Brilliant and not so brilliant

Free tacos, just for me!

This is brilliant, and it is part of California Tortilla's clever (and as they would say, spunky) online direct marketing campaign. Let me explain: CalTort has a loyalty card (the "Burrito Elito" card), which allows you to accumulate points toward free food. To use it, you have to register it online. Every week, CalTort sends out a special of the week or some such to its database (which I am sure is sizeable). And every once in a while they send out a private note to card holders, such as the one I got today, which says, under the subject line "We Miss You. And We Can Prove It":

> *Where the heck have you been? To show you how much we miss you, we got you a little something—but we can't give it to you unless you come in. So here's the scoop: we've just put a* ***FREE TACO*** *on your Burrito Elito card. All you have to do is visit any Cal Tort, with your card, within 2 weeks of this email to get it. After 2 weeks it goes away—so hurry!*
>
> *We're holding our breath until you get here. 1, 2, 3…*

Why is this brilliant? Because it has a personality (slightly irreverent), it is personalized and gives me a REASON to go to CalTort. It also shows that a bit of creativity and some work can earn you customers and loyalty. Kudos to CalTort for knowing how to use direct email effectively.

This is boring. Gen Y thinks this way.

On blog posts, in newspaper articles, on TV and in ads everywhere there are sweeping generalizations and assumptions that undermine your message. You (the blogger or copywriter)

assume that if you find something boring, that everyone else finds it boring. You are a member of a generation, therefore you can speak for the entire cohort. No and no.

It is not very brilliant to assume that the world sees things EXACTLY like you do, like there is a universal key and you hold it. For instance, not everyone found the humor in Pineapple Express funny (I didn't), so if you start a movie ad with the line "As funny as Pineapple Express," you will automatically lose people.

Be mindful of what you are assuming and saying. Generalizations and stereotypes that are cast too wide will turn away more people than will be brought in.