

## ▶ Welcome to the Jungle, Baby!

BY KIM LONGETEIG, FRBMA

Trying to focus your marketing efforts on physicians, patients, hospital partners, and community leaders is creating some *Blurred Lines*. These days you have to manage the experience of multiple audiences, and to say *The Times They Are a-Changin'* would be an understatement. There will be days when there *Ain't No Sunshine* and you may want to say *Take This Job and Shove It* because referring physicians are complaining, and getting into their office feels like *Access Denied*. But *When the Whip Comes Down*, and you feel like you're *Running on Empty*, remember to take *One Day at a Time*. A new, great idea will come your way and you'll be thinking *If I Had a Million Dollars*, these would surely be the *Glory Days*.


If you're wondering what that was all about, let me tell you. Prior to presenting the first-ever "Marketing Deep Dive" at the RBMA Fall Educational Conference in Boston, my co-presenter and I conducted a survey that was posted on the RBMA Marketing Forum. We asked some serious questions, but knowing how the creative minds of marketers work, we also decided to have a little fun and ask two light-hearted questions. One of those was "If you had to pick one song title that best describes the current state of the radiology industry and the marketing challenges associated with that—what song would it be?" The song titles that are mixed into the paragraph above were the responses and reflect the intense state of the radiology industry. If you pair the familiar sound of Guns 'N Roses' lead singer Axl Rose with the many challenges radiology marketers face, you might agree it's like a jungle out there.

Differentiation continues to be a hot topic for radiology marketers who responded to our survey. Fortunately, relationship marketing, a current buzz phrase and newer focus in radiology, presents new opportunities. Managing the experiences and relationships of customers is not a new marketing tactic, but for radiology marketers it's never been less about "the big white machine" and more about the experience the imaging consumer has at your facility than it is now. Some of the ways our survey responders are doing this include increased educational opportunities by communicating directly with patients through videos on their websites, increased M.D.-to-M.D. communication, portals for physician and patient scheduling requests and focusing on providing the attentiveness, speed, accuracy, value, and convenience the ever-demanding patient wants from their appointment along with the price point to match.

New relationships with hospital partners are also emerging and responders are finding new ways to participate and be visible even in contentious times. Joint marketing of services,

adding administration to your list of lunch-and-learn appointments, contributing to their newsletter or blog, participating on committees and with foundations and fundraiser events, and educating staff of the services the radiology department offers help keep these lines of communication open.

It's not really all about the money. Or is it? Two more of our questions asked about the importance of marketing based on exam price and about budget cuts. As you might imagine both were consistently hot topics for our responders. Many marketers are either being asked to do more with the same budget or have seen budgets slashed to reduce or eliminate some forms of marketing or to supplement other areas of the practice. In tough times, it is important to be smarter with marketing and advertising dollars. Lower-cost media such as social media may be a smart marketing investment instead of more costly traditional media. On the same note, marketing specifically to patients with cost-differentiation information between imaging centers and hospitals and other competitors is on the forefront. Marketers are focusing on educating patients on the right questions to ask when shopping prices, about their choices for imaging providers, and the value of service and expertise.

Just one more thing. The second of the two light-hearted questions was, "If you had a dream where you were given the opportunity to hire a staff person for your department, what type of person would you hire and what would you have them focus their energy on?" Most responses leaned toward converting champion physicians into marketers and just having an extra person to help manage all of the marketing tasks. Without question though, my favorite response was, "Someone who could capitalize on the ideas batted around to grow the business." We decided to call that person C.I.C.: Chief Idea Catcher, Grower of Business. I want that title! 



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founded Ali'i Marketing & Design in 2006. She has worked, collectively, in marketing, advertising, graphic design, and social media for over 18 years. Kim is an active member of the RBMA and currently serves on the RBMA Board of Directors as secretary. She is chairperson of the communications committee and previously headed both the educational materials and products committee and the marketing committee. Several pieces of her design work have earned RBMA Quest Awards, and she was the recipient of the RBMA Global Achievement award in 2011. Kim can be reached at 808.769.4351 or [kim@alidesign.com](mailto:kim@alidesign.com).