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**GOT MEME? How to Attract Your Clients' and Customers' Attention**

**By Charlie Cook**

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No "meme" isn't a typo and Got Milk, the more commonly know phrase, is actually a marketing meme. If you've opened up a magazine or watched TV in the last ten years you've seen the fun and memorable Got Milk ad campaign using celebrities with a milk mustache. Chances are it got your attention and you remember the phrase, "Got Milk".

A good meme is simple, provocative and infectious. An effective meme rolls off your tongue and sticks in your mind. Others remember it and pass it along to their friends and colleagues. It's the cultural equivalent of a gene. For those of you without a national advertising budget, helping prospects and clients quickly grasp what you do and having them spread the word about your services is a form of zero cost marketing that you can use.

You may already have a tagline, slogan, or catch phrase you use in your marketing, but does it work as well as a meme? Like a gene, memes synthesize complex information, concepts and ideas and pass them along with little effort. They communicate what you do in a few words or in a short sentence. They enable you to get across the benefits of your products and services to prospects in a form they'll remember and repeat to others.

Does your current title, tagline, or catch phrase: Tell people what you do? Create a perception of need? Start conversations?

NOT MARKETING MEMES Labels such as "Trial Lawyer" or "Copy Editor" or "Computer Specialist". The problem with labels is that they don't tell anyone how you can help them, or which problems you solve. In most cases they kill further conversation. Descriptions of work processes and methodologies. These usually start with "I ...". While at some point a prospect may want to know how you work, it is their problems and concerns which interest them the most and are the best place to begin. Offers such as "Buy this and get two free." Your meme isn't meant to convince someone to buy but rather to get his or her interest and start a conversation.

## MEMES

Effective marketing memes focus on a specific clientele and a solution, or better yet a common client problem. For example, "I help independent professionals attract more clients", identifies a market and a client problem. It also invites the follow up question "How?" FedEx grew their now billion dollar business with the meme, "When it absolutely, positively, has to be there overnight".

Whether you use a meme in the elevator, on your business card or in your mailings, it should help your prospects know whether you are taking to them and define you as someone who can help them solve a problem, and prompt prospects to ask if your products and services could help them, too.

## GET MEME

The "Got Milk" campaign used both words and images to get their message across. If you are only relying on words, you may need more than two, but limit it to less than ten. Use the following steps to write your meme. Identify your target market. Define problems you solve for clients. Clarify the benefits you provide. Determine what you would like people to do after they hear or see your meme. What question do you want them to ask or what action you want them to take? Use this information to write five conversation-starting phrases that summarize who you help and the problems you solve.

Once you have these draft memes, try them out. Some may elicit blank stares; others will prompt people to ask questions or start listing names of people they know who could use your products and services. A good meme can start a chain reaction in people's minds and prompt them to move from prospect to client. When you hear people repeating your meme to others, you'll know you've got one that works.

Coming up with an effective meme isn't easy, but its the lowest cost and most valuable tool in your marketing tool kit. You may be pushing prospects away with your current tagline instead of helping people understand what you do and, more importantly, what you can do for them. So get meme, and get going with your marketing.

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The author, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners who are struggling to attract more clients and grow their businesses. To get the free marketing guide, '7 Steps to Get More Clients and Grow Your Business' visit

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## **Let Your Mistakes Improve Your Marketing And Your Profits**

**By Charlie Cook**

Have you ever sent out a sales letter and received little or no response, or put up a web site and found

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hardly anyone visiting it. Have you worked hard on an article only to find that few people read it and even fewer contacted you as a result?

Let's be honest; everyone makes mistakes. The difference between the winners and the losers in business is that winners recognize their mistakes and avoid making the same blunder again. Each time you can recognize a marketing mistake and correct it your marketing will be that much better.

Marketing experts got that way by working full time at making more marketing mistakes than you can imagine and then learning from them. Common marketing missteps include: Starting your marketing with a focus on your credentials, products and services instead of on client problems. Using a label to describe what you do instead of a "meme" or value positioning statement that tells prospects which problems you solve in a sentence or less. Developing a tagline, article title or web page title without taking the time to discover which words will attract your clients. Wasting time on pushing information about yourself out to prospects instead of pulling them in with ideas they are interested in. Not providing prospects with a free offer to get their contact information. Forgetting to regularly follow up with prospects. Building a web site without a clear step-by-step map of how you will attract visitors to the site, and what you want them do once they visit your site. Not having offers and strategies to turn prospects into clients and clients into repeat clients and sources of referrals.

If you've made any of the above marketing mistakes, you're not alone. But if you want to grow your business, don't repeat these blunders again and again. If you're not getting the results you want, look for a new strategy, modify your tactics and change your materials.

**Strategy** – Base your marketing on a clear set of principles. Have a clearly defined strategy and marketing plan. Use approaches that work for independent professionals and small business.

**Tactics** – Plan your marketing so its organized and individual efforts are additive and contribute to building your business.

**Materials** – Make sure individual marketing pieces resonate with your target market, get their attention and move them to the action you want them to take.

Fix your marketing tactics and materials by testing ideas, keeping the ones that work and throwing out the ones that don't. If you self published a book, but its not flying off the shelves, identify the variables that could be affecting sales.

It may be the book's title, the sales letter, or the price and bonus offers. Pick one of these and make some changes. Test a different title, rewrite your sales letter, or the price and bonus offers and see what happens.

Depending on your timeline and goals, you may want to avoid making all the marketing mistakes on your own, and get expert advice from someone who has made or seen most of the mistakes before.

In the process of growing your business you're bound to make marketing missteps. The more you make, identify and learn from the faster your marketing will improve and the more clients you will

attract.

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