

# marketer

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Weld Coxe:  
*Remembrances of  
The First Marketer*

SMPS

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Professional Services

course of action, and thus enhance and extend the success of their organization.

Tall, lanky, charming, well-mannered, as well as insightful and articulate, Weld thus became not just a consultant but also a revolutionary.

In the early 1980s, Weld, by then founder of the formidable Coxe Group, reached his 15th successful anniversary as a consultant. He felt they lacked a brochure, and that they needed someone outside the firm to create one for them. They interviewed a few people and chose Capelin Communications, my newly minted office.

The day I presented the concept to Weld, Nina Hartung, Brian Lewis, and Peter Piven [alas, the last man standing], I was excited and understandably anxious. Imagine knowing that, if this concept exceeded Weld's high expectations, my firm would probably be cleared for take-off in the industry. But what if we didn't measure up? Well, let's not go there.

For an hour, my ideas tumbled out. Sketches covered the table. Not a word from them the whole time. Finally, I asked Weld for his reaction. Big moment of truth. He smiled, put his hand gently on my arm, and said: "You can breathe now."

A few weeks later I mobilized and traveled again to Philadelphia, breathing more naturally. We began the brochure process, Weld and me side by side. "What do you do, really?" I asked him. Weld answered: "It has been said that a consultant is one who borrows your watch to tell you what time it is. The real question is: 'What time do you want it to be?'" The introduction had just written itself.

Next, we came to the section for The Coxe Group's services. Weld favored B-School terms that I was unable to define. I asked him for examples, and the natural story-

teller in him rose to the occasion. In short order, there were a dozen success stories to work with. While I distilled them into three-sentence anecdotes, Weld devised definitions for the terms so that novices could grasp their importance. And then we swapped our drafts and edited each other's words.

Weld was so clear on what needed to be conveyed, the six-page brochure was written and signed off that same day! Years later, its format and words hardly changed when it became the basis for The Coxe Group Web site, except that the stories were updated periodically.

They say that you should save pictures of the important moments in your life, but my mental snapshots of those two occasions—the presentation and the work session—remain vivid 30 years later. They also say that you should record and thus save the sound of someone's voice, so you can "hear that wonderful voice just one more time." Yet again, in Weld Coxe's case, I don't need a tape; I can still hear his distinctive voice, laugh, and patrician diction in my head. How remarkable he was, how memorable he remains.

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Fellow PRSA, FSMPS**



*President, Capelin Communications, Inc., and 1990 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

"Why did you give up working for

Vincent Kling and start your consulting practice?" I once asked Weld Coxe. He answered that while his background was public relations and his work for Kling was largely in marketing communications, he had observed that few firms had a marketing plan—and that was because they first and foremost didn't have a business plan. Once he realized that his real talent was to enable design professionals to realize their goals, he began helping them to organize their thinking, set a beneficial