

How To Gain Confidence in your Marketing

by Jay B. Lipe

When I started my marketing firm in 1994, I decided to send out a press release to the local media. Over the next 2 weeks, I wrote and rewrote this release until I was sure it would get picked up in the local papers. By this stage, my inner voice was chanting “This will work! This will work!”

On that fateful day, I drove to the post office and triumphantly mailed off 15 press releases. Fully expecting a cavalcade of phone calls, I charged down to my office the following morning. Nothing. In fact, for the next *thirty* days there was nothing. Nada. Zip.

At this point I had a talk with myself. I said “Jay, you can either believe this was a waste of time and nothing will come from it, or you can truly *believe* that something good will happen...it’s your choice”. Being an eternal optimist, I chose the latter.

The very next day I was reading a business journal on the treadmill and noticed a profile article on a local businessman. What caught my eye though was that the writer’s name, listed at the end of the article, was not one I had sent a packet to earlier that month. It was a new name. So the following day, I sent off a packet to this writer and, long story short, ended up being featured in the paper 2 weeks later.

Then, the president of a billion-dollar travel company saw the story and hired me to develop a marketing plan for one division. Nine years later, that client is still our largest client. And to think, none of this would have ever happened if I’d allowed my self-confidence to fade.

The moral here is that you must *believe* to succeed. But are there other methods of building confidence into your marketing? Sure, and here are just a few:

Who’s been down this road?

I’m always a little surprised at the number of business owners who don’t seek out others’ opinions. To me, these people—I call them gray hairs—have already been down the road you’re approaching. They have boatloads of expertise and inspiration that will help you gain confidence.

Before launching into a new campaign, whether it’s developing a marketing plan, building a website, or just redoing your store sign, ask yourself “Who do I know that’s done this before?” Then, seek them out. Chances are, they’ll be glad to help.

Be a graduate student of your audience

One of our clients sells educational games to schools. When I asked him where he drew confidence from, he answered “I’m most confident when I know my target audience inside and out. If I can paint a detailed picture—down to what she’s feeling, or even what car she drives—that’s when I’m most confident.”

So, commit to really knowing your target audience. Ask them questions like “What do you look for in a product/service like mine?” After doing this with enough prospects, I suspect you’ll no longer feel like you’re selling something, but instead like you’re helping solve problems.

Success breeds confidence

It seems so obvious, but it bears repeating. The more you practice something, the better you get. So, think of your marketing effort as one big laboratory. Some marketing experiments will succeed, while others will fail. But from all of them, you'll gain valuable knowledge that improves your success rate. And as your success rate jumps, so will your confidence.

'Fess up...

How many of you cooked the perfect casserole, your very first time? Were you an instant Fred Astaire the first time you hit the boards? Who out there belted a home run, your first at-bat? Marketing, like anything else in life, takes practice. But diligent practice, with the right attitude, will bring you success and confidence you've never dreamed of.

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