



Marketing & Merchandising

BEST OF THE BEST

AND THE AWARDS GO TO...

Granite City Electric and Bridgeport Fittings took top honors in TED's 2006 Best of the Best marketing awards competition.



By Sarah Greider

THE MARKETING STAFF at Granite City Electric (GCE) in Quincy, Mass., certainly understands the benefit of making the most of a good thing. As the official distributor of electrical supplies to the Boston Red Sox, the company has capitalized on that partnership to spread the message that it is the top New England distributor of electrical products. With marketing efforts that include a unique customer program, informative marketing pieces, and a solid branding campaign, GCE took home this year's Best of the Best Overall Distributor designation.

Best of the Best Judge Tara Lockie summed it up best when she said, "Granite City Electric was easily the Best of the Best Overall Distributor for its execution of a highly consistent marketing message."

"They clearly conveyed the image of a high-energy company with innovative offerings and a strong commitment to community," Lockie explained. "Each entry showcases the company's attention to detail, creativity, and consistency of its message."

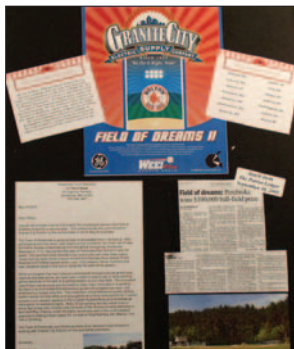
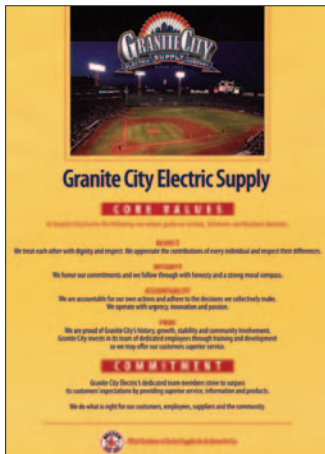
GCE earned six Best of the Best individual category awards; some basic information about each follows (check out future issues of *TED* to learn more about these and other winning entries in each category).

• Integrated Promotional Campaign.

GCE is working to brand itself as New England's premier electrical distributor. In an effort to drive its brand, the company entered into a partnership with the Boston Red Sox to become its official distributor of electrical supplies, and lit Fenway Park with 1,500W high-density

Continued on page 58

Best of the Best Overall Distributor: Granite City Electric



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million: Top row, from left: *maps, line card, and services folder*; *www.granitecityelectric.com*; *electric branding campaign*; bottom row, from left: *Field of Dreams II sweepstakes*; *Service in a Box*; *Electric Kids Club*

Best of the Best Overall Manufacturer: Bridgeport Fittings



Supplier under \$250 million: From left: *Served up just the way you like it*; *Quick Install products*



Marketing & Merchandising

BEST OF THE BEST

Continued from page 57

floodlights. This sends the message to contractors that the company is capable of handling their business as well.

- **Direct Promotion.** GCE chose to do something different for a recent customer incentive. Instead of offering an incentive to customers, it decided to launch a club for its customers' children. Again, the distributorship decided to play off its partnership with the Boston Red Sox and reward members of its Electric City Kids Club with baseball-themed items that included Wiffle ball and bat sets, Red Sox/GCE-branded cheer hands, and other baseball-themed and GCE-branded items.

- **Literature and Selling Tools.** GCE's winning entry in this category included a map of the company's locations, a line card, and a services folder. The laminated map included directions to each location. The items were presented in a GCE-branded folder along with a key chain.

- **Merchandising.** GCE packages orders and deliveries in its award-winning Service in a Box promotion. The box, which features ergonomic handles and can hold up to 70 lbs., was designed to be reused and features an attached lid and attractive design.

- **Public Relations.** GCE hit one out of the park with its Field of Dreams II campaign. By providing a lighting package to a town in New England for a junior baseball or softball field, GCE created fans for life. The campaign encouraged participation via online voting and randomly chose the winning field from the top candidates.

- **Web Site.** GCE updated its Web site to be more user-friendly and employee accessible. Contractors can log on and order items while employees can check e-mail and access files. GCE also added fun items such as jokes, contests, and additional information about its Kids Club program.

"Granite City's entries show a warmth and public service in their business promotions," said Judge Kim Funcik. "We were impressed with the promotion for

Continued on page 60

Print Advertising



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million
Dominion Electric Supply
Delightful



Distributor over \$200 million
GE Supply
Tired of going around in circles?



Supplier under \$250 million
Bridgeport Fittings
Served up just the way you like it



Supplier over \$250 million
GE Consumer & Industrial Lighting
How much is your lighting costing you?

Direct Promotion



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million
Granite City Electric
Electric Kids Club



Distributor over \$200 million (tie)
North Coast Electric
Join our Burlington lunch bunch



Distributor over \$200 million (tie)
Summit Electric Supply
Get it. Done.



Supplier under \$250 million
Klein Tools
2005 Race & Win promotion



BEST OF THE BEST

Continued from page 58

kids and support of expanding use of youth baseball fields through professional lighting systems in the Field of Dreams II sweepstakes.”

Katrina Olson, a new judge to the competition, said she was impressed by how GCE remained true to its brand in everything it showcased.

“And by ‘brand,’ I don’t mean simply graphic identity,” she explained. “That’s such a small part of branding. GCE consistently applied its logo and other graphic standards, but in every entry, the company was faithful in delivering on its promises to its target audiences. Whether it was a benefit for kids, making ordering and pickup easier for customers, or giving away a trip to its vendors, it was clear that GCE is truly outwardly focused and customer-driven,” she said.

There are five members of the GCE marketing team, and each took the lead and ran at least one of the award-winning programs, events, and promotions throughout the year, according to Marketing Manager Dave Zenaldi.

“We are proud and honored to be recognized from such a long-standing and respected organization as *TED Magazine* and the National Association of Electrical Distributors. Of any award that we have ever won, the Best of the Best Overall is the one that says you have arrived,” Zenaldi said.

Earning the Best of the Best Overall designation means the distributorship is doing a lot of things right. “I am proud of every employee of Granite City Electric for buying into, being a part of, and carrying out each and every marketing program or event with enthusiasm and passion. No program, event, or campaign will ever be effective without support from the entire Granite City Electric team,” Zenaldi said. “Without the help of our salespeople pushing these promotions and events, none of them would be effective.”

On the supplier side

A successful marketing tool grabs attention and inspires action—exactly what

Bridgeport Fittings’ entry in the Print Advertising Category did to this year’s Best of the Best judges. While the image on the ad certainly caught their eye, it was the copy that really made them think.

Connecticut-based manufacturer Bridgeport Fittings earned Best of the Best awards in the categories of Print Advertising and Integrated Promotional Campaign. The entries submitted by the company were enough to secure it the Best of the Best Overall designation as well.

- **Print Advertising.** The flexibility of the manufacturer’s product line and service availabilities were the ideas highlighted in the company’s “Served up just the way you like it” print ad.

Using a photo of a breakfast platter, the manufacturer conveyed the message that, like breakfast, it can deliver products just the way its customers want them. The ad also tells readers that Bridgeport Fittings understands that their needs and wants are unique, and that it has the products, services, and desire to make sure they get precisely what they need to make them happy.

- **Integrated Promotional Campaign.** Bridgeport Fittings shows its customers how its Quick Install products save time—and therefore money—with an all-in-one salesperson sample kit. The package includes connector samples, literature, and photos that convey the message that these products are fast.

“Bridgeport Fittings went out on a creative limb in the design of its marketing materials,” said Olson. “For its winning print advertising entry, the company used an image not normally seen in the industry—eggs and bacon—to drive home the point that it provides products and services to customers’ specifications. The claim is supported by facts and information, so the copy is meaningful as well. I’m not a big fan of creativity just for creativity’s sake, but when it’s used effectively with good content, it’s a winning combination.”

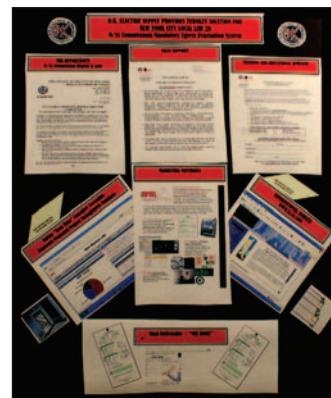
Continued on page 62

Direct Promotion, continued



Supplier over \$250 million
Tyco Electrical
True colors promotion

Integrated Promotional Campaign



Distributor under \$25 million
OK Electric Supply
OK Electric Supply provides turnkey solutions



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million (tie)
Edson Supply
Costa Rica 2005

Marketing & Merchandising



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million (tie)
Granite City Electric
Electric branding campaign



Supplier over \$250 million
Advance
Ballast hold 'em

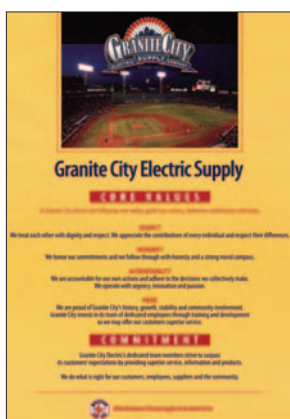


Distributor over \$200 million
Stuart C. Irby Co.
Building profitable partnerships since 1926



Distributor over \$200 million
North Coast Electric
Scope it out

Literature/Selling Tools



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million (tie)
Granite City Electric
Maps, line card, and services folder



Supplier under \$250 million
Wiremold/Legrand
The perfect appliance for all your appliances



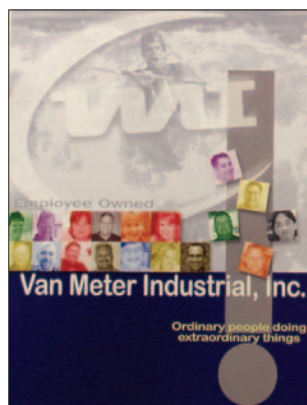
Supplier under \$250 million (tie)
Bridgeport Fittings
Quick Install products



Supplier over \$250 million
Cooper Wiring Devices
ASPIRE design system



Supplier under \$250 million (tie)
Federal Signal Corporation
The signal is clear



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million (tie)
Van Meter Industrial
Ordinary people doing extraordinary things

Web Sites



Distributor under \$25 million
OK Electric Supply
www.LL26.com



BEST OF THE BEST

Continued from page 60

Lockie believes that the Print Advertising category entry was by far the most imaginative and memorable manufacturer entry. "This print advertising piece made a strong visual impact that grabs readers' attention and draws them into the tag line promoting the company's 'fill' rates," she said.

Funcik added that the entry was a great attention-getter, as was the company's winning entry in the Integrated Promotion Campaign. "The print ad was visually appealing and clever for this category. Bridgeport Fittings also offered an effective and truly integrated campaign to promote its Quick Install products," she said.

Executive Vice President Paul Suzio noted that earning the Overall award means the manufacturer understands its markets and its customers' needs and desires.

"Best of the Best is the litmus test of achievement in our industry," he said. "Just entering is important, because entering says that you support ongoing marketing and communications improvements in the industry. And, given the ever-increasing quality of the work, actually winning something is a testament to the team that works on our marketing."

Both pieces were developed by Maier Advertising, an agency headed by Bill Maier. The advertising agency has focused on electrical clients since its launch in 1971 and has helped its clients earn numerous individual and Best of the Best Overall awards.

"We tell our clients all the time that we're not in this business to get awards, that we're in it to get them business results," Maier said. "The Best of the Best is one of the few awards programs that seems to share that philosophy and recognize agencies for the practical effectiveness of their programs, as well as their creativity," Maier said. ■■■

Greider, an Illinois-based freelance writer, can be reached at sdgreider@yahoo.com.

Web Sites, continued



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million

Granite City Electric
www.granitecityelectric.com



Distributor over \$200 million

GE Supply
The new gesupply.com



Supplier under \$250 million
Universal Lighting Technologies
E-learning center



Supplier over \$250 million
GE Consumer & Industrial Lighting
Redesign of www.gelighting.com

Publications



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million

Edson Supply
The "Edson Connection" Magazine



Distributor over \$200 million

Stuart C. Irby Co.
"Irby Circuit"

Merchandising



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million

Granite City Electric
Service in a Box



Distributor over \$200 million

Summit Electric Supply
LaPorte, Texas project

Marketing & Merchandising



Supplier over \$250 million (tie)
Generac Power Systems
QT Series point-of-purchase



Supplier over \$250 million (tie)
Lutron
Free "This Old House Magazine"

Public Relations



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million
Granite City Electric
Field of Dreams II sweepstakes



Supplier under \$250 million
Fluke Corporation
Fluke Plus



Supplier over \$250 million
Acuity Brands Lighting
It's playtime at Lakeview Estates!

Events



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million
United Electric Supply (Del.)
There's no place like home



Distributor over \$200 million
Hughes Supply
Marketing field guide and tour '05



Supplier under \$250 million
Prescolite
Above & Beyond

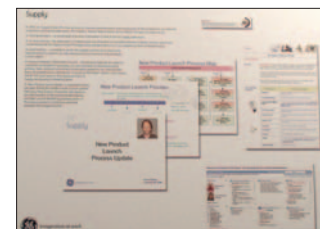


Supplier over \$250 million
Southwire
"A perfect fit" trade show puzzle promotion

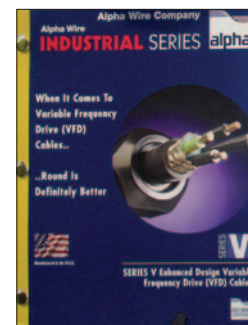
Product Launch



Distributor \$25 million-\$200 million
Springfield Electric Supply
Introducing audio video products & services



Distributor over \$200 million
GE Supply
New product launch week



Supplier under \$250 million
Omni Cable
Round is definitely better



Marketing & Merchandising

BEST OF THE BEST

Product Launch, continued



Supplier over \$250 million

Thomas & Betts

Ty-Duct wiring product launch

MERCHANDISING OFFERING

Five-level, in-store program

Sea Gull Lighting is offering a five-level, in-store merchandising program designed to further the sale of its lighting products.

The program, which can be used individually or collectively, is composed of the "Basic Promotional" point-of-purchase program; the "Star Energy Star" point-of-purchase program; the "Spotlight is an Ambiance Lighting System" point-of-purchase program; "The Works" (which contains the basics of the three promotions); and "The Ultimate" (which includes all of the marketing elements of the three promotions). For more information, circle 305 on the Direct Info Card.



Best of the Best judges

By Sarah Greider

TED welcomed two new judges to the 2006 Best of the Best marketing awards competition: Tara Lockie and Katrina Olson.

Lockie brought the unique perspective of a past competitor. As a former electrical distributor, Lockie and her staff earned several Best of the Best awards and the Best of the Best Overall award. Olson is a 20-year veteran of marketing communications and a former agency owner.

The pair joined veteran judges Kim Funcik, a professional marketing re-search consultant, and Sarah Greider, a former editor of *TED*, in St. Louis for two days to review the nearly 370 entries.

"As a former recipient of the Best of the Best Overall award, it was an honor to be asked to participate as a judge," Lockie said. "Our experience with the competition allowed me to analyze the entries based not only on their creativity and innovation, but also on how they impacted their organization."

Lockie has 25 years of industry experience—including positions as an area sales manager in manufac-

turing, vice president of sales and marketing, and president/CEO of an electrical distributorship. She currently serves as the director of marketing at Nelson & Associates.

Olson currently teaches persuasive writing and business communications courses at the University of Illinois and Parkland College in Champaign, Ill. As a copywriter and creative director, she has won more than 40 advertising and marketing communications awards. As principal of Katrina Olson Strategic Communications, she provides consulting, marketing, public relations, training, writing, and creative services and is a regular contributor to *TED Magazine*.

"Having participated in several advertising competitions, it was a real eye-opener to be on the other side of the table," Olson noted.

Funcik conducts research to help business clients be successful with their advertising, branding, and product/service development. She has been involved in many projects that help determine what makes a brand or communication successful to business customers and



Best of the Best marketing awards judges (from left: Tara Lockie, Kim Funcik, Sarah Greider, and Katrina Olson) met in St. Louis for two days in March to select the winners.

consumers and has conducted research studies with electrical distributors and manufacturers for NAED projects. She has served as a Best of the Best judge for the past six years and worked in marketing research management, analysis, and consulting for almost 25 years.

Greider served as editor of *TED* from 1997 through 1999. She is currently communications coordinator for a central Illinois telecommunications company. In this role, Greider is responsible for internal and external communications and the company's monthly newsletter. ■■■