



Toot Your Own Horn: Using Self-Promotion to Create Demand for Your Services

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*"If he who has a thing to sell
Goes and whispers in a well,
He won't be so apt to make the dollars
As he who climbs a tree and hollers!"*

–Anonymous

Every day in your business something happens that people should know about. You may give exceptional service to a client, or you may begin to reach out to a new type of prospect, or you may demonstrate your expertise on an important topic. Yet most of the time, the only people aware of these significant events are those you are speaking with at that moment and you.

News Worth Sharing

We might chuckle at the artist or performer who is waiting to be "discovered," but business owners are often just as guilty of hanging back when there's a bit of self-promotion to be done. Consider the following examples of ideal occasions for informing your clients, prospects, referral sources, and even the media, that you have done something special:

- Winning an award or competition
- Being elected or appointed to office in a professional or civic organization
- Obtaining an important new client, contract, or strategic alliance
- Giving noteworthy service to an existing client
- Opening or relocating your office
- Expanding to serve a new market
- Offering a new product, service, or seminar
- Launching a new or redesigned website, blog, or social media feed
- Publishing the first issue of a newsletter
- Reporting an invention or discovery
- Expressing a unique opinion on a topical subject

- Being selected to speak at a meeting or conference
- Completing a survey or study
- Having an article, white paper, or book published
- Being quoted or mentioned in the media or blogosphere
- Landing an interview on radio, TV, or the web

Whenever an event like this occurs, take advantage of the opportunity to notify everyone on your mailing list and in your personal network. These significant happenings give you a reason to stay in touch with people, remind them of your value, and build your credibility as a qualified professional.

Spreading the News

Don't be shy; share your news in as many places as possible. If you're invited to speak at an industry conference, for example, you might announce it in a number of different ways:

- Send your clients, hot prospects, and top referral sources an email with your announcement and a link to the conference website.
- Mention the conference and your presentation topic in your next newsletter.
- Announce your upcoming appearance in a blog entry, on your website's home page or calendar page, or on your Facebook business page.
- Post your announcement as a Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn status update.
- Include the conference brochure when you mail invoices to your clients, and add a personal note inviting them to join you there.
- Put a copy of the conference brochure in your marketing kit.
- Post an announcement to any message boards you belong to (when posting guidelines permit).
- Send a notice to your professional association for the member news section of their newsletter or website.

Some new developments in your business will be newsworthy enough to reach beyond your own network and inform the media in your local community or industry. If you believe your event might be of interest to news outlets, issue a one-page press release describing what has occurred, and include your opinion about the event.

For example, if you win an award, describe how you feel about winning. If you are elected to office, outline your goals for the organization. It will add to your credibility if the event you're reporting is also acknowledged by someone else. When reporting on a new strategic alliance, for example, include a quote from your alliance partner about its significance to his/her organization.

When you do appear in the media, no matter how small the mention, be sure to capitalize on it. Unless you are on the cover of a major publication or featured on national TV, don't expect many people to contact you as a result of

your appearance alone.

Instead, use your media appearance as another reason to let people know about your success. With print stories, published articles, or online mentions, make copies for your marketing kit, and use them as handouts at speaking engagements and trade shows. Frame them and hang them on the wall of your office. Post the piece or a link to it on your website, and mention it in your newsletter or blog.

When you land a live interview on radio, TV, or the web, let everyone in your network know in advance when you will be appearing. After it takes place, let them know how it went. You will quickly discover that you'll often land more business as a result of telling people about your interview than you will from the interview itself!

Stepping Up to the Microphone

You may be hesitant about broadcasting your achievements at first. It might feel like you are showing off, or you may worry how people will react. But you'll quickly find that your clients and colleagues actually want to hear news from you, as long as you don't constantly barrage them with it. People who do business with you or send you referrals will want to know when you have something new to offer. When you have a major success, they'll wish to congratulate you.

When you share valuable expertise in an article, interview, or speaking engagement, people in your network will be eager to learn what you have to say. When your story is truly newsworthy, local media outlets, your professional association, and your industry's trade press will want to hear about it. And your prospective clients would much rather receive an invitation, article, or announcement with useful information than one more sales letter or brochure.

So don't keep your successes a secret, or wait for someone else to discover how talented you are. Start spreading the word. Telling more people about the good things that are happening in your world will increase your visibility, boost your credibility, and create ongoing demand for your professional services.

C.J. Hayden is a Contributing Editor for RainToday.com. She is also the author of *Get Clients Now!* Thousands of business owners and salespeople have used her simple sales and marketing system to double or triple their income. Get a free copy of *Five Secrets to Finding All the Clients You'll Ever Need* at Get Clients Now. You can reach C.J. by email at: info@getclientsnow.com.

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