

## *Need a Sales Boost? Get a Mascot!*

by **Stephanie Bond**

Most companies have them—mascots or spokespersons who, if positioned properly, become synonymous with a product (Pillsbury Dough Boy) or a cause (Smokey Bear). They're used in commercials, print ads, but especially, for personal appearances to give the product or the business a "personality." Consider establishing a mascot for your store, or for an event you're planning.

For a one-time event, you can rent a costume. But if you're interested in creating a mascot for your store, you should consider having a costume made by a local seamstress—or you might be able to put something together yourself. A few ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

**Answer Woman (or Man)** who "zooms" around the store wearing a cape with a big question mark on the back.

**Book Worm**—think round head with antennae and long, narrow solid-colored body

**Miss Romance**, woman in period costume who just happens to be an expert in the romance and women's fiction genre

(Note: Most characters in children's books are copyrighted. Don't be tempted to make your own purple dinosaur costume, for instance, and call him "Barney," or you might find the licensing police at your door.)

Alternately, you might adopt a live animal as a mascot. Birds, cats, iguanas, hamsters, and small dogs are usually a hit with customers (remember, safety first). If you're not a pet person, consider a butterfly farm or a fish aquarium. Or how about a Venus fly-trap plant with scheduled "feedings"?

Or you might create your own spokesperson—a grandmotherly or grandfatherly type? A precocious child? A local athlete or respected businessperson? A popular teacher? A veteran who cherishes the freedom to read? If you align yourself with a charity or a cause, such as literacy, you might be able to attract a bona fide celebrity for an event or commercial.

If you're searching for a new way to get customers into your store or a way to stand out at trade shows, consider doing what other industries and businesses have been doing for years—create a mascot. You just might create a commercial goldmine! ~**SBond**

© Stephanie Bond, Inc. All rights reserved.

Article first appeared in *Romance Sells*, a publication of Romance Writers of America.