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Explaining What You Do in 15 Seconds

By Charlie Cook

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by: **Charlie Cook**

You're in the elevator and your friend John introduces you to Barbara who is the CEO of one of the companies you'd like to do business with. Barbara asks, "What do you do?"

Here is your chance to make a connection with a prime member of your target market. You want to get her attention, make a positive impression and get her interested enough to continue the conversation. You've got about fifteen seconds to do this.

Whether you are in the elevator, or on the phone, the way you start the conversation will determine whether or not it will continue. You could tell anyone what you do if you had half an hour, but with fifteen seconds you're likely to simply label yourself, as most people do.

Labels don't tell us much. Imagine you told Barbara in the elevator that you are a coach or a consultant. Are you talking about working with high school kids, senior managers, or actors? Few job labels tell your audience who you work with. Most labels are not only vague but don't help to prompt the conversation to continue.

You could be more specific and tell your prospect you are a tax accountant or an automation specialist. That gives people some idea of what you do, but still doesn't explain why your prospect should care.

Instead of using a label, you could tell your prospect how you do your work, the processes you use. You might say, "We analyze light manufacturing companies to identify areas where the addition of a programmable logic controller could boost throughput." If she understands what you are talking about, you still haven't given her a reason to contact you.

Whether you are an executive coach, lawyer, accountant, or automation specialist, when you start talking about the processes you use eyes glaze over and minds shut down. While you may have developed processes that no one else uses, prospects don't care about the process, at least not initially.

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One of the most common mistakes people make is assuming their message should be about themselves. If you are in business to provide services and products to clients and customers, your marketing message should be about their needs and wants. Here's the difference:

"I'm a marketing coach." (It's about me, and who really cares?)

"I help independent professionals attract more clients and make more money." (It's about what I do for others and should prompt the question, "How do you do that?")

Your prospects' primary concern isn't you. They want to know what you can do for them and how you can help them profit, financially, physically or emotionally. They want to know if you can solve a problem for them.

To get attention with a short sentence about the problems you solve, you might tell Barbara you "help reduce manufacturing operating costs and increase profits". Cost containment is a continual problem for any CEO and should pique her interest and prompt follow up. Stop shutting the door to new business with your marketing message. When people ask you what you do, avoid using a label or a discussion of process. Instead, quickly clarify who you help and what type of problems you solve. One sentence should do the job.

Talking about what you do in a new way takes a little getting used to. The first couple of times you stop yourself from saying, "I'm an executive coach or consultant" and replace it with a marketing message that describes how you actually help clients, it will feel awkward. Keep using and fine tuning your marketing message and soon it will not only give prospects a clear idea of what you do but you'll be comfortable using it.

Once you have a 15 second marketing message that works you can use it in the elevator, in the airport, on the phone, and at parties and watch your business grow.

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The author, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners attract more clients and be more successful. Sign up to receive the F*ree Marketing Guide and the 'More Business' newsletter, full of practical tips you can use at

The Internet And Responsibility

By Richard Lowe

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Many years ago, when I was a young lad, a wise man gave me the

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best advice that anyone has ever given. "Richard", he told me, "Never lose your integrity." I've followed that advice all of my life, and it has served me better than just about anything else. Here on the internet, we webmasters have a substantial amount of power. Because of that power, we also carry a burden of responsibility.

My wife has been very sick for several years. In fact, four years ago she went into a coma for 5 days and came within seconds of dying. It's a major league miracle that she survived. Her recovery has been tough on her, both because of pain and because she has trouble leaving the house. In order to make things more tolerable for her, I gave her all of the tools she needed to become a webmaster along with some training and help.

Now she has become a very good webmaster. She has created a site about how she survived asthma (<http://www.survivingasthma.com>) and another about how she survived diabetes (<http://www.survivingdiabetes.com>). These sites explain her experiences, give some advice from her heart and attempt to give people hope.

Recently, she got an email from someone who just stumbled across her site and was greatly moved. In fact, that person had been contemplating suicide, read her site, and decided to live. Another person was able to get help based upon my wife's advice. Many others have sent in emails explaining how their lives were changed or in a few cases even saved.

Wow. Now that's power. And along with that comes an incredible responsibility.

Now, on one of my web sites I give people advice on the web, the internet and other related topics. I give people insight on how to create sites which look good, produce results and perform their task.

I've received numerous emails from people explaining that I have changed their life in many ways. Some people have had their interest rekindled, others have learned things they didn't know.

And still others began to get an understanding of how to be ethical on the internet. In fact, some people even said they've learned that it's important to be ethical at all!

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I humbly submit that we webmasters have a high responsibility to the internet community.

- We need to communicate clearly
- We need to communicate accurately
- We must not tolerate unethical behaviors
- We must not promote scams and frauds
- We may make money, we must do it honestly
- We must respect other's opinions
- We must not flame, spam or engage in other unsocial behaviors

All of us need to understand how much power we have and use that power in a responsible way.

Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets at <http://www.internet-tips.net> – Visit our website any time to read over 1,000 complete FREE articles about how to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

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