

**WINNER** newsletter

# NCR Canada

**When NCR** Canada was selecting a communications vehicle to deliver personal financial information to its employees it was determined not to produce another “boring newsletter,” declares Alpha Montemayor, the company’s compensation specialist.

With its dynamic colours and illustrations and numerous editorial features containing valuable nuggets of information, *future=focus*, the Toronto-based technology firm’s newsletter, is anything but run-of-the-mill.

“We wanted something that was hip, fresh and punchy,” says Montemayor. “At the very least we wanted to stimulate people who knew nothing about the subject matter.”

Karen Black, communications team leader at Krieger & Associates, the Toronto firm that created the newsletter, adds it was important that this project stand out from everything else NCR had previously done because the purpose of the piece was distinct.

NCR wanted its employees to take responsibility for their finances, particularly retirement, and it uses the four-page, bilingual newsletter to provide them with a wide range of information and tools that help accomplish this goal.

Indeed, *future=focus* is billed on the cover as an employee’s road map to financial independence.

The other challenges that NCR faced were conveying complex information in an accessible format and speaking to two different audiences, notably the sales and marketing staff that comprise the Toronto head office

and the manufacturing employees at the company’s Waterloo, Ont. site.

NCR achieved its goals by creating a series of newsletters that build on the theme of personal finance.

The first issue addresses the initial steps in a financial assessment and contains a separate personal financial statement for tracking individual liabilities and assets. This was followed up with a focus on planning and measuring financial performance.

A subsequent issue addressed how to select a financial adviser and the pros and cons of paying down the mortgage as opposed to investing more in registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs).

Overall, the newsletter does an excellent job of providing employees with valuable business information in a lively format.

In addition to main articles, the newsletter contains regular features such as Web Watch, Tax Tips and Trends. There is also an online version of the newsletter with hyperlinks and an e-mail feature.

NCR’s desire to educate and empower its employees and encourage them to take ownership of their financial health is evident in the fact the newsletter is not used to promote the company’s two pension plans.

In fact, the only promotion of company services is



in the form of a sidebar. Just a Call Away, which profiles NCR human resources employees, stating what they like best about their work.

“The project is about giving employees a helping hand,” emphasizes Montemayor.

The newsletter is mailed to employees’ homes and its non-corporate focus, in terms of both content and design, encourages all family members to use the information and get involved in financial education and planning.

The communications initiative did not result in an increased volume in contributions to the company’s plans.

Montemayor points out that NCR already has an 86% participation rate. Once again, he stresses the goal of *future=focus* is not to promote benefits but champion financial responsibility.

NCR says it will gauge the success of the newsletter based on how successful its employees are in their own financial planning.

— Kathryn Dorrell

**Fine Points**

**Impetus:** To encourage employees to take responsibility for their financial well-being by providing them with personal savings and investment information.

**Challenge:** Getting the message right. Communicating complex information in a simple and compelling format.

**Outcome:** 70% of respondents to a company survey say they would keep the newsletter, *future = focus*, for reference and 68% say they have taken action to learn more about personal finance as a result of the initiative.

**Cost:** \$6,000 for initial development and \$15,000 for quarterly production.

**Judge Says:** “Clearly, (NCR) is very enthusiastic about (its) benefits communications strategy. The network of tools included (teasers, surveys, etc.) is very impressive.”