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Service Marketers; How's Your Packaging?

By Jay Lipe

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When a shopper picks up a product in a store, what's the first thing they notice? The packaging, right? The same holds true for someone buying a service.

Yet instead of a folded carton with colorful graphics, you are the packaging for your service business. Intangible points of contact, including your clothes, your briefcase, maybe even your breath, all burn a lasting image in your buyer's mind.

Here are some of the more common packaging elements all service marketers should pay attention to:

Your clothes

All your technical expertise won't mean diddly if you wear a tie dye t-shirt and striped bell bottoms to your first client meeting. "Always dress better than you need to," says Sue Morem, author of *How to Gain the Professional Edge; Achieve the Personal and Professional Image You Want*. "Even when dealing with a casual company, remember you are not a part of that company; you're an outsider." If you're not sure what to wear, find a personal shopping consultant.

Briefcase

I've seen people use briefcases that looked like they carried the first batch of Pony Express mail. Resist the temptation to use that briefcase Uncle Joe bought you at Wal-Mart and instead invest good money in one at a reputable luggage store.

Briefcases are one of the few personal effects almost every business person carries into a meeting and this simple item speaks volumes about your image.

Your notebook

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When you pull out some paper to take notes, do you pull out a sturdy, professional looking notebook or just a pad of paper? This item, which sits on the table throughout the meeting, may go unnoticed by many of your buyers. But then again, it may not.

Etiquette

Saying please and thank you. A firm handshake. Looking someone in the eye when talking to them. "Etiquette is the equivalent of the ribbon and bow on a package," says Morem. "Good etiquette lets others know you are in control and finishes off your image." For a good primer on professional etiquette, consult her book.

Proposal covers

Up until five years ago, I routinely faxed my proposals to prospects. Then, one of these prospects said to me "Jay, I have two proposals here. One is handsomely bound and the other is faxed. Which do you think I should go with?" Point taken. When final packaging your proposals, estimates or RFP's, use the highest quality binding system you can afford.

Envelopes

Do you still hand-address your envelopes? A lot of business people I know do and I sure wouldn't penalize them for it. But if your competitors are ink jetting their envelopes, your image will suffer ever so slightly.

Email address

What image does your email convey? If your email address is

or

, you might take a step back and ask yourself, what image does this convey? If

you're after a professional image for your service business, and you have an email address that doesn't synch up with this image, you might want to consider upgrading it.

Domain name

These days, with the costs of taking your business online dropping precipitously, your business really should have its own domain name. I'm not knocking AOL or Yahoo. But if you want to project the image of an established business that operates in a professional manner, having your own domain name is a giant leap. For more information about availability of certain domain names, visit InterNIC at

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Email fonts and colors

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I've received some very professional looking emails. I've also received some emails that were laughably amateur. Increasingly these days, buyers and sellers make initial contact through email, and casual fonts or background colors that bury the body text penalize you right from the start. Consider your email address and template as "wrappers" for your business and treat them accordingly.

Voicemail greeting

Talk about a moment of truth for your business. The vast majority of business calls (including calls from your prospects) reach voicemail, thus underscoring the need for a professional, well-crafted greeting. Don't have your daughter recite her new poem or feature a rap version of "Old Lang Syne". Keep it simple...and professional.

Punctuality

At the root of being on time is respect; respect for someone else's time. So, be on time for all appointments. If you do run late, call and let someone know. If you're running a meeting, end on time or announce that the meeting may go longer and give anyone an opportunity to bow out.

If you think any of these packaging elements aren't worth investing in, then you've missed my point. Each one of these is a defining contact point between your service business and your market, and forms an important element of your packaging. Pay attention to your packaging; your buyer will.

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Reasons To Keep The Adhesive Packaging Tape Sticking Around

By John Francis

Adhesive packaging tape is one kind of tape that you will want to keep close at hand. Adhesive packaging tape is useful for many jobs around the house and office.

Planning a move? If you are moving and will be doing the packing yourself, make sure you have plenty of adhesive packaging tape. Nothing holds a box together as well as adhesive packaging tape. Moving companies use this product because it is strong and can be used to close a box that holds household or office items. Adhesive packaging tape will keep the box from opening and the contents from spilling.

When you are the one who gets to pack all the dishes, books, small appliances, decorative items,

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linens and clothing you will be glad to have adhesive packaging tape within your reach. If you use strong boxes and good adhesive packaging tape you should not need to worry about your possessions making it safely across town or across the country.

Time for one of the kids to go away to college? This is another time for adhesive packaging tape. You can help them box up all the things they will need for school.

Let's say it's a few years later and the kids are ready to get their own apartment or house. Round up the adhesive packaging tape, clean out their bedroom and closet and send them packing, literally!

The time may come when you need to go through a parent's home. There will be years of memories and treasures to look through. Purchase some boxes and adhesive packaging tape and you will be able to box up your favorite keepsakes and also send a box or two to other family members.

If you need to clean out the attic, garage or basement you may find that adhesive packaging tape is necessary. Whether you are keeping things or giving them away the adhesive packaging tape will help you get everything in order.

When you want to send a gift to someone who lives out-of-state you can use adhesive packaging tape. Masking tape will not always do the job but adhesive packaging tape is a good choice because it will keep the gift safely taped. Put your gift in a box, secure it with adhesive packaging tape and send it to that special friend or family member.

As you can see, there are many reasons to keep adhesive packaging tape sticking around your house or office.

Everything you need to know about adhesives from adhesive dispensers to

wood floor adhesive.

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