

## Crafting a Compelling Call to Action

Aln the course of the last few months, I've spoken with many attorneys, service providers, real estate and financial professionals about their marketing goals. Despite their differing industry focuses, there is a common theme shared:  
How do I make the phone ring?

Marketing is more than a a big question mark shaped hole that you throw money into and hope for the best - it is an entire strategy comprised of many parts, each working to reinforce the others. If you only have one part of the whole - you are missing out on many opportunities. It's not about how MUCH money you spend - but how smart you are in using the opportunities you have to position yourself and your company.

Here are my three marketing mantras:

### 1.) Advertising Doesn't Work...by itself

If you are in the business of selling widgets, and your widget is remarkable and priced far below competitors, your phone will ring if you place one ad. In the service industry however, advertising - whether print, radio, TV, billboard, etc. - your advertising should be viewed as a branding vehicle only, with any phone calls received from it as an added bonus. Your advertising should serve to reinforce a carefully honed marketing message and image you are projecting out into the world, crafted to appeal to your intended, targeted audience. It serves as a reminder to those who may already have met you, heard of you, read your articles, or seen the press release about your recent victory - that you are ready, willing and able to work with them to help them achieve what you have already successfully done yourself.

In short - if you can only afford to run an ad, make it look good, make the message smart and short, and run it monthly in front of a targeted audience. You must view it as a branding tool that may never "pay for itself". Don't expect that it will be the only marketing tool you'll need if you're hoping to build your business to the next level.

### 2.) Decide Who You Are and Sell Yourself Well

When you are getting ready to make a buying decision, think about why it is that you want what you do when there are SO many options available. For example - what is it about Harley Davidson Motorcycles that makes them the #1 choice - when there are so many other highly crafted vehicles on par with them at a lower price? It isn't necessarily the mechanics of the bike, or the pricepoint that makes you want it; it is the BRAND identity you want to be associated with. You want not only what you think is "the best", but also what is perceived as the best by others. It's a much more satisfying purchase when others recognize the status, no matter the price you have paid.

How can you make people WANT to be associated with you? What do you have to "sell" that will make them pick your services over other competitors who may be lower priced, have a higher public status, or a more established track record? Recognize that the decision to buy is emotional. You need to decide what you have to sell - then craft a message that makes them WANT only what YOU have and makes every other possibility seem inferior and unsatisfying. Don't be afraid to stand out from the crowd - this will get them to pick up the phone and call you first.

### 3.) Be Goal Oriented

Take ten minutes to sit down today with a beer, a glass of wine, or a cup of coffee, turn on some music, turn off your phone and make three lists:

- a.) What you would like to achieve in three months
- b.) What you would like to have achieved in six months - year
- c.) Your long term work "exit" strategy

These can be work goals (when to hire that new employee or remodel the office), family goals (when to have kids or saving for colleges), fun goals (vacation, learning a language, etc). Take time to think about what daily activities you are already doing to work towards those goals and also what you could eliminate or add to make achieving them more realistic.

Keep your list in front of you daily and work towards meeting them, not just in your business but also in your personal life. As you start to cross your accomplished goals off the list, you will find yourself feeling more energized and fulfilled, which makes the "work" more enjoyable and makes achieving the next goals far more realistic and rapid than you thought possible.

In marketing as in life, expect that there will be setbacks but see them as par for the course and learn from them. Don't be afraid to make mistakes or you'll find yourself in the same place in ten years that you are right now - if you're lucky. Look at marketing as a commitment to a WHOLE strategy with many coordinated pieces, put time into deciding WHO you are and WHY people will be compelled to choose YOUR brand, then work consistently towards improving and spreading your message and building the business. Do these things and there is absolutely nothing that will stand in the way of making the phone ring.