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Frodo's Journey: What It Can Teach You About Marketing Your Small Business

By Dr. Rachna D. Jain

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Just recently, I took a break and caught "The Return of the King" at the movie theater. At the same time, I was pondering a topic for this article. As often happens, the themes and timing converged. Here are 10 things you can learn about marketing your small business from the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

- 1) The task is primarily yours. In the Lord of the Rings, Frodo must complete the task that is primarily his (i.e. to destroy the ring at Mount Doom). In the same vein, marketing your business is a job that is primarily yours. If you don't take the time or make the effort no one else can do it in your stead.
- 2) You will benefit from help. Throughout Frodo's journey he was supported and assisted by many people along the way. Many entrepreneurs generally avoid asking for help. Who or what do you need to ask for help so that you can be more successful than you are now?
- 3) The path always opened up and not usually before it was needed. In the movie, there were many times Frodo and his company narrowly escaped doom and destruction. At the last minute a path would open up that would lead them to safety. In marketing your business it's often the same way. You can see where you need to go but the path may not open up for you until the last possible moment. You need to stay the course and trust that all is unfolding just perfectly – even when it doesn't look that way in any particular moment.
- 4) Persistence pays off. During the movie, there were many times Frodo probably wondered, "Why me?" and several times where he was too tired to think about going ahead but he did, led on by his vision and sense of responsibility. Where in your business can you be more persistent and more responsible to your vision? How could this give you the energy to move ahead?
- 5) Pay attention to signs along the way. Throughout the movie, there were hints and clues about what might happen next – the same is true for your business. When you pay attention to the clues and hints along the way you are more well-prepared for any unexpected turn of events. Pay particular attention,

especially, to outcomes which are significantly different than you anticipated.

6) Take advantage of the rest–stops. It's important on a hero's quest, and as a small business owner, to take periodic rest–stops in order to refresh and refuel. When you find yourself in a business lull use that time to put additional structures and supports in place. Use the rest–stops to your greatest advantage.

7) Recognize that everything comes together in due time. Sometimes, small business owners feel impatient when their business is not growing as fast or profitably as expected. Understand, though, that building a business has a certain rhythm and pattern. When you work within the pattern, rather than fighting against it, you will feel calmer and more confident. For Frodo, he needed to travel a great distance to get to Mount Doom and he needed to 'put in his time' so to speak in order to complete the quest. For example, he had to first travel to meet Galadriel or else he wouldn't have been able to move through the part of the journey when he met with Shelob. So understand that all your efforts are

coming together even if, sometimes, they seem like random tangents to your path.

8) Learn as much as you can along the way. In the movie, Frodo learned about various lands by paying attention to those people he met along the way. He was able to gain assistance and loyalty because he took the time to learn from everyone he met. The most successful business owners are the ones who continually make time to learn and take the best of what they learn to propel them even further.

9) Be flexible and yet stay the course. Several times in the movie, Frodo needed to change his plans in order to appropriately respond to events as they unfolded. Similarly, small business owners need to be flexible in their planning so they can take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

10) Success may sometimes look or feel different than you expected. In the movie, each of the main characters pursued a different path after the journey was finished. Each had a different life trajectory after playing their part in the story. For every small business owner success may look different than you expected and may require some new adjustments. For example, you might have great success with a marketing approach and then have some glitches in fulfilling the orders. Success doesn't come without lasting change.

As we move forward in this year I invite you to examine your business from these viewpoints: 1) see where you can take actions that you must take, 2) where you can allow help and assistance in a new (or bigger) way, 3) where you can find paths that open up to lead you along on your journey, 4) where you can persist in the face of adversity, 5) where you can learn from the information unfolding around you, 6) how you can better use your rest–stops, 7) where you can grasp the pattern of business unfolding as it should, 8) where you can learn from those you meet, 9) where you can be more flexible and 10) finally, where can celebrate your success and move onto a new playing field?

Follow these steps, and you will manifest a positive outcome in your quest for small business success.

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Dr. Rachna D. Jain is a sales and marketing coach, author, consultant and speaker. Sign up for her free email newsletter, "Sales & Marketing Secrets" To learn more or to contact Dr. Jain directly, please visit

A Team Building Seminar Can Work For Any Business

By Paul Tobey

It amazes me how popular team building seminars have become. Most major companies and organizations have turned to team building professionals at one time or another to get greater results from their employees. But, team building is not just for large companies, it works just as well for the small business entrepreneur. I'd like to focus on a couple of key points that will help you decide, as a big or small business, if team building seminars are right for you.

One of the first questions I always ask in my own team building seminar is; what's the number one thing you need to do in business to be successful. And, you wouldn't believe the mixed responses I get like; having a good product, having a good marketing strategy or having good management. While these things are important they're certainly not number one! The most important thing you need to do as a company, whether you like it or not is; **SELL**. In fact, if you're not selling is a hobby, not a business.

Learning to sell is by far the most important skill you could ever acquire. That's why I teach it in my team building seminars. Everyone on the team needs to know how to sell, not just the sales people. Why? Because that way, everyone understands, not only how important it is to the success of any business but how learning to sell can increase everyone's awareness of what it takes to be successful.

So, if selling is the most important skill what's the second most important? Team! The team is what gives life and energy to your ideas and what propels your company forward. Imagine how hard it would be to push a car up a hill if you didn't have a team. A team makes everything easier if, and only if, people know how to work together. Which, brings me to the third most important thing; Teach!

As part of a team, your responsibility is to teach everyone around you what you know that can help them do their job better. How do you know when and when not to teach? When you've done something and had success doing it, then it's time to pass on that information. So often when people learn something that's worked for them they keep it to themselves because somehow they think it gives them an advantage within the company. That's what you don't want. You don't want a bunch of individuals all competing with each other. That's not a team, that's a contest!

Finally, the glue that holds Sell, Team and Teach together is; Accountability. When you become

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accountable for the success of others then you realize that your responsibility is to share the information you've learned that can help them. Then, and only then, can you be truly successful as a team. Becoming accountable for each other is truly the magic potion of successful businesses.

So, how can this work for a small business person that doesn't have a team? Exactly the same way! If you're in small business you still need a team in order to sell a lot of products and services. If you can't afford to hire a big team then all you need to do is offer to teach what you know that will help others. In the process, a team will form around you and the energy that you put into teaching will bring you greater success than you ever thought possible.

The cornerstone of Paul Tobey's

is focusing on results through collective

energy. To learn more about what this involves please visit

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