



## Ad guru: Know audience, balance message

By James Dowd

September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010

The good news for today's advertising executives: the creative industry offers more venues than ever for marketing campaigns.

The bad news: the creative industry offers more venues than ever for marketing campaigns.

When the good and the bad are the same, the challenge becomes reaching target audiences without diluting brand relevance, says **Kevin McKiernan, president of New York-based [Creative License](#)**.

"A lot of companies make the mistake of trying to be all things to all people," McKiernan told members of the American Advertising Federation Memphis at a meeting last week.

"It's fine to offer products or services that appeal to different demographics, but you have to stay true to your muse. Know the audience you're trying to reach."

One of the most effective ways of reaching key demographics is by merging entertainment with marketing, McKiernan said. That includes celebrity endorsements and musical accompaniments, provided they're appropriate.

"I don't see it slowing down any because consumers have an insatiable appetite for celebrities and pop culture," said Marcia Anthony, AAF Memphis president. "Getting the right spokesperson or having a popular song in a campaign is advertising gold."

Jim Tumbrink, partner at local ad agency IDEX, agreed.

"Product placement or the integration of familiar music or a recognized face in a campaign works," Tumbrink said. "It just makes sense to use a famous person or hit song to sell something."

An example of a good fit is the Wrangler ad campaign featuring NFL quarterback Brett Favre. "It's fun, tough and for regular guys and it's a great partnership," McKiernan said.

But that 2004 Victoria's Secret television commercial featuring Bob Dylan? Well, not so much. "Do they find Bob Dylan sexy?" McKiernan wondered.

Today, advanced mobile technology has made it extraordinarily easy -- and relatively inexpensive -- for companies to fuse entertainment with advertising, McKiernan said. That trend will yield more opportunities for little-known acts to achieve broad-based exposure through viral campaigns.

That's welcome news for Music Resource Center director Cameron Mann. The center is operated under the umbrella of the [Memphis Music Foundation](#).

"As a resource for local musicians, we try to help them with the business side of the industry by showing them how to increase the value of their individual brands," Mann said.

"It's encouraging to hear that marketing campaigns featuring music and entertainment figures will continue to flourish."