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Unique Consulting Services

By Graeme Notega

Need advice? Need help in conquering a particular challenge? Hire a consultant! Professional

consulting has become one of the fastest-growing segments of our society. What do consultants do? They provide information and advice in exchange for a fee.

They can be found under a variety of names: accountant, psychologist, architect, designer, attorney, consulting engineer. Almost everyone within a society uses their services in one way or another.

What each of these consultants has in common is the need to identify and find clients, and to package their own unique know-how in a fashion that will appeal to others and be useful and meaningful. They find that marketing themselves is quite different than marketing a product that people can put their hands on. People still like to visually see what they are putting their money out for.

Many consultants know they could provide their service ever so easily from a private office in their home. They don't need large areas to warehouse inventory, or to staff many employees. However, their clients need to see and feel an atmosphere that will justify spending money on. Hence consultants often can be found in luxury office buildings.

The service that a consultant renders is often difficult to describe. Some clients only use the services because forced to by law (such as needing an attorney). Some clients are encouraged by family members or friends to seek the services of a psychologist. Unless one is financially well off, there can be strong resentment in paying a consultant for advice. Clients need to feel they are receiving value in return - and to feel respect and admiration for the one who is doing the consulting.

Many consultants spend their working hours in large companies training and advising sales staff or increasing the morale of the employees. Proving that one's services can provide large-scale differences in a large segment of a huge company requires positive feedback from prior clients and also strong marketing skills. Acquiring these marketing skills and putting them into practice consumes a large part of a consultant's time.

Marketing requires planting many 'seeds' of what you have to offer. These seeds need to be spread as far and wide as possible in the areas where potential clients might see them. And, as we all know, not all seeds germinate and sprout. One of the safest ways for a consultant to successfully create a large marketing program is to apply the old standard rule of 80 - 20. Eighty percent of their income will come from 20 percent of their clients or leads (seeds).

By carefully analyzing which potential clients are going to be the most irritating and troublesome, and which will be a great joy to work with, consultants are usually able to eliminate eighty percent of the seeds and focus on where they can truly serve and make the best use of their time. This is how a consultant acts as his own consultant!

Greame Notega is the owner and operator of Excel Consulting which tackles all consulting issues. For more information, go to:

<http://www.fbnc consulting.com>

Brand Your Consulting Brilliance

By Robert Moment

Today's competitive marketplace for consulting services is no longer responsive to the marketing strategies that worked in the past. The services you provide should speak volumes about your consulting business. Think about what happens when you hear phrases such as 'the ultimate driving machine,' 'don't leave home without it,' and 'just do it.' Chances are good that you can immediately associate them with BMW, American Express, and Nike. These companies have mastered 'brand brilliance.' Brand your consulting brilliance because the future of your business depends on it.

There's an old adage, 'Perception is reality.' Simply stated, the perception of a brand lies in its ability to influence a client's behavior. When you have successfully branded your business, in the client's eye there is no service in the marketplace quite like your service.

All consulting businesses should have a distinct, sustainable, and competitive advantage to differentiate their services from the competition. I call this process of identifying your advantage 'Brand Your Consulting Brilliance.'

Here are six simple steps to brand and differentiate your services in the new economy.

1. Think client focus first.

The client's reality: Consulting businesses exist to serve clients. Develop a client visitation calendar and schedule in-person visits. Look the client in the eye and say, 'I am here to serve you.' Follow up and follow through on all client related matters in a timely manner.

Create a client questionnaire so clients can rate the performance of your services. You want them to tell you how you're doing and what you can do to serve them better. It's also a way to discover what

challenges they are currently facing. Be relentless in your client retention efforts.

2. Discover a distinct advantage that will set you apart from competitors.

Start by articulating your 'unique marketing proposition,' a statement of all of the qualities and characteristics that set your services apart in the marketplace. Analyze your services: What skills and services do we provide that are distinctive, measurable, and add value? Which of our past successes can we leverage in the marketplace? And don't forget to ask colleagues what they see as your competitive strengths.

Communicate these messages reinforcing your unique marketing proposition anytime you have an opportunity to write or speak about your consulting firm and what you have to offer to prospective clients.

3. Generate publicity.

What others say about your brand is much more powerful and credible than what you can say about it yourself.

When it comes to branding your consulting brilliance, favorable publicity in the media or word of mouth is far superior to advertising. So how do you generate the publicity 'buzz'? Create a buzz about your brand by being visible: speaking at seminars, publishing a newsletter on your website, participating as a host or guest on television or radio talk shows, writing a column in a reputable trade journal, and networking.

4. Promote a powerful perception of quality in the client's mind.

What is quality if not a perception that resides in the mind of the client? You build quality intangibles around trust, reliability, excellent people, and innovative client services. Show clients that you can interpret and process their information to convert it to results oriented solutions. What you say is important, but what you do is even more important for reinforcing their perception of your brand quality.

Keep the lines of communication open. The goal of branding your consulting brilliance is to convince the client that your brand is worth their trust and worth a premium price.

5. Establish your credentials as an industry leader in the field.

Clients like to know they are doing business with an industry leader. Make clients aware of your consulting acumen, presence, and commitment. Know your clients' businesses inside out – what they do, why they do it, how they do it. Tout your firm's successful track record of accomplishment in working with companies like theirs.

Build and sustain credibility with clients by strengthening your client relationships, developing a client retention strategy, demonstrating that you value your new clients, and going the extra mile for them.

6. Practice consistency in building your consulting brilliance.

Stay focused on implementing the branding of your consulting brilliance. Keep abreast of marketing trends in your profession and position yourself as a recognized expert. Make the most of your unique marketing proposition. Accelerate and elevate the perceived value of your brand in the marketplace.

In short, to brand your consulting brilliance, know what you have to offer, know how to differentiate it, and know how to market it.

Robert Moment—Author, Business Coach and Strategist—is the Author of best-selling book, 'It Only Takes a Moment to Score'. Founder of The Moment Group, a Small Business Coaching & Consulting Firm, Robert helps entrepreneurs harness their potential and soar to new heights. Contact

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How Do I Define My Market?
10 Things You Should Try To Barter For Before Buying

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The Great Big Book of Internet Marketing
The Ultimate Ad Tracking Tool
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How To Win The War Of Internet Marketing



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