

BUSINESS BOOKS

Appealing to readers' inner 'you'

Your Attention, Please. How to Appeal to Today's Distracted, Disinterested, Disengaged, Disenchanted, and Busy Audiences

Paul B. Brown and Alison Davis; Adams Media, \$14.95; www.yourattentionpleasebook.com; e-mail: Alison.davis@davisandco.com

BY PAULA A. PAIGE
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

For those of you who hate it when people delete your e-mails without reading them, discard your letters without opening them and don't return voice mails, author and public relations expert Alison Brown has some solutions.

"People pay attention when someone says, 'This is for you,' 'Here's something that can help you,' 'You can be (thinner, richer, happier). Here's how,'" she suggests in her new book, "Your Attention, Please," co-authored by Paul Brown, a columnist for the New York Times.

Davis, a Rutgers University graduate who was born in Waldwick, started her career as a reporter at the Bridgewater Courier News, then changed professions, becoming a public relations consultant in 1979. With more than 26 years in the PR industry, she is the co-founder and chief executive of Davis & Company, a communication consulting company based in Glen Rock, where she resides.

Davis talked to the Ledger about how she captures the attention of today's busy audiences.

Q. Many young people communicate via text messages, cell phones and instant messages. How can corporate America get



Alison Davis' book offers ways to capture your distracted audience's attention.

their attention?

A. People who are young are interested in information that speaks to them. They don't want corporate blah blah blah. They want to know that people really understand their needs and are communicating to them in a way that helps them meet a need. Everyone who is smart is looking at new media. But old media works, too. My son is a student at Drew (University). Like a lot of colleges, they have a weekly newspaper. A recent survey by Y2M (which produces publications for the college market) showed 77 percent of college students read the print edition of their campus newspaper; 57 percent read it online. If you want to reach the youth, be aware of their new gadgets, but you should know your youth audience and be aware of what they're doing. It might surprise you.

Q. How do you deal with "old school" thinkers who refuse to incorporate new strategies for communicating?

A. One of the things I do is to find out what the old school people are reading and watching. I

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10. **The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It**, Michael E. Gerber; Collins, \$16.00

bring the best examples into the room and say, "Let's look at how these ways of communication have changed." Every form of communication has gotten briefer, more visual, more dynamic, more focused on the needs of the audience. People have a view of what's good based on the past, not today. The Star-Ledger of today is much different than years ago. If you look at TV, it's geared towards breaking through the clutter.

Q. Do you think we need to get back to the basics of communication?

A. Yes. There are so many times when getting up from your chair or picking up the phone will work for someone. Although people are overloaded, we're even more hun-

gry for person-to-person contact.

Q. Since, we're "distracted, disinterested, disengaged, disenchanted and busy," what do you see for the future?

A. There will continue to be a lot of communication choices. If your job involves communication, you'll need to think hard about the choices of what you're trying to communicate. An interesting trend is the old-fashioned bulletin board with the push pin. People still go to lunch and look at the wall. Don't discard what's old, look for opportunities for what you want to get across.

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