

MARKETING IS LIKE SAYING GOOD MORNING

“Small businesses with tight budgets and little help can start their marketing by saying good morning”

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In this article Bill talks about the basic marketing principles that work for him.

What are we going to do about marketing?

I’m a business coach, I have to market – or I go broke! Everyone knows that good marketing brings in good business. But what is good marketing? I believe it is following a well thought out strategy and having a proactive message your target market understands and continually hears.

Sometimes it’s easier just to avoid marketing. After all, I am a business coach, not a marketer. But here’s the catch 22: if I don’t market, I will not have a business coach business or any business for very long!

Many people in business learn the hard lesson that no matter how attractive a one off marketing approach may seem, in the long run it just will not work and because there is no strategy it’s likely to be expensive.

In small business you quickly learn that well thought out, timely and relevant contact with clients and prospects does work.

A case in point

Attending a recent State Conference the other day a number of people came up to me and all said the same thing: “Can I speak with you afterwards?”

How did they remember me?

Not from a one off phone call. More likely it was because I present myself to them constantly, either by attending their professional development days or through the bi monthly newsletter I send out to them. In simple terms: I am visible to these people.

Marketing is like saying hello

A long time ago a marketing colleague told me his version of marketing: "Bill, marketing is putting up your services in the face and mind of your prospect regularly – just like saying hello or good morning when you meet them! You do always say hello, don't you?"

Marketing is the "good morning" or the "hello" we say to people as we start the day. It may also be asking how they're doing, finding out their wins and worries.

Constant contact builds rapport. Notice the term 'constant'. If I stop reaching out to people they may think I am unapproachable or invisible. Either way that is bad for business.

It was a relief when I discovered that marketing is not about selling or *always* asking for something. Now my marketing is like: "Hi, I'm here if you need me." Or, "Can I help you?" And occasionally, we tell everyone a great piece of news and even ask, with a suitable call to action, if they want to experience it too.

If you stop marketing, people notice. You know what happens in the workplace if people stop saying hello, or good morning – they get all sorts of ribbing. "Don't go near Bill today! He couldn't even say good morning!" More importantly in business people will not be ready for my offer or to discuss their issue with me if they don't know me.

Being top of mind

So how do I market so I remain top of mind but am not seen as intrusive?

I have to find out what people's issues are as opposed to just spouting my product. If I can find out what is "painful" for them then I will be able to offer a solution.

There's the joke about the man who tells his doctor that he hurts wherever he pokes himself. The doctor responds "Your finger's broken". So before you market your services you must first find the client's broken finger. Once you know where your client "hurts" you can offer a remedy they'll respond to.

Marketing becomes more effective if I concentrate less on what I want to say and more on what my clients' needs. Also by listening rather than speaking you are much more likely to come up with cost effective solutions to their problems no matter what their budget is.

But in the end, I need my marketing backed up by a strategy. One that is easy to follow because I am still a business coach, not a marketer!