

## Marketing Man Shares Savvy Solutions.

By Steve Higgins,  
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John Follis is an advertising man who wields an irreverent wit to grab attention for his clients. But his latest endeavor doesn't require Follis — who recently moved from Manhattan back to his native Hamden — to tickle anyone's funnybone.

Follis has started a web site that features interviews with marketers in the form of podcasts, or downloadable digital recordings, of audio (or video) broadcasts. "More and more people are listening to podcasts," said Follis, 52. "It's becoming a medium for the masses. It's a very easy way to digest information on a subject of your choice."

*The Marketing Show with John Follis*, ([themarketingshow.net](http://themarketingshow.net)) features interviews with business owners and managers who talk about their marketing challenges and the solutions they came up with. The site currently offers 16 interviews with marketers or business owners, from La-Z-Boy and Ventura Insurance Brokerage to Amy's Bread and Moo Shoes. The podcasts may be downloaded, or a listener can simply click to start the program and hear it on their computer. "The podcasts let people listen to business owners talk about their own real experiences with marketing," said Follis. "It's not just me giving people cookie-cutter solutions."

The Marketing Show grew out of Follis's consulting sideline, *Marketing Therapy* ([www.follisinc.com/therapy](http://www.follisinc.com/therapy)). Small-business owners kept asking Follis to give them advice on advertising and marketing, so he

became a consultant while continuing to create ads for clients ranging from Coca-Cola and Amex to French Toast Clothes and Solgar Vitamins.

Follis is an award-winning ad man who worked on Madison Avenue for 25 years before returning to Hamden in June to help



John Follis has developed a marketing podcast.

care for his elderly parents. After graduating from Syracuse University in 1976, Follis worked at ad agencies in Atlanta and Chicago until he moved to New York City in 1982. There he worked for major agencies, including DDB, K&B and his own, Follis DeVito Verdi before going solo in 1993. He currently works in Hamden.

John Frazier, vice president of Quinn and Co. Public Relations in New York, worked with Follis on a major marketing campaign four years ago. "He came up with some really great creative strategies and implemented a campaign for very little money," said Frazier. "I found him refreshingly creative and very funny."

A recent example is a print campaign Follis dreamed up for Marble Collegiate Church in Manhattan, featuring humorous slogans such as: "You Don't Have To Be A Sinner To Attend Our Church. But It Helps," "Now That Spirituality Is Cool Here's Where To Get Some," and "If You Want To Feed Your Soul, We've Got A Great Menu."

Follis also created an Internet ad banner that reads "Introduce your husband to a younger woman." Three imprints of lipstick-reddened lips appear one at a time as the kicker appears: "Oil of Olay." For Ecology Kids Degradable Diapers, Follis showed a large photo of Earth from outer space and wrote, "It's The Mother Most Diaper Companies Totally Ignore." For Tri-State Auto Insurance, Follis wrote, "Tri-State can save you hundreds off your auto insurance. How you spend it, that's up to you," with ads featuring a screaming sky-diver, a pampered poodle and a blow-up sex doll.

Follis said moving out of New York has not slowed his business. He continues to meet with clients in New York while adding new Connecticut clients. "I just had my busiest summer in years," he said. As for *The Marketing Show*, right now all the content is free as Follis builds content on the site. At some point, he said, he plans to place ads within the podcasts, or monetize the site in other ways. He also foresees a big market overseas. "The Chinese are thirsting for all things marketing, and all things American," he said. No doubt Follis will find some intriguing ways to get the word out globally about his new venture. ●