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You Belong in the Spotlight

By Cathleen Fillmore

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You Belong in the Spotlight:

Promoting your business by writing and speaking

Having a strong publicity strategy is key to staying in business. With so many competing images in the marketplace, it's critically important to maintain a high profile. Maintain is the operative word here - a start and stop effort won't get you long term results or credibility in the eye of your customers.

Be clear about the objectives you want from your publicity campaign. You may want to increase your firm's name recognition, bring in more clients, make a time-specific offer to existing clients or introduce a new product. Even if you'd like to achieve all of those goals, decide which one is most important to you and let the others become incidental. Clarifying what you really want to achieve helps you make the best use of your time and money.

If you think of your publicity campaign as a wheel, then consider speaking and writing to be two major spokes. And all they'll cost is your time.

Begin with a demographic profile of your target market. What books do they read, what associations do they belong to and what magazines do they subscribe to? Starting with the magazines, study a few back issues. The editorial will tell you a lot about the magazine's focus and approach and reading the articles will give you a sense of typical style and length. Is the article chatty or solemn? Is it directed towards beginners or those well-established in the field? Check the magazine's website, request editorial guidelines and then think of an article that would fit those guidelines.

Once you have a solid proposal, send it to the editor, telling him why you are qualified to write this article. Then follow up with a phone call three to four weeks later. While you can send out multiple submissions, it's best to tailor each query to the readership of a particular magazine. This approach takes a lot of patience but it's well worth it in the long run.

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Another strategy is to target a specific company, ask for copies of their newsletter and offer to write a monthly column for them on e-commerce, customer service, publicity, marketing or whatever relates to your area of expertise. Or if your target market is found in your community, offer to write a weekly column for the local newspaper.

You can also publish and distribute your own newsletter, of course. And you can maximize your exposure by going online with it. You can keep in touch with your clients or prospects on a monthly basis by giving them free information.

Contributing to ezines is a really effective way to get your name in front of thousands of people. Susan Sweeney, an internet marketing consultant at www.connexnetwork.com, suggests the following resources for finding the right ezine: <http://www.infojump.com>, <http://www.ezinesearch.com>, <http://www.magazine-rack.com>, <http://www.etext.org/Zines> and

<http://www.factsheet5.com>.

Having your name in print establishes you as an expert and gives you instant credibility. You can often include a brief bio along with your byline and possibly a photo as well at the end of your article.

Keep copies of any articles you have published - these become part of your promotional portfolio.

Speaking engagements are another critical spoke in your wheel and they will be much easier to come by if you've established yourself as an expert in your field by publishing a few articles.

What associations and clubs do members of your target audience belong to? And what conventions do they attend? You can get contact information for all Canadian associations (with a list of upcoming conferences for the next three years) at the Toronto Reference Library or you can purchase it from Micromedia (416-362-5211). A copy of Sources Media Directory will also provide you with useful contacts for publications and associations (416-964-7799).

If you check the web addresses of some trade magazines, there is often a section on upcoming conferences and promotional events.

If you see an opportunity here, approach the organizer and offer your services.

Develop a one-page faxable sheet that consists of a brief bio, an outline of the speeches you give, a partial list of clients and testimonials. The bio, of course, should present you in the best possible light while still sticking to the truth. As for speeches, think of three slightly different topics related to your area of expertise and give them catchy titles. Some that have worked well for me are:

Mindset for the Millennium

Creating Credibility with your Customers

The Gold Rush: Marketing your Tourism Destination

The title must both catch the eye and stick in the mind of your prospective buyer - a subtitle can be used for explanatory purposes if necessary. Catchy and clear are the bywords here.

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The one–page sheet you create will not only serve to get speaking engagements but also as a great public relations sheet to send out with other marketing material to anyone who wants information about you and your business.

Once you have the person in charge of the conference on the phone, ask when their next conference will be, what the theme is, and whether they've hired all the speakers they need. If not, offer your services. Conferences often require up to a year's lead time so if you're too late for this year, try for next year.

You'll need to decide whether to charge a fee, and if so, what the going rate is, or whether to offer your services in exchange for some free publicity. Whatever you decide, it's important to be consistent - don't speak free of charge for some clients and charge others – word gets around.

Ask if you can fax your bio sheet (along with your contact information) and then follow–up with a phone call a week later. If you don't fit into a particular conference, keep in touch with the organizer and keep trying.

Build up a database of potential clients this way, noting when you contacted them, what the response was, and when to contact again.

If you're inexperienced in speaking, take courses through Toastmaster's and offer your services to local service groups such as Rotary clubs.

Again this approach takes patience but fame and fortune are often incremental. One opportunity piggy–backs on another and momentum is soon built up. Before you know it, you and your business have become a household word!

Why You Should Be an Affiliate of Several Products

By Dennis Eppestine

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If you're like me, you're probably an affiliate of several different products. While managing several of them can lead to a bit of confusion at first, I still believe it's better to be involved with more than one.

Why? More income! While I may be promoting Internet Marketing products, it really doesn't matter WHAT area your interests lie in. For example, on one of my other sites, I'm promoting something entirely different. Never–the–less,

I am promoting 5 or 6 different affiliate programs, and it's not even finished yet!

Why should you do this? Like I said, more income, but let's break it down. Why does it necessarily mean more income if you belong to more affiliate programs?

Because everybody is looking for something different. A couple of examples:

1) You may have been marketing on the Internet for awhile, but your sales aren't what you'd like. You've examined every detail and come to the conclusion that you need better sales copy. So naturally, you're looking for marketing tools about sales letters or sales copy. A general overview of Internet Marketing would do you no good. If I can provide BOTH, then I can sell products to more people.

2) You're looking for a job and want a professional resume, but you don't have a lot of extra money. In that case, you need help writing your OWN resume. On the other hand, you could be currently employed, with no time for learning how to write a resume. In that case, you might be looking for a resume writing SERVICE.

As you can see from the above examples, it just makes good sense to promote more than one product.

Now, how to manage them? Belonging to several affiliate programs can get confusing. It's easy to forget the URL or the username and password. Here's what to do:

1) Write down every affiliate program you belong to. The list is probably longer than you think!

2) Open up Word (or whatever word processor you like) and start listing each complete URL to EVERY affiliate program. Then, beside each one, enter your username and password.

3) PRINT THE LIST! If you join a new one, enter all the information, and print a NEW list. If your computer has troubles, you won't believe how glad you'll be that you printed this document!

Think you won't forget a detail? You will. Maybe not at first,

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but before you know it, you'll belong to several affiliate programs, and you'll forget a username or password. Then you'll have to frantically search through hundreds of old emails, crossing your fingers that you didn't delete it.

So join as many affiliate programs as you need, just keep track of the details.

Dennis Eppestine operates his website at <http://www.products4profits.com> You can join his newsletter by sending an email to subscribe@products4profits.com



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