

# COUNSELOR

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MAY 2007

## Distributors + Suppliers

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"My Biggest Screw-Up"

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## Creative Campaign Driving it Home

**W**hat's the key to creativity with ad specialties? Customization. It's something that supplier Flash by Design (*asi/54573*) certainly knows, as it recently took customization to new heights with its Century 21 USB flash drives. The flash drive itself is custom-shaped, and when it's plugged into a computer, a custom widget automatically appears on the screen.

"USB widgets are not Web keys, the distinction is that Web keys have no memory and they're just a link to a pop-up window

to take you to a particular sponsor site," says Ron Friedman, president of Flash By Design.

"USB widgets deliver dynamic content on a fully functional USB drive."

Century 21's house-shaped widget provides the user with traffic information. Users type in their zip code and a real-time local map shows where traffic incidents are, such as accidents, congestion or construction.

"There's certainly other ways of getting this information, like going to a Web site, but it makes for an elegant way to get it," Friedman says. "Right now everyone is about saving time and ease of use, and this generic traffic information that's branded gives the user true added value, making this USB drive the particular USB drive that

they'll choose to use."

The drives that work best with widgets start at 128 MB and the USB widgets use only 1% or 2% of the available functionality of the drive. "The advantage is that it mostly gives added value to the end-user, so the user doesn't only have a functional USB drive with branding on the outside," he says.

Flash by Design has already created a second version of the flash drive for Century 21 that will allow the real estate



agents to put their own contact information on the drives. "It's going to have information that can always be updated by the account executive, with their contact information, 25

words about what's happening in the real estate market now and links to their own sites as well as the corporate site," he says.

The widget also has a "Show me properties!" link that takes the user to a Web page that has properties for sale in that particular zip code. "It completely supports the agenda of showing properties," Friedman says.

The drives are available in stock shapes, as well as custom 2-D and 3-D shapes. The widgets come in any custom branded shape, look and feel. "It functions like a standard browser, it can be minimized, closed and it can go behind other windows," he says. —AO

*"USB widgets deliver dynamic content on a fully functional USB drive."*

—RON FRIEDMAN,  
FLASH BY DESIGN (*asi/54573*)

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occasional mistake happens, they are ready to make it right, even if it means tearing up the invoice.

"Have we had to eat the cost of orders? Yes," says Spring. "But the benefits have far outweighed the costs. In fact, we now use the tag line 'Cedric Spring delivers your branded products done right, on time, guaranteed' on all our communications and

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—RANDY SPRING, CEDRIC SPRING AND ASSOCIATES (*asi/332750*)

we've been very successful in getting new business using that strategy."

The strategy didn't just come out of thin air. Spring did a comprehensive customer survey that lead directly to the approach to guarantee customer service. Spring and his company surveyed 150 end-users and asked them what their primary concerns were when purchasing from an ad specialty distributor. They found that price was not the primary issue. The first concern was bad communication and the second was unresolved issues.

"We found it interesting that price was not the first objective," says Spring. "Clients want to be kept informed and when issues come up, they want them resolved quickly. We've been able to acquire several new accounts because the end-users told us they had issues that took forever to get resolved. In the end, giving the client a written guarantee doesn't just get their attention. It keeps them coming back." —LB