



How to market yourself – by Carl Hopkins



 **Let's do business!**
Lancashire's b2b networking group

TRY TWO
MEETINGS
FOR ONLY
£10

SATISFACTION
100%
GUARANTEED

COME AND SEE
WHY WE'RE
DIFFERENT

How to market yourself – by Carl Hopkins

In order to succeed you need to accept that part of your success will be the ability to ‘market’. If you have a service or a product to sell then you need to understand and employ proven marketing techniques.

The same techniques can be applied to YOU. If your goal is the promotion of ‘you AND your business’, or ‘you WITHIN your business’ or even ‘you AS a business’, then you can apply a number of techniques and approaches to ensure success.

The fortunate thing is that in order to succeed, you do not have to be the BEST – although that helps! You simply have to be better at marketing yourself than everyone else.

Here are some of the techniques and approaches to consider in order to take Extra but Ordinary steps to becoming Extraordinary.

Tip 1 - Exit

Have you heard the phrase ‘start with the end in mind’?

Marketing yourself is a journey – it’s important to consider where you want to go and what your ultimate destination is.

What is your goal, is it a BHAG – a Big Hairy Audacious Goal? By its very nature, a BHAG is both ‘big’ and ‘audacious’ and therefore can seem a little bit scary – but who gets up on a morning wanting to achieve the ‘mediocre’? Not you I hope.

So if your BHAG seems too BIG to even begin tackling, then simply break it down. ‘No job is too large if you break it down into smaller parts’ Henry Ford once said. Think of travelling to your ultimate BHAG as a journey across a big river – you wouldn’t simply take a running jump and hope to land on the other side. And your goal was achieved so simply could it really be called a BHAG? Break your journey down into small steps - stepping stones with each manageable step moving you further toward your ultimate goal.

How those steps are laid down and aligned is another matter and perhaps shouldn’t be focused on in too much detail – this can only serve to limit your thinking. If you believe you know every step, its place, its direction and its size, then previously unconsidered routes may pass you by simply because they do not fit in with your pre-conceived route.

So ask yourself whether you have really considered your destination, your goal and whether you are prepared to ‘wander’ a little on your journey?

Tip 2 - Extra

We’ve all heard of the saying ‘gotta go that extra mile!’ But how often do you find that people simply say it rather than actually doing it? How often do you simply sit and wait for things to happen, waiting for instructions in your job perhaps or waiting for an opportunity to simply place itself in front of you, waiting for the right person to appear and make you the right offer?

If you have ever wondered why other people around you seem to do really well and have good things happen to them, or perhaps you often feel overlooked or that you are standing still, it's because you probably do not really do anything EXTRA. This doesn't mean you are not good at what you do, but you will never be extraordinary at what you do. We all know people like this, we all work with them – they are the ones who complain when things do not go well, the ones that say it's always someone else's fault!

So what's that got to do with marketing? It's everything. It's how you start to differentiate yourself from everyone else. You should assume that most people are ordinary in what they do and how they do it – so you must do EXTRA to become extraordinary and believe me you do not have to do a lot to appear a lot better than most people.

So do something extra – get up and attend that early morning networking session, help your colleagues on another project, read new books, listen to new presentations, perhaps give your time for free - just do something EXTRA.

Tip 3 - Explain

In order to successfully market yourself you need to be able to EXPLAIN yourself. Explain your ideas, your vision, your plans and if appropriate, your proposition. I spend a lot of time with businesses that range from start-ups to well-established organisations and more often than not, they are rubbish at explaining what they actually do, never mind explaining for whom and why they are any good, or different from anyone else.

It's the classic elevator pitch test - if I was to get in a lift with you for one floor and asked what do you do – could you tell me in that space of time? If you can't, then you have missed an opportunity. You need to know your vision and be able to explain your values, your plans and your ideas to others – So try it now, what is your proposition?

Tip 4 - Expose

When you know who you are and what you do, and think you can explain this to others then it's time to EXPOSE yourself - get out there and expose yourself, your brand, your offer to your market and audience.

Remember that marketing is a system to get in front of as many people as possible. The channels you can and should use to market yourself are many. From websites and social networking sites to PR or face to face networking. Each channel you choose to expose yourself on will bring a different response so ensure you manage your expectations, otherwise you will be disappointed. Remember; start with the end in mind. If you expose your brand through networking, what end result do you want? You will probably help build your brand, but you will probably not walk out with an order. So choose the appropriate channel when you expose yourself and manage your own expectations.

Tip 5 - Express

It's not enough to simply explain what you do. You have to EXPRESS yourself. If you simply keep exposing and explaining yourself, but you are exactly the same as every other designer, solicitor,

plumber, then is anyone going to remember you? Will they recall your personal brand? All your hard work will have gone to waste.

To ensure success when you market yourself you have to be ready to stand out from the crowd - otherwise it is very, very difficult to succeed. There are so many people who want to market themselves but the majority tend to 'play it safe' for fear of standing out or taking a risk. I call this approach of being palatable to everyone being 'vanilla' - everyone likes vanilla ice-cream but we don't choose it all the time. We like strawberry cheesecake and Phish food flavours – or is that just me? So one way to avoid being 'vanilla' is to build on your own personal interests, passions, values, beliefs and personality to establish a personal brand that reflects you while creating a brand you enjoy.

All a brand is is a company's personality and a promise to a customer. So what's yours? What do you want yours to be?

Tip 6 – Excite

Whatever you do make sure it EXCITES and interests you, because if it doesn't excite you then you will not excite anyone else – trust me. If you are not excited by what you do, or who you spend your working days with, then perhaps its time to explore something new or to start having some fun with your brand!

Your energy, your passion, your excitement for your product, your service, your business or you yourself will become infectious and others will want a slice of the action.

Tip 7 – Exploit

It's not possible to be every where so try to put bits of yourself in as many relevant places as possible. Marketing is a system so work it like a system. Find out where your audience is and what appropriate channels and relationships might be suitable to EXPLOIT.

For example, if you regularly network, you may go into a room of 40 people and come out having met maybe three to four new people. So you know that channel works. Why not exploit it and be the reason those people go into that room in the first place by being the speaker? Then out of those 40 people perhaps 8-10 of them might self select themselves to work with you. And the bigger the audience you can get in front of, the more people might come to you.

So what relationships can you EXPLOIT, who can you co-operate with, what win-win opportunities can you both exploit?

Tip 8 - Execution

A common thread that holds all of these strategies and tips together is your EXECUTION.

Consistent execution is paramount in moving you away from your competitors and creating a space in your prospect's head. Are you memorable?

David Byrne of Talking Heads said 'if you want to be remembered wear the same suit' - he is right.

A business does not change its brand every time you come in to contact with it – it is consistent in its execution, language, experience and its customer touch points.

So when you market yourself are you consistent? Consistency gives you and your brand leverage and can fool people into believing you are much bigger than you actually are. So when you produce that leaflet or create a new business card, make sure the look, style and feel is the same as all your other marketing collateral.

Tip 9 – Extinguish

Going out there and marketing yourself can be scary – new networks, clubs, meetings, events; even new introductions can be scary!

You will make excuses of not having the time, or the money, or the contacts but really they are mostly excuses. It's too easy to say no.

It's the fear of the unknown; the fear of failing that is the main thing holding you back. It could be simply a fear of changing the way you think against the way you have always thought or been told to think. You may have been told that 'things are too risky' or 'things like that don't happen to people like us'. I'm sure there is some rubbish like that in your head, placed there by other people, who guess, what are pretty 'ordinary' – not bad, not evil, simply 'ordinary'.

Extinguish that fear and ask yourself what is the worst that can happen? Then think about how you might deal with it or even how you might avoid it before it happens.

Now ask yourself what's the best thing that might happen? Attach that greater pleasure and gain to the possibilities and the opportunities that may open up to you. Attach more to the pleasure than to the pain you attach to the fear of loss, or the fear of risk, financially, or emotionally. EXTINGUISH the pain of the process of change to the pleasure of the gain of change.

And finally...

Tip 10 - EXUDE

Perhaps the most important tip in marketing yourself is to now EXUDE confidence. Believe in 'it'. If you don't believe in yourself why should anyone else?

Never use the phrase 'I am just...'. "I am JUST a receptionist", no "I am THE receptionist" in fact "I am THE BEST receptionist I could possibly be". You get the idea. Also never slouch but stand tall – do you know that people associate tall people with intelligence? Never walk around the edges of rooms - walk down the centre and always walk over and introduce yourself to people, remember they are scared as you used to be.

You will create believability and credibility and you will create opportunities.

- ENDS -

Carl Hopkins

carl@faith-pr.co.uk