

### Tipping (and Branding) the Topper to 2009


I recently had coffee with a colleague in the industry who I know through one of my networking groups. We discussed media kits and exchanged ideas on how to market ourselves with our publishers and other clients. The session of brainstorming and sharing ideas capped off months of refining our company brands through our own fine-tuned marketing strategies.

Among many other things, 2009 was a year for branding. It seemed to work similar to that of a game of hopscotch; rotating between the various components of the website, networking, and media materials. Incubation time was critical, as I was able to extract helpful feedback from colleagues and “test run” many marketing approaches. In addition, networking with peers helped give birth to some ideas while developing, reinforcing, or modifying others.

When you're a one person operation, everything develops in stages. Taking the company logo for example; over the last couple of years, a simple top hat has represented the company as the primary logo. It was time to build on that image with something new and unique so folks wouldn't mistake me for...let's say...Mr. Peanut, the Monopoly guy, or possibly a magician. At the same time, I didn't feel compelled to rush the process. I knew it was more important to take my time to consider various ideas knowing that some combination would jump out at me one day.

Before I arrived at developing the updated logo (see the [“Logo Launch” newsletter edition](#) for the details of that process), other marketing elements had to keep moving forward. The website, business cards, bookmarks, and postcards were developed prior to the logo update. Meanwhile, I allotted myself ample time to throw ideas at peers and colleagues—in special brainstorming sessions through a social network of solopreneurs dealing with similar business challenges.

Fortunately, many of the marketing items I developed early in 2009 are still useful or convertible following the final logo decision and related design details that took place in September. Marketing materials sporting the “lone top hat” are still useable, as the top hat is still a primary component of the updated logo. The website was modified to reflect the updated logo through a few simple strokes and some work with Adobe Photoshop.

Following the ground that was covered this year, we're really excited and looking forward to a great 2010...bring it on. 

### Planning in Perpetuum


This morning I woke up from a dream about urban planning. I was in the middle of the AICP exam, the planner's equivalent of the bar exam (taken by prospective attorneys). It was one of those typical fish out of water “exam dreams” where you're in a classroom with a test in front of you, with NO CLUE on what to do. Thankfully, that's about the time where I wake up...whew!

The information was probably in my head since I'd been part of a conversation over Thanksgiving dinner with a friend who also works in the planning field. When we see one another, we usually trade war stories about past jobs since we've both spent several years in small towns and can relate to the intricacies and politics of such settings. So when we get involved in discussions about population statistics, comprehensive plans, and the politics of growth management hearings board decisions—something in me starts to stir.

I believe the dream also echoes a passion I've carried with me for city planning since my college days. I don't believe it's faded in the least—it's simply formed into something different. As I entered the field in the mid-1990s, I focused on serving communities as a public-sector planner with an emphasis on long-range planning (also referred to as *advanced planning*).

While many of my colleagues served as merely robots and paper pushers for development interests, I tried to bring something different to the table. I asked the tough questions in development meetings. I informed residents to involve them in the planning process. Whether or not I purposely intended it, I brought an environmental lean to the field as a change agent. I was fortunate enough to be exposed hands-on to nearly every conceivable facet of the field through project management and department managerial roles. As time went on I gained valuable experience, figured out what I could change and what I couldn't, and was afforded the necessary time to cultivate my talents in a variety of professional settings.

One of those talents that emerged was my writing and editing, so I decided that needed to be taken into another setting where it could be better served. I took several writing classes and boned up on the latest tech tools. As a result, other talents and interests emerged—such as writing indexes for books and documents.

The background and insights planning gave me serve me as an informed citizen in ways I can't begin to imagine...and I maintain these connections through writing and editing jobs within the field. This field specialty spiders into other areas such as architecture, engineering, government, and the green industry. 

To see additional issues of the newsletter, visit [Dexter's Corner](#) to find tidbits on each edition—and then simply click to read!


Visit the [Top Hat Word & Index website](#) or contact us at [info@TopHatWordandIndex.com](mailto:info@TopHatWordandIndex.com) with any questions or inquiries.

### Happy Holidays, with a Tip o' the Topper!



Seasons greetings from Cascadia (a.k.a. the great Pacific Northwest), where the winter and holiday season are upon us!

Needless to say, things are a bit chilly in these parts, as we've recently had record low temperatures...we hope all our colleagues and clients in the region and abroad are staying warm!

Everyone have a safe New Year, and see you on the other side in 2010. 

You can find out more [about us](#)



at Top Hat Word & Index by visiting our website, and to see samples for our [indexing](#), [technical writing](#), and [editing](#) work. Also be sure to check out [testimonials](#) from past clients!

### Adobe Flash makes an appearance!



Adobe Flash is the latest tech tool to be semi-conquered and harnessed, serving as a component of an updated Top Hat Word & Index website.

If you go to any page on the website, you'll see a rotation of quotes under the picture on the right-hand side of the page.

It's all part of the ongoing development and evolution of things at the company. 