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Grow Sales Using Image Tactics

By Sharron Senter

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In my dreams, I envision being the marketing consultant equivalent of Oprah or Tiger Woods. Oprah, for her premise, "You're a woman and only you are responsible for yourself." Tiger Woods, for his ultimate dedication to the game. Respectively, this is what they're known for or what their personal value can be identified as; put another way, this is what their brand identities are.

Once you're known for something and people perceive value in "this something [your brand]," it's at this moment that you start to make money. Once you have perceived value, other entrepreneurs and businesses will pay money to be associated with the perception for which you're known.

To be an entrepreneur, the first decision you must make is, "Who do you want to be?" Or, put another way, "How do you want to be perceived by others?" The answers to these two questions are equivalent to the foundation that'll drive all of your future marketing decisions, from what advertising vehicles you'll use, to the type of customers and clients you'll target.

For example, would you like to be known as the world's most prestigious dietician? People all over the world seek you out and pay money for your advice on how to integrate more color into their diets. To build a foundation and reach such prestige, your image marketing plan might involve the following actions.

Complete appropriate credentials such as certifications and higher education.

Obtain and make visible reputable references including popular media personalities quoting you as an expert, current and past clients quoting specific things you did to help them, and a variety of print articles and electronic news bulletins in which you're quoted.

Build credibility by hosting, writing or producing a weekly healthy-eating column called, "Got Colors, Get Healthy."

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Socialize and be seen with other health-related well-known experts or people who exhibit healthy behavior such as: other dietitians, diet book authors, athletes, personal trainers, physiology professors and food scientists. Why? Because a person can create an implied credibility about themselves simply by hanging out with other experts. Generally speaking, people assume that because the other experts let you hang with them, then you must be worthy of your "expert" status.

Pick a unique clothing and makeup style and stick with it. A simple example, perhaps every time you leave your house, you always wear something purple, a scarf, pin, shirt, tie or nail polish. The repetitive purple creates a subliminal image, that, after awhile, causes people, when they see you in the news, at an event or in a magazine, to say, "I've seen her somewhere." And from this statement they extract that you're sought after, and therefore, you must know what you're talking about.

Always evolve your image based on current trends. However, remember to make small changes, so as not to walk away from the image you've been working hard to build.

Every entrepreneur's image-building plan will be unique. In fact, it must be. It's the subtle differences about you as an entrepreneur that distinguish you from your competition. More importantly, it's also these differences that help your customers find you, since you'll be more able to effectively and affordably reach customers by selecting an image niche.

Sharron Senter is a New England-based marketing consultant, speaker, writer and founder of Senter & Associates. She helps small and home-based businesses deploy affordable marketing strategies. She's well known for her free weekly emailed marketing tips and her "14 Image-building Dos & Don'ts," small biz survival report. Receive Senter's free marketing tips at

Is Your Marketing Strategy Killing Your Profits?

By Charlie Cook

With the wrong marketing strategy you could be killing your profits and limiting your business. Your marketing strategy is like the driver in a car, with marketing tactics being the engine. If you know where you want to go and how to get there, your marketing tactics will help you attract many more clients, if not you could crash.

Every business uses one or more of the following tactics to attract clients; mailings, advertisements, phone calls, networking, promotional events, a web site and sending email. If you use any of these and aren't attracting as many new clients as you want or making as much money as you'd like, the problem may not be the tactics. It's your marketing strategy that needs attention.

Without an effective marketing strategy you won't achieve the results you want, no matter how much time and money you spend. A high profile radio ad campaign won't help you grow your business

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unless it includes a message that attracts your prospects. An article about your firm in a newspaper can bring in business or just be a conversation piece. Email messages you send can end up in your prospects' delete bin or prompt them to contact you.

Mailings, radio advertisements or web sites are only delivery vehicles for your marketing message. They are the tactics you use to implement your strategy. Are you using the right strategy to market your business?

What are the fundamental principles of your marketing strategy? If you can answer this question, you're among one percent of business owners who can. Most people think only about their marketing tactics or vehicles and wonder why their profits aren't growing as quickly as they would like.

Business—Building Marketing Strategy To grow your business you need to:

Define Your Goals Identify where you want to take your business and what you want to achieve. Other than making more money than you are now, have you written down a vision of what you want your business to be two years from now? Five years from now?

Target Your Marketing Most small business owners waste their time and money pitching too broadly. Do you have an effective method for identifying the people who want your products and services?

Use a Problem Solving Approach Over 95 percent of small business owners focus their marketing on the reasons people should buy their products and services, not on their clients. Is your marketing focused on client's concerns and problems or on yours?

Demonstrate Value Getting your name in front of people is a first step in marketing, but if your prospects don't know what you do or how you can help them, you haven't achieved your goal. Past clients and prospects may have only a limited idea of how you can help them. Do your prospects understand the range of problems you solve and the solutions you provide?

Build Relationships Every past client and prospect who has shown an interest can help you grow your business. Most service professionals know this but waste this resource through lapsed or infrequent communication. Do you have a method for staying in touch on a monthly basis with every person who could help you grow your business? Do you have a strategy for growing the number of qualified prospects on this list each week?

Many people find that defining their marketing strategy is the hardest part of their job. So hard that many small business owners use a tactical approach instead. Don't make this mistake!

Once you have clear marketing goals and a well—defined strategy, your marketing will be more focused and you can make more effective use of appropriate marketing tactics to grow your business. Shift to strategic marketing and you'll turbo charge your marketing and your business.

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The author, Charlie Cook, helps service professionals and small business owners attract more clients and be more successful. Sign up to receive the Free Marketing Guide, '7 Steps to Grow Your Business' and the 'More Business' newsletter, full of practical tips you can use at

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