

Personal marketing: it's not what you think

There's an old marketing joke that goes something along the lines of:

 By Donna Rachelson ^{29 May 2013}

You're at a party and see a beautiful woman. You walk up to her and say, "I'm great in bed". That's direct marketing.

You're at a party and see a beautiful woman. You ask your friend to walk up to her and say, "See that guy over there? He's great in bed". That's advertising.

You go to a party, have a few drinks, and then you walk home. You climb to the top of a rooftop and shout at the top of your lungs, "I'm great in bed!" That's spam.

When many people think of "personal marketing", what they picture is something to the effect of that last situation: somebody shouting from the rooftops about just how fabulous he or she is. But, contrary to popular belief, personal marketing is not about spamming people with inflated descriptions of your abilities. It's about getting noticed for the value you add.

Here's how to do that:

1. **Package your value-add properly.** You might have developed a fantastic email marketing campaign for a client or implemented a new training solution in your HR department, and you're waiting for someone to pat you on the back. Instead, develop a case study or a presentation about what you've achieved and talk about it. Collect testimonials from the people who've benefited. Offer to facilitate a workshop in your area of expertise.

In short, don't tell people you're brilliant, show them how you can solve their problems.

2. **Promote other people.** Now that may sound completely counter-intuitive when you're marketing yourself, but the more you promote others the more they will want to promote and talk about you. As human beings, when someone does something nice for us, we instinctively want to return the favour. Furthermore, by putting people in touch with excellent referrals from your network, you once again demonstrate the value you add.
3. **Discover what you want to be known for.** You can't be everything to everyone and in today's cluttered workplace, the people that move ahead are those who stand out. Think about your unique strengths and skills and actively promote yourself on that basis.

Instead of saying, "I'm just the most wonderful financial planner in the world," you're saying something more like, "I can help you with your financial retirement planning; it's my area of financial expertise and my passion". If you are clear and consistent about this, it can go a long way in ensuring you develop a reputation for what you want to be known for.

4. **Create and share great content.** One of the easiest ways to show people how much value you can add is to share a little of your expert knowledge where they can read it, whether that means writing a

white paper, putting together a workshop for your team, writing an article for an industry publication or starting a blog.

By giving people expert advice that helps them to solve a problem, you position yourself as an expert and raise your credibility.

5. **Be heard.** Make your voice count in important discussions by sharing your opinion (and being ready to back it up with solid research or evidence). Join discussions in your workplace or online on forums; blogs posts and social media, where you can have a say, demonstrate your knowledge and constructively influence conversations.

To come back to that joke, the goal of personal marketing is simply to build a reputation, credibility and visibility in your field - to be recognised for your personal brand.

You're at a party and see a beautiful woman. She walks up to you and says, "I know you. You're the one who's great in bed". That's Brand Recognition.

ABOUT DONNA RACHELSON

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