



Marketing Manager Beth Tarnoff and COO Tony Byerly discuss Stanley CSS vehicle logo designs with colleagues.

Marketing Monster of the Midway

By Rodney Bosch

In the time since the inaugural SAMMY Award prize was bestowed one evening in 1995, a select few companies have distinguished themselves as perennial finalists, while fewer still have taken home multiple trophies in the same year. But only one company can tout itself as victor of the rigorous Overall Integrated Marketing Program category for three years running.

That unequalled feat was achieved on the eve of ISC West 2008 at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas by HSM Electronic Protection Services, newly renamed Stanley Convergent Security Solutions (Stanley CSS), of Naperville, Ill. Not bad for a company that was formed in 2004 and first entered *SECURITY SALES & INTEGRATION*'s sales and marketing and installation competition in 2006.

In a brief period, Stanley CSS has built a top-class reputation for its conceptualized marketing campaigns and uniquely-themed trade-show booths.

Its unrivaled showing at the SAMMY Awards has earned the company a reputation for having some of the strongest and most unique marketing collateral in the industry. "A big challenge is continually coming up with ideas that top what we did last year," says Stanley CSS Marketing Manager Beth Tarnoff. "It is a great honor to be recognized for these efforts, especially for the third year in a row."

Based on the quality and breadth of its program, one might assume Stanley CSS spends lavishly on all its marketing endeavors. On the contrary, a super lean in-house marketing operation goes about its creative toils justifying every dollar. It's a well-oiled machine that even the smallest security contractor can glean insight to strengthen their own promotion and sales efforts.

Success, Growth and Change

In each of the past three SAMMY Award competitions Stanley CSS has received six nominations and won in one other category to go along with its top marketing program prizes, including the 2008 top Commercial/Industrial Sales Brochure. All of that marketing acumen exacted in the SAMMYS is testament to what has helped fuel Stanley CSS' breakneck organic growth during a time of quaking corporate evolution.

Originally a partnership between privately held investment firm GTCR Golder Rauner LLC and Jim Covert and his senior managers, HSM came into being to acquire the sputtering security alarm monitoring business of Honeywell Int'l. In late 2006, after a two-year holding period, the ownership group sold the now thriving company to Stanley Works Inc. for \$545 million. Stanley Works said at the time the price equated to about 2.7 times HSM's \$200 million in annual sales and 12 times the target's EBITDA.

Stanley Works soon made plans to structure a business unit to house all of its electronic access control and monitoring businesses, including HSM, with annual sales of about \$600 million. And so at ISC West 2008, Stanley Works announced it would combine its Stanley Systems Integration unit with HSM to create Stanley CSS, led by President Brett Bontrager and former HSM National Accounts leader Tony Byerly, as COO.

According to Stanley Works, the HSM brand, too valuable a commodity, is not going to fade into oblivion. The HSM National Accounts Program lives on as a branded entity within Stanley CSS.

Creativity Is Key

Each year an independent panel of judges is charged with selecting the *crème de la crème* among commercial/industrial and residential SAMMY entries in 12 categories, such as print advertisement, sales brochure, company newsletter and Web site design. (Awards are also given for community services program and integrated installation of the year.)

Putting Stanley CSS' three consecutive trophies into greater perspective, the Overall Integrated Marketing Program category may be the most difficult to attain victory. The judges are looking for a cohesive marketing concept that is designed to make all facets of communication — including sales promotion,



Marketing Manager Beth Tarnoff and COO Tony Byerly peruse HSM's SAMMY award-winning commercial sales brochure.

advertising, public relations and direct marketing — work in unison, rather than a mixed bag of dissonant parts.

At Stanley CSS, the person responsible for assuring that all of the company's marketing materials work together as a unified force is Tarnoff, who has been with the company since its inception and assumed her current lead role after HSM was acquired by Stanley Works. Tarnoff says her philosophy about Stanley CSS' marketing tools is to create eye-catching pieces that "convey a very clear, concise message so the reader can instantly see what the value and benefit of the program is."

People's lives are busy, hectic. "It is really important to catch their attention quickly and convey that message before you lose their attention," she says. "We want to do that efficiently and also obviously convey our focus on high quality, leading technology and excellent customer service."

Sowing a common thread through all Stanley CSS marketing items is accomplished, in part, by adhering to a few guiding principles: the company's assertion is that its superior service and quality is worth paying for; there is nary a mention of discounts or zero-down offers. Peace of mind is another central tenet to company philosophy as fear tactics, long common to the electronic security industry, are strictly avoided.

Fine-tuning materials for sales initiatives involves meeting one-on-one with company managers and department heads for which a particular marketing tool is being developed. "Beth helps lay out marketing plans for the New Year and then we convey that with the sales leaders — both the national accounts program and the core sales organization — and we make sure it is consistent with the sales initiatives," says Byerly, who is also intimately involved in the process.

As an example of how the decision-making course of action is executed, Tarnoff was involved in roundtable deliberations with Felix Gonzalez, vice president of strategic initiatives and business development, to best determine how the company will launch its new eServices at the ASIS expo in September.

"All the items that we do we always grab the person who is expert in their field and at the company and involve them in all of the decisions and conversations to make sure we are marketing to the right audience," Tarnoff says.

Penny-Wise and Cost Efficient Just how lean is the Stanley CSS marketing department? "Our marketing department is Beth," Byerly says.

The allotted marketing budget of the one-person shop amounts to less than 1 percent of Stanley CSS' total revenue. Nearly all of the company's ideas and concepts are conceived internally, while the materials are produced in conjunction with a Chicago-based advertising agency.

"You have to say that is one of our strengths to be able to deliver the value and the overall content that [the industry] has seen for three years," Byerly says. "To be able to do that with a very small marketing program, it shows that even with a small company the expectations can be there for any size of business."

Cost efficiency is a virtue and a conviction at Stanley CSS. Return on investment (ROI) is analyzed for many projects, such as a sales brochure. The marketing piece may include a special call-in number or code, so when a prospective customer initiates contact Stanley CSS knows exactly what piece the lead is coming from.

Byerly explains: "From a metric standpoint, how many leads did it generate? Then the next step is how many appointments did we get? And out of the appointments, how many proposals did we get? And from the proposals, how many sales did we get? You can then back in to how successful was the program."

An Example of the Possibilities

HSM took home the 2008 SAMMY trophy for the top Commercial/Industrial Sales Brochure, which can serve as inspiration for other companies aiming for quality on a limited budget.

Themed "Take a closer look at HSM," the brochure cover is fashioned with die-cut windows that reveal only portions of several images below, prompting the reader to, well, take a closer look. The first page opens to the complete picture, revealing HSM's commercial services: Intrusion Alarm, Fire Alarm, Video Surveillance, Access Control, Online eServices and Integrated Security Solutions. Each of the those

themes is represented in the brochure using simple, yet artful photography chosen to relate to key decision makers in the commercial security arena.

Note: professional-style photography doesn't have to break your marketing budget. For its SAMMY-winning brochure, HSM used stock photography, which is available to anybody. "You don't necessarily have to hire a photographer and set up a photo shoot," says Tarnoff. "That is one way we save on the budget, opposed to actually having a photo shoot."

The limited text for each of the themed services is meant to be an easily consumed overview, and here again Tarnoff conferred with sales leaders to drill down to the most salient information to convey to potential customers. The result is a series of bullet points for each service. Sales reps also use the bullet points as a presentation tool by providing key talking points.

"The key aspect that Beth was able to achieve with that piece — and it is an underlying theme to our entire marketing program — is clear messaging and the value proposition," Byerly says. "In the end, the whole marketing program has to be around the value proposition of the corporation. What is different about you? Your value proposition has to stand out to make the marketing effective."

PRINT | POSTED ON TUESDAY, JUNE 03, 2008 12:11 PM