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Shameless Self-Promotion

By Janice D. Byer, MVA

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Hi! My name is Janice Byer and I am the owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (<http://www.docutype.net>). I am the winner of several prestigious awards (information is on our website) and have a slew of happy customers, as the testimonials on our site will attest to. My services are professional, creative and in demand.

Now, wasn't that easy? In one small paragraph, I have shamelessly self-promoted my business and it's success.

I'll admit it, I am addicted to shameless self-promotion, and why not? Who better to promote myself and my business than me? And, the opportunity to talk about your business should be the root behind every marketing effort you undertake.

Networking utilizes shameless self-promotion almost constantly. After all, when you visit a networking event, why are you there? To promote your business of course! And, when you are at a designated networking event, it is not the time when you should hold back. Be shameless yet professional, and also be considerate of your fellow networkers. They are there for the same reason you are. So, give them the opportunity to shamelessly self-promote themselves.

Networking is the "right time" to shamelessly self-promote. But, there are times when it is not appropriate. There is a time and a place for everything, including promoting your business.

For instance, if you are a member of a news or discussion group, there are generally rules against promoting your business, unless that is what the list is for. So, don't take advantage of the captive audience or break the rules. That can actually be bad for business.

However, some lists have designated days of the week or month when you can shamelessly tell the world about what you do and what you have to offer. This is the time to show them what you've got.

Shameless Self–Promotion

Opportunities arise at various times when it is good to promote yourself and your business. For instance, I was with my daughter at the library yesterday and the woman there asked if I was excited about my daughter going into grade one and the fact that she will be in school all day. This was the perfect opportunity to tell her that I run my own home–based business and what I do.

Also, a few weeks back we had our water supply guy here filling up our well and we talked about his father's business. Well, I didn't give up the chance to say, "Does your father have a website? I can design one for him." Well, the conversation went from there and I ended up giving him several of my business cards.

My husband is also the owner of a small business; a tow truck and storage business. Well, the other day we had a fellow here delivering gravel for our driveway and, as he is always on the road, I asked him if he sees accidents and such. So, my husband gave him some of his cards and it has paid off

already. Yesterday this dump truck driver called to tell my husband about an accident that he had just seen.

And, don't forget your existing clients. Do they know everything that you offer? I have a wonderful steady administrative client that I told a few times about some of the websites I am designing. Well, he was impressed and now we are in talks to design his website. He didn't know I did website design until I told him. And, this may be true for you as well. Your clients won't know everything that you can do for them unless you tell them. They may not need any of your secondary services right away, or at all, but they may know someone who does.

My administrative client, which I mentioned above, has now given my name to some of his customers who need help with their office tasks and web design needs.

As I said before, there is a time and a place for shamelessly self–promoting yourself and your business. Be careful not to sound arrogant and don't be pushy. But, as a small business owner, you are the best person to tell others about what you offer and you should take advantage of situations that will allow you to do so.

Janice Byer is a certified Master Virtual Assistant and owner of Docu–Type Administrative & Web Design Services (

). See this and other articles on her website.

3 Magic Words that Boost Ad Response

By Will Dylan

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3 Words that Boost Ad Response

Shameless Self-Promotion

Key to success is avoiding hype

For the small business owner, advertising is a critical expense that helps to drive customers through the doors or to a website on the Internet in the hopes that they will spend their money. With tight ad budgets, small businesses need their advertising to pay off every time. Ads that result in no sales are simply wasted money.

There are countless online articles that tell you to use the words "free", "guaranteed", and "limited time offer" in your advertising to boost sales. They work, however the ongoing overuse of these words has reduced their effectiveness somewhat. When you're writing your next ad, keep the following advice in mind when if you plan to use these key advertising terms.

"Free" - Getting something for nothing has universal appeal and is a strong attention getter. Where most businesses fail is that they give away something that is essentially useless, leading customers to believe that your business falls into the same category (i.e. "useless"). For example, many websites give away free "e-books", in order to entice potential customers to visit their site. The e-book itself is usually loaded with advertising and links to the website, and contains very little real, valuable information.

If you're going to advertise a free giveaway, make it a legitimate, valuable item. If it's an e-book, try not to make it a shameless self promotion piece that doesn't add any value to your customers. In fact do the opposite...make it somewhat valuable. Use the quality and value found in your e-book to inspire your potential customer with confidence that you offer a quality product or service. A credible free giveaway of any kind that has value and contains no shameless self promotion will be a huge credibility boost for your business.

"Guaranteed" - Customers appreciate the safety and security that comes with a satisfaction guarantee. All reputable retailers and businesses have some type of return policy, because they know that it will encourage customers to buy, and only a small fraction of people ever bother to return anything.

The key to guarantees is to be reasonable. A 100% money back guarantee is reasonable. So is an exchange policy or warranty against defects. Some of the more recent guarantees that have emerged in advertising, especially on the Internet, are actually a turn off to a potential customer. A "double your money back guarantee" usually makes customers wary of the seller. Why 200%? Is that what it takes to generate a sale, and if so, how good can this product or service really be? When it comes to guarantees, mirror those offered by the industry leaders in your business, and don't go too far.

"Limited Time Offer" - If you're going to offer your customers something for a "limited time" then follow through on your promise. Customers don't appreciate being lied to. If you state that your special offer

expires tomorrow, then follow through on your promise and rescind your offer tomorrow, even if its only temporarily. When a business consistently offers "limited time" deals week after week, customers lose faith in the credibility of the business. Anyone who jumped on your offer believing that they only had a "limited time" to take advantage of it will now feel that you were not honest in your advertising and will not likely give you additional business in the future.

Shameless Self-Promotion

"Free", "Guaranteed", and "Limited Time Offer" are great tools to use in your advertising to get attention and stimulate purchases. However, overuse and abuse of these terms can be very harmful to your reputation and to your future revenue stream.

Will Dylan is the Author of "Small Business Big Marketing" a powerful e-book for small businesses available through his website www.marketingyoursmallbusiness.com . Will also offers article and news release writing services. You can contact Will at askwill@marketingyoursmallbusiness.com

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