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Create Visibility For Yourself

By Leni Chauvin

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Everyone in business has one thing in common. It doesn't matter whether you're a salesman, a coach, a dentist, an artist, a lawyer, running a nonprofit organization or a work-at-home-mom. What we all need is to have people know about us. We can be the very best in all the world at what we do, but if we haven't got any customers, clients, or patients what good will it do us?

If you're just starting out or want to take your business to the next level, you're probably a lot like many others in the same boat. You've got a limited budget for promoting your endeavor and there are so many things you could easily spend it on. It's like being a kid in a candy store all over again. So many choices, each as enticing as the next. All the selections seem to be calling out, "Pick me." "Pick me." "Pick me."

I'm talking about logos, Web sites, graphic designers, brochures, 1-800 numbers, business cards, advertisements, Yellow Pages listings, and memberships galore. They all cost money and they're all shouting, "Pick me."

What if you can't pick one, though? What if you need to bring in more business before you can spend money on bringing in more business?

The solution is very simple and it boils down to just one thing: networking. That is by far the least expensive and most effective method of marketing known to wo/man.

If you're serious about becoming the success you know you were meant to be, I urge you to do two things now: 1) STEP AWAY FROM THE COMPUTER and 2) create visibility for yourself because that's where it all begins.

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That means leaving the safety of the confines of your cubicle, office, or spare bedroom and getting out to see and be seen over and over again. After all, when people are in the market for your product or service who do you think they'll think of to help them: someone they met once at a party 18 months ago or someone they see and speak to repeatedly?

One way to get yourself noticed is to set a routine and stick with it. For example if you think the gym might be a good place to meet prospective clients, go regularly at the same times and days. You'll get to talk to far more people—and form relationships with them—than you would if you went on a drop-in basis, and it's relationships, after all, that are the crux of networking.

Check out the supermarket. It's an often overlooked, but excellent place to create one-on-one visibility. If you go at roughly the same time and stand in line for the same checker each time you go, you will find that you start chatting to the checker and before you know it, he/she will remember you and start calling you by name.

Over time, his or her memory will increase from the realm of "paper or plastic," to what you do for a living, the name of your company, etc. Supermarket checkers come in contact with an awful lot of people and they share a lot of information with their customers, too.

Wouldn't it be nice if this person, who has access to probably several hundred people a day, knew you, what you do, and even better yet, had a ready supply of your business cards in his/her pocket? It can happen and it all begins with starting a routine and forming a relationship.

Join and become active in your professional association, a service club, your Chamber of Commerce, Attend networking meetings. Go for a walk in your neighborhood. Coach a Little League team. Become a member of a professional leads exchange group like my own BRE Business Referral Exchange. Lead a Brownie troop. Join a book club. Take up a new sport. Start a new hobby. Pick up the phone just to say "hello." Go to seminars where your customers go. Invite your customers or prospects to attend a workshop with you.

BOTTOM LINE: It doesn't matter what you decided to do to get yourself noticed. Just do it, and do it consistently. You'll find it's a low cost way to build your business; you'll learn a lot from others and have fun at the same time.

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Visibility Equates to Higher Profits

By Kathleen Gage

One of the greatest challenges businesses face is how to market cost effectively while gaining a good return on investment (ROI). Regardless of what industry you are in, the size of your organization and

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how long you have been in business, you must continually look for ways to gain and maintain your visibility to your market.

Gaining visibility is one of the most important, and yet often most overlooked, aspect of running a business. Perhaps you don't run a company, but you are in sales. Visibility applies to you as well.

Before you begin to aggressively position yourself and gain visibility, think about what the vision for you and your organization is. Gaining a vision of what the organization stands for, the impact you want to have on your customers or clients, the quality of products and services, your contribution to your community, and where you want the organization to be in the future is essential as you move forward.

Your vision is your ideal future state. The statement includes what you desire your organization to be like. Again, it doesn't really matter the size of the organization. Included in the vision are your values. What is really important to you?

Once you have your vision in mind, consider writing it down. This can help you to solidify your thoughts and to stay on track with what is truly important.

Another important aspect of your marketing is your Unique Selling Proposition (USP). It is beneficial to actually write down what makes your product or service different from those of your competitors. Whether you are in financial planning, training, banking, the beauty industry, day spas, or technology, take the time to know what sets you apart. In the consumer's mind, Company A looks the same as Company B in many ways. The same with Salesperson A compared to Salesperson B. To stand apart your job is to help the consumer understand your differences. You can do this in a very positive way without belittling or badmouthing your competition.

A simple formula to clarify your USP is to write down every reason someone would want to do business with you. Are you an expert in your industry? Do you deliver in record time? Do you have a unique location? What is unique about your business compared to your competitors? What is most important to your prospects and customers about doing business with you? (If you don't know - ASK!) What can only you do that your competitors can't do?

Once you answer these questions, create a short message to include the key information. Many people avoid doing this type of exercise thinking it is a waste of time. Fact is, when you meet with a potential customer and they ask what you do, you want to be able to concisely tell them. This process is also helpful with your current clients in that they are only one call away from utilizing the services of someone else.

Another challenge people have is once they have created a USP they seem to be married to it. Avoid

the trap of having a canned USP. Make it spontaneous according to the situation.

Your USP can be used in a number of different ways; conversations, networking opportunities, on your business cards and letterhead (if it is not too long), your yellow page ad, and in your other forms of advertising.

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Periodically, it is helpful to revisit your vision and USP. As you change and your customer's needs and wants change, you may find it necessary to adjust to those changes. What should drive any change are your core values more than anything else. When you are congruent with your values, success is assured.

Kathleen Gage is a business advisor, keynote speaker, and trainer that helps others gain market dominance and visibility within their market. Call 801.619.1514 or E-mail

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