



# PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

## Episode 102: Designing Ads for Sponsorships

### Guest: Rebecca Cariño

*This is Prove It. A podcast for impatient business owners, overwhelmed marketers, and PR practitioners with no time for podcasts. In just 10 minutes they answer 3 questions and offer proof of what's working in marketing communications today. Here's Debbie Albert, President of Albert Communications.*

**Debbie Albert:** Welcome. On this episode of “Prove it” we’re going to look at designing ads specifically for sponsorships. Companies, firms, and businesses are always asked to purchase ads for events and galas, career fairs, or their local Chamber of Commerce and it’s important that you don’t just send your logo.

The ad should speak to your business and to your audience and I’ve asked Rebecca Carino to join us today.

Rebecca and I go way back. She’s a graphic designer, she did my very first website, she’s done every version of my website since, and she’s adept at designing print collateral materials. We once even did a short book together and I’m always asking her and other clients are asking her to design ads for sponsorships.

So, you may think it’s no big deal to create an ad for a sponsorship, but it really is. So, I want to welcome Rebecca “Prove it!”

**Rebecca Cariño:** Hi Debbie, and thanks for having me.

**Debbie:** I’m so glad you’re here. Before the podcast, we talked about how designing an ad, or even a website for that matter, is collaborative. It’s not unlike song writing; I often write the lyrics and Rebecca writes the music, which is the art work. So, I want to get into it. As you know, the format for “Prove it” is three questions, and then of course I interrupt and throw some others in along the way, and then I want you to prove how it works.



# PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

So, are you ready to get started?

**Rebecca:** I'm ready.

**Debbie:** Okay. So, **talk to us first about why the visual aspect of an ad is so important.**

**Rebecca:** The visual design of an ad is very important but it's also just one part of the project. Before arriving there, my job, or the job of the designer, is first to listen to the client to absorb their vision and their company's goals and culture, learn their style, taste, personality. All of that is inspiration for the visual components of the ad and it comes through in the end. The most important thing is getting down to the essence or the heart of a business. What they are about and what they are trying to achieve, who they wanna reach?

Debbie, you and I have had so many of these initial meetings where we delve and ask the right questions and get down to the core of the company and I think you're really great at getting them to talk about what makes them special, what makes them shine, and sets them apart from their competitors, and then putting all of that into words. I then take those words and create custom visual environment that's inviting and engaging and supports their goals.

**Debbie:** Right. So, like you and I always talk first when we meet a client; who's the audience, what are your business objectives and the same is true, whether you're designing the website or this ad.

**Rebecca:** That's right. You know the thing I like to shoot for - I told you this before, I love it when we are working on a project together and I deliver something in the middle of the night and then you see it and you say, "Oh, it's like opening a Christmas present!"



# PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

**Debbie:** That's how I feel every time I get an email from you!

*(Both Laughing)*

**Rebecca:** That's the best. It's the "wow" factor. That's what you aim for.

**Debbie:** And I think you and I have had many, many instances where we've sent our collaborative artwork to clients. By the way, this podcast is not meant to promote us as the geniuses in this area. We have sent them to clients and they are like "Perfect!"

I mean it's very rare that a client would not come back and say we miss the mark because I think that we do start with who the audience is and what's the business objective, but let me ask you question number two, which is **what happens when you're designing one of these ads and there's more than one audience?**

**Rebecca:** Sometimes an ad calls for multiple audiences or has multi purposes, and again the clear vision of a brand is paramount and to establish that in the overall design is what you want to do.

Stay true to the branding, be mindful of how companies need their images shaped in all aspects whether it's the websites or the newsletters, billboards, any print collateral. You have to ensure that we are not making it hard for viewers to find the services they need and I'm definitely from a "less is more" design ecstatic and sensibility. And I would say in situations where there's more than one audience, I'm even more of a minimalist and sensitive to not overwhelm people with too much content.

I think simplicity is key and the opposite of simplicity can absolutely kill an ad and we've seen plenty of those in our careers *(chuckling)*.



# PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

**Debbie:** Yeah, I probably agree with you... like you know I always ask you this, and I will ask you this now for the people who are listening. When I send you the copy, how do you think about the visuals, like how does it start? Because as someone who's not artistic or visual in any way, but I know what I like to see. How do you start thinking about it when you just get copy in an email?

**Rebecca:** Well, for I'd say that the art of designing is actually something that doesn't take place in my head, it's something outside my head. My process is very intuitive, I'm not thinking really, I'm not in my head figuring out visual problem-solving.

First evaluate all the content I need to have there, work with the branding elements, and then probably drive away, get into a place where ideas are flowing and images come, and I just start sketching. I draw the ideas first by hand before even going to the computer, creating story boards.

**Debbie:** You're so old fashioned!

**Rebecca:** I am, well that's my background. Fine art was actually something I did before becoming a designer. Before I even go through the process of designing photo selection or creating illustrations, or adding textures or playing with types, it's drawing; the foundation is drawing.

**Debbie:** Right.

Okay then I've asked you three or more questions, so now I'm up to the prove it part. So, Rebecca can you give us an example of an instance where you created an ad for a sponsorship that you know really made a difference?



# PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

**Rebecca:** If I have to give an example, I think about many years ago when I was living in San Francisco where I first started a career in graphic design. I worked for small agency who for the most part focused on designing for organizations working towards social change and we helped promote large non-profit community, health agencies, education and arts institutions and my projects then made a great difference to the communities they served. Then I was really fortunate to work with a group of photographers and writers, artists and production staff and I've remembered how we'd often used people on our photoshoots from the neighborhood.

**Debbie:** Instead of the stock photos.

**Rebecca:** Exactly, and that made a huge impact. The campaign was strong and heartfelt. I have to say you know now times are different and with designing in connected ads with social media marketing. SCM, SCO, AI, you know...

**Debbie:** You know one of the things about sponsorship ads that bothers me a little bit is that many of them are now electronic ads. So, you know we've been asked to put ads in an online tribute site instead of being in a book that people get it at an event. They just see there's a slide show going on during the event or they can click on it [online]. There's a lot less impact or the impact has to be even faster.

**Rebecca:** Right.

**Debbie:** And I see that when people send in just a logo. You know it might not say anything about the organization, but the right image with just a few of the right words could make a huge difference even in that format.



# PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

**Rebecca:** Absolutely. I think you hit the nail on the head and you have to think about that whenever you approach any design project or ad, creating a compelling image that grabs you and it gets to your senses right away in under three seconds.

**Debbie:** Absolutely, absolutely. Well, this is a podcast for the impatient. We're just about out of time, we did about 10 minutes, which is more than enough for me. Thank you very much but I want to tell our listeners to keep checking back for more podcasts with more ideas and trends and really more clarity in marketing communications. Thanks so much for joining us and thanks to Rebecca Carino for everything she does and her incredible eye towards design. Thanks, Rebecca.

**Rebecca:** Thank you Debbie, it was a pleasure.

**End podcast**