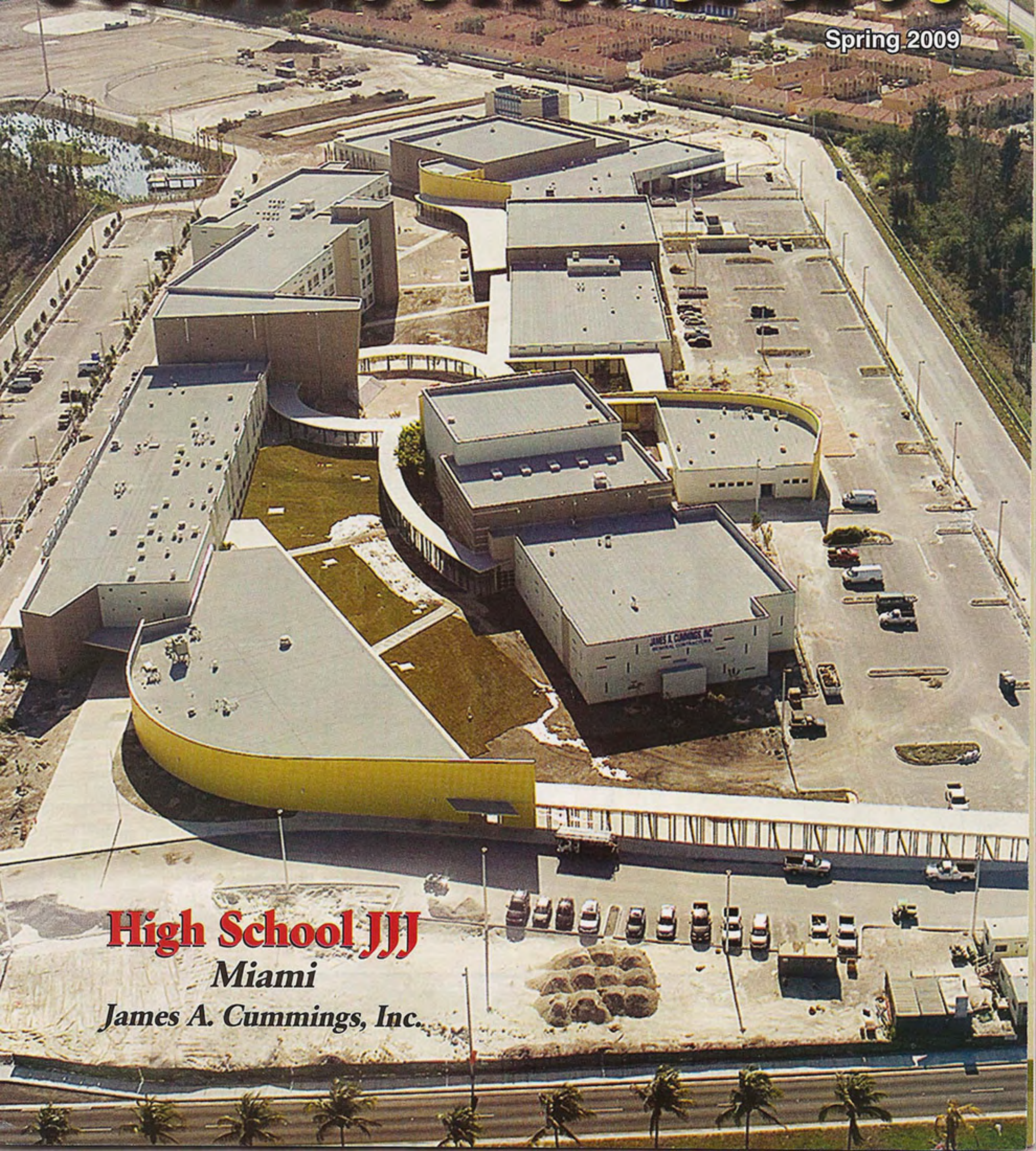


Spring 2009

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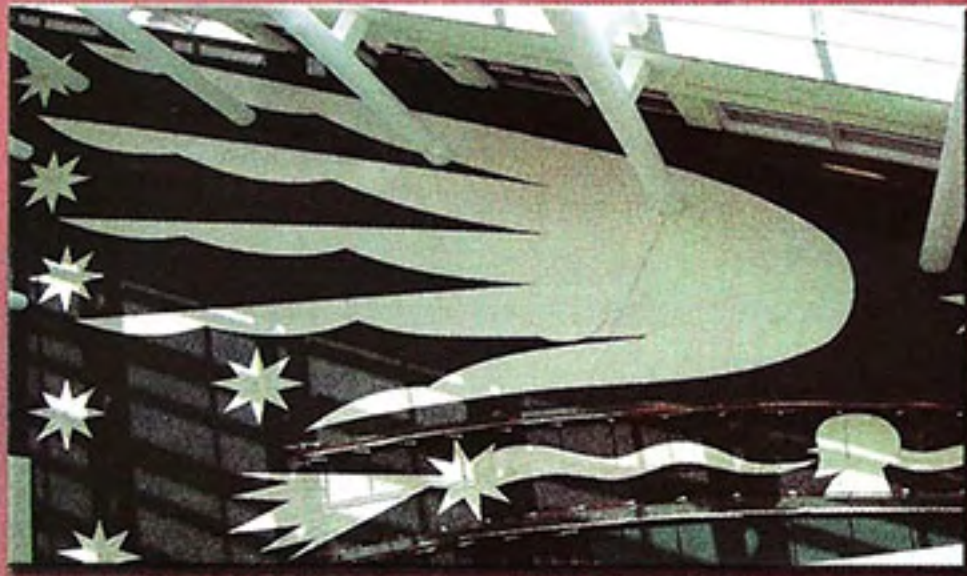
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trade figures. Use your time more productively when you are trying to learn from others. If you just argue and disagree with everything, you are not learning anything. One thing is clear with the big companies that are in the media all the time – they usually know who they are and what they do. They may hit bumps and potholes in the road like everyone else, but they will not entirely reinvent themselves and do a complete 180 from their original business model. They understand that it will only confuse their customers, and negatively affect the morale of their employees.

Since you may have some extra time on your hands, work on new company goals and objectives (short-term & long-term). Relook at your target markets and tweak your market strategy if needed. When you aren't listening to what the TV "experts" are spewing – check out what your competition is up to. Strive to make your market position clear, and always remember to sell the company, not just the products or services. Go out of your way to develop a marketing strategy by differentiating yourself from the competition. And for god's sake, don't let your emotions distract you from what you should be doing. Have the discipline to maintain focus and clarity.

The whole point is to stay sharp

If you are going to follow the lead of the big, successful companies, keep this in mind. When it comes to choosing a fresh, new marketing strategy – the only thing that matters is Return On Investment (a.k.a. ROI). Spending money to spend money is just about as foolish as touching a 115,000 volt FP&L power line with your zipper. The initial thrill will soon be replaced with certain death.

The down side of making ROI work for you is having the intense focus and clarity mentioned above. No sugar coating about it, understanding the details of what works and what does not has caused countless marketing professionals to seek immediate medical attention. To make it easier, you need to start with a plan that outlines your goals. At the top of nearly everyone's list is "to make money." But don't forget about branding too. The best plans involve both. Again, look up the corporate food chain – when Budweiser sponsors a Curling Championship in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan – do you think it's just to sell a bunch of beers at the concession stand? Of course not, they also want to constantly drill their name into the heads of the people packing the stands, as well as, the millions of zany Canadian Curling fans shaking brooms at their televisions at home.

Whatever strategy you decide, whether it's a public relations campaign, trade show promotions or traditional advertising – it's all about evaluating your marketing efforts. Proper tracking of your ROI is not easy by any means, but needs to be done to see what actually produces sales for your company. Of course, if your plan goes beyond generating piles of green cash – it's even tougher to track the emotional impact your strategy involves. As tough as it may be on your cash-flow and ego, it would be great to know if your target audience absolutely hated your ad cam-