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Shift to Full Power Marketing

By Charlie Cook

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Marketing should run like a car's engine. Give it the right fuel and you'll enjoy steady acceleration when you step on the gas, but let the tank run dry or put in diesel when your engine runs on gas and it will sputter and stall. If your marketing isn't helping you attract a steady stream of new clients and accelerate the growth of your business, chances are you aren't using the right fuel to market your business.

The first step in any successful marketing effort is to get the attention of your prospects. If they don't know you or your products and services exist, you won't be able to grow your business. All too often service professionals and small business owners think that touting their expertise and the benefits of their services will get them the attention they want. Unless you are a well published author or sought after expert, this marketing strategy rarely works.

Problems Precede Solutions Prospects' primary interests are solving problems and meeting their needs. If you can show prospects you clearly understand their concerns and know the problems they are experiencing you'll get their attention and have the opportunity to demonstrate your expertise and the solutions you provide.

When you take your car to a mechanic you don't want them to replace parts until they've diagnosed the problem. A good mechanic will start by asking you to describe the symptoms, then they may hook your car up to the computerized diagnostic machine to further understand the problem before they order that expensive part.

Similarly if you want to sell your products and services to a prospect they must first have a problem that needs to be solved or a need to be filled. Despite an understanding of this fundamental sequence, most firms' marketing efforts start with a focus on their services, products and credentials.

Shift to Full Power Marketing

Client Problems Fuel the Marketing Engine Without prospects problems and needs your firm wouldn't exist. And without the services and products you provide, you wouldn't have a revenue stream. You need both prospects' problems and service solutions to keep your marketing engine running smoothly. Problems are the fuel that provide the power and your solutions are like the cylinders of an engine that do the heavy lifting.

Fueling your marketing engine requires a constant focus on client problems and needs. The more accurate your identification of client's pressing concerns and interests, the more power you'll get out of your marketing engine.

The first step to strengthening your marketing efforts is to clarify your prospects client's common concerns. Do you know: What the concerns of your target market are? What problems they have that you can solve? Which problems they want to solve?

If you don't know the answers to these questions, don't panic. Instead, list the questions you could ask your prospects to get the answers. Chances are you already know your prospects' concerns and the problems they want solved but aren't using it to fuel your marketing.

Power Up Your Marketing Materials Take a look at your marketing materials and or marketing meetings. Do you start with clients' problems and concerns or do you start with a description of your services and products and benefits?

Prospects want to see themselves and their concerns clearly identified in order to feel confident that you understand their needs. If you lead with this in your marketing materials you'll get their attention.

Which of the following describe and focus on prospects' problems and which focus on benefits and solutions? Your one liner describing what you do (Tagline, audio logo, meme, business card or elevator speech) Your positioning page (first page of your web site and /or brochure) Your ads Your exploratory conversations with prospects Any articles or press releases you write

If you are trying to fuel your marketing with the solutions you provide, chances are your marketing will sputter along and you won't attract all the clients you want. Make the switch to using client problems to power your marketing engine and you'll be amazed at how quickly your marketing helps your business accelerate.

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The author, Marketing Coach, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners who are struggling to attract more clients. He can be contacted at

or

visit

to get a copy of the free marketing guide, '7 Steps to Get More Clients and

Grow Your Business'.

Win–Stay, Lose–Shift: A Marketing Strategy

By Susan Dunn

Win–Stay, Lose–Shift: A Marketing Strategy by Susan Dunn, Coach

When you're in marketing, you often have to explain to a disgruntled CEO or manager why you want to abandon your original year's plan and move on to something else. You may even have been asked, as I have, "If I hire you will you stick with a plan that you make all year?" the unspoken inference being -- like all the rest of my marketing people, expletive deleted.

Well here's a paradigm for why we do what we do in marketing that can solidfy your strategies, and perhaps be used to explain them to significant others.

Consider the "Win–Stay, Lose–Shift" Theory from behavioral psychology. It's very simple to understand, and amazingly difficult to put into practice. Nor have I heard the terms used.

If you don't use the win–stay, lose–shift strategy, you're in the "keep doing what you've been doing and you'll keep getting what you've been getting" position.

Everything we do now we learned at one time or another through what's called "reinforcement" in behavioral psychology. We learned that doing certain things brought desirable results, and doing certain other things brought undesirable results. And then we learned to stay with the winning strategy, and if it was a losing strategy, to try something different: Win–Stay, Lose–Shift.

It's so simple, monkeys do it.

Experimenters place a monkey in a cage with a blue button and an orange button. The monkey's curious, like humans, and he starts pushing the buttons at random. When he pushes the blue button, he gets a peanut, and he likes that a lot. When he pushes the orange button, he gets a spray of water in his face, and he doesn't like that.

So what does the monkey do? He may test the situation out a couple of times, but it doesn't take him long to shift from the orange button to the blue button, and to stick with it: Win–Stay, Lose–Shift.

It's very important in marketing to monitor cause and effect constantly, and to pay attention to results—to ROIM—returns on investment slash marketing.

Know what you do that wins, and stay with it. Know what you do that loses, and shift to something else.

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