

Marketing Yourself in This Economy Can Be Easier than You Think, if You Practice Good Follow-up and Perseverance!

Whether you are in a marketing mode for your business, or you are looking for a new job, opportunities exist if you strategically look for them. In my consulting practice, I see so many businesses that are burying their heads in the sand in this economy hoping that it will all just go away. I am also hearing many of my students tell me that they are giving up on their job search. That strategy never works—if you don't play the game, especially in the world of business, you will never win! The A client and good friend of mine, Gary Martin, owns an exterminator company in Los Angeles, Reliant Pest Control. His take on the current business environment is simple: There are hunters in business and there are gatherers. In today's economy, you have two choices—you can either passively wait for something to come your way (as in gathering) or you can go out and hunt something down and make it happen. I can tell you right now that Gary is a hunter, and besides being very good at what he does, his outlook has made it that he has no shortage of business for his pest control company. Jeanette, one of my students, was able to reinvent herself into a new career that she is very excited about, because she used this time to plan and make that job transition happen.

Thinking outside the box is also a huge plus. Examining what you specifically do as a business, or as an employee or professional, and what the specific attributes are of your product or service or core skill sets, can allow you to discover new Target Markets whose problems you can solve with your specific product or service or skill sets. Don't think about who you are going to "sell" your product or service to so much as whose problems you are going to solve with the work that you do. Don't think about "selling yourself" in your next job interview, instead, think about the problems that you can solve for that company with your skill set offering. This thinking can give you new ideas, and create business opportunities that you may not have thought of before.

Connecting with other business owners, prospects and professionals is crucial for finding good business opportunities and connections that will stand the test of time, whatever the state of the economy. So you have 500+ connections on LinkedIn and you have a "gazillion" friends on Facebook—how many are you connecting with and actually doing business or networking with? All of those business connections mean nothing if you are not creating gainful business referrals and connections! This does not happen unless you turn your "cyber connections" into "people connections," either on the phone or in person. This is how successful marketing efforts happen, regardless of the state of the economy!

Finally, use the uniqueness of your ethnicity, and/or your “woman’s intuition” to give your business marketing or job search efforts a competitive edge over others. Make the effort to "get out of your shell," and connect with all of the people and business communities whose problems you can solve with your product or your service. Make the effort to connect with all of the different types of businesses that may have problems that you can solve with your skill sets. Use your uniqueness to solve problems for your business or job prospects in a way that they have never thought of before. You will find that if you cast a bigger net, you will certainly catch more fish. Take the time to go to that mixer or networking group in a surrounding community and reach out to others. You will learn from them, and they will help you find new opportunities that can make the difference between a successful year for your business or personal career development, or a year of just getting by.

Lynn Sarkany is the owner of MarketFinders, a marketing firm based in Thousand Oaks, California serving clients worldwide by creating marketing strategy that works to grow small business. For more information, please go to www.MarketFinders.net. Lynn is also a college professor, and the founder of Entrepreneurs Professionals, a business development group that is forming chapters and working for the good of small business throughout the United States. For more information about this organization, please go to www.entrepreneursprofessionals.com