

Marketing Trust[®]

by Kathy Ellis, Business Lab Marketing Coach

Trust...it's such a critical component in building relationships. But what is trust and how can you maximize it with your clients/prospects? In this month's article, we take a look at the three main aspects of trust and how to use them in marketing you and your company.

Consistency: If you are consistent with your service, your product and your philosophy, then your clients and prospects will be able to predict your behavior, which will build trust. All successful companies are proud to be consistent and predictable (FedEx, McDonald's, etc.). Consistency in your message, consistency in your look, and consistency in your delivery will provide predictability.

Tip From The Business Lab: Perform an internal consistency audit by gathering your team and your collateral materials. Spread your print materials across your conference table and see how you feel about the consistency of the look and feel as well as the messages. Ask yourself these questions: Does every piece have a similar tag line describing your company? Are the colors consistent? Is your logo used in a similar fashion each time? Does the feel of your print materials match your company's personality? Next, review the last 12 months of your marketing efforts to get an idea of how consistent your delivery is. Think "top of mind awareness" such as frequency in sending information (post cards, newsletters, articles, offers, direct mail, etc.). Are your marketing campaigns haphazard or do you have a plan to remind clients/prospect about your company on a consistent basis? Along with your team, find out what information is important to your clients/prospects and set-up a plan that allows you to deliver this information in a consistent manner.

Integrity: As far as business relationships go, integrity is as simple as keeping your promises. Keeping your promise translates into making the life of your clients easier, which translates into a solid relationship with sustained benefits. If your clients do not have to worry that you'll do what you say you will, then they will see you as a business partner and a friend.

Tip From The Business Lab: Make "under promise and over achieve" your motto and find ways to share your promise successes with your clients/prospects. With your team, gather all the success stories that revolve around

keeping promises to clients. With your clients' permission, share these stories in your newsletters, post cards, website, etc. It is important these stories "speak" to your clients/prospects and provides them with the "ah-ha factor"—that moment when they make the connection on how your service/product can also help them. These stories should be like a guided tour of the problem, solution and promise.

Protectiveness: The third component in building trust is protectiveness. Think about the people in your life that you really trust. They are the ones you know have your best interest at heart and will protect you and your secrets. The same goes for business relationships. As you work more closely with your clients, you will learn more and more about their business. All of this information is highly sensitive and should be held at the highest level of confidence.

Tip From The Business Lab: Actions speak louder than words when protecting your clients/prospects. It is important that everyone on your team understand how fragile the protective aspect of trust is. Set-up specific guidelines about protecting your clients/prospects—i.e., guidelines that indicate how their information is kept in your system, guidelines on how to handle rumors, guidelines on how to handle changes in their organization, etc.

More Information? If you would like to learn more about this important topic or would like to receive our FREE Service Ideas Booklet, please send an E-mail to kathy@thebusinesslab.com, visit our website at www.thebusinesslab.com, or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-517-0789.

Author's Note: Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. We share with you our FREE newsletter to showcase powerful marketing tips, techniques and ideas to help you improve your business. The Business Lab is based in Houston, TX at 281-517-0998 or by E-mail at kathy@thebusinesslab.com