEXTSTEP bug. It began by producing materials for its internal professional development needs, but has now begun to offer investment seminars as a new customer service and profit center.

- This year, Empire is planning to produce a multimedia supplement to its annual report on a CD-ROM. The disk gives Empire's customers, many of whom are installing NEXTSTEP systems to gain access to the supplement, the ability to export live financial information to spreadsheets and databases for deeper analysis at the customer site. It also allows Empire to tell its story with sound and full-motion video in addition to the text and images of the printed report.

The tools for doing all this were readily available to Empire under its standard desktop operating environment, NEXTSTEP. GS Corporation, the sponsor of this Solutions Suite CD-ROM, provides a complete line of its own graphics tools as well as those from other publishers and manufacturers.

For hardware, Empire's use of NEXTSTEP accelerated when the operating system software became available on industry-standard Intel- and RISC-based workstations. Canon's ObjectStation was built from the ground up as a NEXTSTEP host, providing the design integration of NeXT's now-defunct hardware with a vast performance boost. Canon is also the source for the industry's best color scanning and printing devices, which Empire has deployed in its marketing department to provide quality input and output services to employees throughout the firm.

The key to mission-critical marketing with NEXTSTEP is the powerful suite of graphics software that takes advantage of the

benefits of NEXTSTEP to provide easy yet powerful document-creation, editing, and output. The tools include software for desktop presentations, document design and layout, charting, PostScript editing, scanning, and color-managed output.

A critical piece of software for tying together all the elements is GS Corp.'s Collaggi Palette, the application used on this CD-ROM to catalog applications and documents. At Empire Trust, Collaggi Palette is the central repository for all kinds of sales and marketing information, which can be easily accessed and reused, thus leveraging the skills and knowledge resident in the company for use by all its employees.

NEXTSTEP itself serves as the integrating environment for collaborative work throughout the firm. Group software for email, customer management, financial information access, and scheduling goes hand in hand with group software for producing outstanding communications. With NEXTSTEP's advanced Object Linking, live financial information from outside information services or from the firm's own computers can be connected directly to customer documents. Another evolving NeXT technology, its NEXTIME full-motion video software, is expected to provide a further enhancement in conveying information to Empire's customers.

While NEXTSTEP first took hold at Empire among financial analysts developing new trading software, its impact has spread throughout the company through innovative sales and marketing programs for generating new business and servicing the existing customer base. As a result, Empire Trust has emerged as a leader in its growing segment of the financial services industry. What could be more mission-critical than that?