

# the solopreneur zone

*the resource place for solo-entrepreneurs*

## What's Stopping You From Promoting Your Business?

Would having your own business be perfect if only you didn't have to market yourself? Do you have the best of intentions to focus on marketing, but find yourself not following through? Or, are you ready to market your services, but overwhelmed with where to start? These are all common struggles that Solopreneurs go through as we begin to promote ourselves and our businesses.

### Why Do We Put the Breaks on Something We Know Every Business Owner Needs to Do?

We know we need to market our business and promote ourselves in order to get (and maintain) clients. But many of us get tripped up in the process of putting ourselves "out there".

*Which of these 6 marketing blocks are stopping you from fully promoting your business?*

#### 1) You Think Marketing is Something Other Than What It Is

What do you think of when you hear the word "marketing"? Do you jump with excitement, or break out in hives?

Marketing is simply a form of communication. You are sharing who you are and what you do. You aren't "selling" anything - that comes later, if at all. Marketing is about letting your target market know you exist. By promoting your services, you help your ideal clients find you. If you don't market yourself, no one will know that you and your services exist. Do you really want to be the best kept secret in your industry?

#### 2) You Are Uncomfortable "Tooting Your Own Horn"

As a Solopreneur with a service business, you are your product. This means promoting your business is promoting *you*, which can feel awkward. In order to promote a product, it helps to believe in that product. If having the focus on you isn't comfortable, promote the *business* instead of yourself.

Remember that marketing is simply about letting others know you exist. If you are avoiding promoting yourself and your business, focus instead on all those potential clients waiting to find out about you.

#### 3) Everything Needs to Be "Just Right" Before You Can Begin Marketing

Many of us get caught in the "perfectionist" trap when it comes to marketing. This either shows up in the form of not getting out there until we have our website, brochures or elevator speech perfectly designed and worded, or, not marketing ourselves until we feel we are "qualified" enough (i.e. we need letters behind our name or need to know as much as any of the experts in the field before even working with our first client).

Perfectionism is usually fear in fancier clothing. If we don't put ourselves out there until everything is perfect, we don't have to risk rejection. However, we also won't run the risk of actually getting any clients because they will have no idea we exist!

You may have heard the adage, "Clients don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." If you care about your potential clients' problems, then get out there - and let *them* decide if you can help them.

#### 4) You Aren't Clear on Who You Are Trying to Reach

Marketing is most effective when it involves the right message, to the right audience, at the right time and in the right way. If you are a coach and you plan to coach "anyone" on "anything", how do you propose reaching anyone to tell them you'll coach them on anything? You better have one big marketing budget and a whole lot of time!

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When you are clear on who you want to reach, you can select the right marketing strategies to reach your market and deliver a message that addresses their needs. They'll feel as if you are speaking directly to them instead of "anybody". Now, which is more attractive?

## **5) You Don't Have a Plan**

Marketing can take up quite a bit of time if you don't have a plan. Many of us "dabble" in marketing strategies we hear others are using and then wonder why nothing is happening for us. We often aren't focused enough to actually reach our target market.

The best marketing strategies are those that you feel most comfortable doing (so you'll actually do them) and which put you in front of your target market. Remember, not everyone is your ideal client - your marketing only has to appeal to those you want to reach.

The key to marketing effectiveness is being consistent and persistent (that's why you want to do things you enjoy). An effective marketing plan outlines the 3-5 main strategies you plan to employ, how you will implement them and by when. Creating a plan and sticking to it will get you more than halfway to a full practice alone - so what are you waiting for?

## **6) Your Business is Already Full**

Many of us stop marketing entirely once our business is full. While a full business is likely to generate referrals that bring in more business, the business may not be consistent. Rather than take the feast or famine approach, select a couple of marketing strategies that you really enjoy and consistently do them regardless of the size of your business. If you get more clients than you can handle (lucky you!), refer them to a colleague (they'll likely send business to you in return).