

Becoming a Butterfly ©

By Kathy Ellis, The Business Lab Marketing Coach

“How does one become a butterfly?” she asked pensively. “You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar.” —Trina Paulus

This is a very powerful message and to me, it is the perfect description of how you position your product/service/company. So, what would it take to give up everything else to focus on the one quality that was the perfect representation of your product/service/ company? It would take a clear definition and understanding of that quality; a passionate belief in that quality; and an unwavering commitment to focus on marketing and positioning that quality 100 percent of the time. In this month’s article we share some ideas that will help you in these three areas.

Defining Your Qualities: As defined in the dictionary, “A quality is a characteristic, innate or acquired, which, in some particular, determines the nature and behavior of a person or thing.” Think bottom-up here. Why do you offer/sell this product or service? In what ways do you help your clients? Here are some well-known qualities/attributes to help spur your thinking:

Harley Davidson = male; rebel; cool

Apple/Macintosh = fun, innovative, creative

Volvo = safety

Maytag = reliable

Tip From The Business Lab: With your team, list all the qualities or attributes that can be used to describe your product/service. From this list, pick the three (try to agree on no more than three) that are the perfect representation of your product/service /company. Make these your butterfly focus.

Passionate Belief: Think top down for this one. Passionate beliefs come from the top (the owner or president) and are infused into everything related to the company and its products/services: the people, the collateral, the advertising, the clients you attract, etc. If you have chosen qualities that are the perfect representation of your product/service/company, then getting excited about imbuing these qualities into everything your company does will be natural.

Tip From The Business Lab: With your team, develop exercises on ways you can tie-in your qualities into everything your company does. Have each one on your team write a paragraph about how they personally convey this particular quality and ways they could convey this quality even further. What tools do they need from you in order to achieve this? Do the same exercise for every aspect of your business: look at your office (everything from the neighborhood to the walls—does it match with your qualities); have friends/relatives call your office and critique the initial experience your clients/prospects receive; look at your team members (especially those who come into contact with clients and prospects) — how do they act? how are they dressed? do they have a belief, an enthusiasm about your company/product /service or are they going through the motions?

Take a look at your collateral materials (all the marketing pieces/activities that you use to share your story and qualities

with your clients and prospects). Do these items convey your qualities? From your business cards to your invoices and everything in between, all items should be an expression of the qualities you’ve defined. Do they tell a story of credibility, seriousness, experience, consistency and reliability? Are they helping you become a butterfly or keeping you a caterpillar?

Make a list of everything that can and should be an expression of your qualities (include everything from people to signage). Identify those that do convey the qualities you’ve defined and use these as a guide. Separate the items that need improvement and prioritize them. With your team, determine what actions will be necessary to bring them in line with your qualities. Set realistic time lines and budgets and work on the highest priority items first. Share your progress with everyone in your company so they begin to understand how serious you are about your beliefs.

Unwavering Focus and Commitment: Focusing and committing to one particular quality can be one of the most difficult decisions a business will make. This is a walk-your-talk-and-walk strategy. It takes a lot of patience as you will probably not see an immediate payoff. This is where a lot of companies loose faith and start considering the grassy pastures around them. However, there are so many success stories that prove butterflies do come from caterpillars that it is a strategy worth pursuing. While you should not ignore the competition and what is happening in your industry, the magic will be in finding ways to incorporate this information into your focused game plan.

Tip From The Business Lab: With your team, list all the apprehensions about focusing on one particular quality over all the others. Have everyone list their opinions, fears, feedback. Go over each item as a group and discuss both the pros and cons of your focused strategy. Identify the areas that need to be overcome internally and start here first. Then with the full backing of you and your team, make the commitment to become a butterfly.

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 Web site at www.thebusinesslab.com, or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-374-0569.

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