

# the solopreneur zone

*the resource place for solo-entrepreneurs*

## How Actively are You Marketing Yourself?

### The Best Time to Market Yourself

When do you tend to market yourself? If you are like most Solopreneurs, you market yourself when you need clients. Logical, right? Sure, except that every time you start a marketing campaign, it often takes several months to get a return from it -- sometimes much longer, depending on the strategies you choose.

"But I don't have time to market myself when business is good", you say. I agree. You don't have time because we all know how much effort it is to get a marketing strategy *started*. However, maintaining a marketing strategy is much easier, but often overlooked.

### Marketing When Business is Good

The best time to market yourself is when you don't need clients. If you've been in business long enough, you'll begin to notice a pattern of clients coming and going. It's tempting to ignore marketing when business is good, but nearly every Solopreneur has woken up one day and realized they only have 3 clients, or 1, or none...

The good news is that marketing when your business is full is easier and requires much less effort. The strategies you use at this time are often more passive strategies which may require a lot less of your time and will keep business flowing long into the future.

### Why are You Marketing Your Business?

Dumb question? Not really. There's absolutely no point in marketing your business if you aren't sure what you are trying to accomplish ("to get clients" is not a clear enough goal, by the way)!

So, what is your intention for your marketing? Are you trying to find your first few clients in order to have testimonials? Are you looking to establish yourself in a new target market? Or, are you wanting to establish yourself as an expert in your market so your business comes to you mostly by referral?

Your intention for marketing is critical in helping you decide how to market and which strategies to use. Please don't take another step in your marketing until your intentions are crystal clear. If you move forward without clear intentions, you'll find yourself working much harder than you need to and likely giving up on your marketing strategies before they have a chance to be successful.

### I've Got a Great Business Card and My Website is Up, so Why isn't My Business Full?

I hear this sentiment regularly from Solopreneurs. You've got a clever business card and you even have a great-looking website up, and yet very few clients or visitors to your website. The problem? These are *passive* marketing tools.

A website can convey a great sense of who you are and what you have to offer and enable potential clients to learn more about you, but it can't help at all if no one visits it. In order for your business card or website to help market you, people have to know you exist. You need to use an active marketing strategy in conjunction with a website in order to get traffic to your site. Then, and only then, does the content of your site even matter.

### What Makes a Marketing Strategy Passive or Active?

Passive marketing strategies are those that need activity from you or your clients in order to be successful. For example, your website needs visitors to attract clients and your articles need readers to bring in business. That is not to say that

# the solopreneur zone

*the resource place for solo-entrepreneurs*

they aren't effective. In fact, they are highly effective in turning prospects into clients, but they need to be used at the right time to be effective. They also tend to take longer to produce results and require more patience on your part. Examples of passive marketing strategies are: websites, marketing collateral, ezines, article writing, and creating additional products and services.

Active marketing strategies involve you more directly. They are often the fastest ways to get clients because they put you right in front of potential clients. Examples of active marketing strategies are: networking, cold/warm calling and speaking (with speaking, you'll want to have an offer for listeners in order to make it truly active). Even an ezine can be an active marketing strategy if an offer is included.

## When Should They be Used?

If you are struggling to get your first few clients, it's best to focus on active strategies rather than passive strategies -- they will bring in new clients faster. But most Solopreneurs tire of active marketing strategies because they can be time-consuming. That's why they stop "marketing" during busy times.

Passive strategies, on the other hand, will take longer to attract clients (think 1-2 years to be realistic), but once you've begun to write articles on a regular basis or have established a popular ezine, they will continue to bring in business with less effort.

## Your Marketing Recipe

Every marketing plan should involve both active and passive marketing strategies -- they work best in combination. But your specific marketing recipe will depend on where you are in your business and your intentions for marketing in the first place (see Why Are You Marketing Your Business above).

**New Business Start-Up:** most new businesses are looking for clients *now*. Your best bet in this case is to spend the majority of your time on active marketing strategies. However, you don't want to have to do these forever. Starting a passive marketing plan now ensures that it will begin to reap rewards once you've established yourself and want to spend less time on marketing. Look to spend 3/4 of your time on active marketing strategies and gradually increase your passive marketing strategies until they reach 1/3 of your marketing allotment.

**First 1-2 Years of Business and/or Establishing Business in New Market/Niche:** At this stage, you may want to switch to a 50/50 breakdown between passive and active marketing strategies. The 50% spent actively will continue to bring in business, while the 50% spent passively will begin to grow your reputation in the field.

**Established Business:** Once your business is established, you can spend more time on maintaining your passive marketing strategies such as writing, speaking, creating products, maintaining your newsletter, etc. If you've been doing the same things consistently for 1-2+ years, business will begin to come in consistently based on your reputation in the market. You might aim for 2/3 of your time spent on passive marketing strategies and 1/3 spent on active marketing strategies. This will keep you from letting marketing fall off the radar during strong business times which means you won't have to put in energy to "prime the pump" up again if business slows.

## Passive or Active, You Still Need a Plan

Whether you are pursuing passive or active marketing techniques, you always want to have a plan. Just because a strategy is active, doesn't mean it can do the job alone. You'll want to create a marketing plan that outlines how each strategy will be implemented. Because passive strategies take longer to show results, having a plan will help keep you motivated during those times you are doing a lot of work and seeing few results.

# the solopreneur zone

*the resource place for solo-entrepreneurs*

With any marketing strategy, being consistent and persistent will get you the farthest. If you've got a plan, you can plan for that consistency instead of trying various marketing strategies "shot-gun style" and getting frustrated. If you follow a strong plan, eventually your business will have fewer floods and draughts and you'll notice you're spending a lot less time on marketing. And isn't that why we all market now anyway -- in hopes that one day we won't have to market ourselves that much anymore!