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ChangeAbility
The Newsletter of Redpoint Business Coaching
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Welcome!

You are reading ChangeAbility, a newsletter from Redpoint Business Coaching run by Urs Koenig PhD, MBA.

ChangeAbility is a bimonthly newsletter bringing you hands-on tips and cool resources for starting or building your business.

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I. Keep Chasing Perfection in Your Marketing

Is marketing your business more effectively one of the top things on your to-do list? Do you sometimes find it difficult to move forward because you want nothing less than a perfect outcome?

Read on about what Robert Middleton, one of the leading marketing consultants for small service providers, has to say about perfecting your marketing:

You may have heard Voltaire's quote, "The perfect is the enemy of the good."

Sometimes, in striving to make our marketing perfect, we never actually get around to implementing a good marketing strategy. Perfectionism in crafting logos and websites can result in delays of weeks, months, even years. I see it all the time.

But it is important to realize that there are two kinds of perfect: the first kind, mentioned above, results in procrastination and failure. The other results in great success. So you need to distinguish between the two and opt for "perfect" over "perfectionist."

The kind of perfect that results in success is embodied in the Japanese practice of Kaizen, or "continuous improvement." Here, good is a stepping-stone on the way to perfect. You do the best you can and put it out there. You then tweak it and put it out there again, and tweak it again and put it out again.

Finally it's perfect – or close to it.

I have another favorite saying: "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly" (widely attributed to Herbert A. Simon). This means that since you are probably going to make a mess of it the first time round, it's probably best to try something – anything – and learn from your mistake.

Remember, those who do extremely well in their business and their marketing didn't get there overnight. With very few exceptions, they built their businesses one brick at the time. And you can be sure that some of those first bricks were not so perfect!

For instance, my first website (from 1997) was pretty bad. In fact, it might charitably be described as just this side of "butt ugly." My second attempt was better. My third version was getting there, and my fourth and final design actually works quite well and brings me all the business I can handle. Without the three failed attempts, I would never have gotten to my fourth, successful website. Those first three weren't bad; they were . . . educational.

There is, of course, another enemy of good, and that's 'good enough'. I see it in my local grocery store, which sells peaches that look great, but taste like sawdust. And you see it in marketing that is boring and

mediocre. Marketing that lacks energy and conviction will not attract many clients.

Start to look at everything in your marketing from the eyes of a client. How would *you* react to your marketing?

Scrutinize your elevator speech, logo, business cards, websites, letters, calling techniques, eZine and speeches. And then tap into the vast collection of articles, books, audio programs and professional services available. Finally, take the next logical step in making everything in your marketing a little bit better. Remember: Kaizen, or “continuous improvement” is the key!

Take this away for your own business:

- Don't focus on perfectionism, chasing after what you can never be, do or have. It inevitably leads to paralysis and procrastination. Rather focus on the wonderful game of chasing perfection by improving one little thing at a time.
- After thinking, planning, writing, designing and tweaking, you have something to show the world. Put it out there boldly. About the worst that can happen is that people will ignore you. You can live with that. They are already ignoring you ;-)
- Fail your way to success. The more things you try, the faster you'll learn what doesn't work. By testing many marketing strategies, you'll finally emerge with a handful that produce great results every time.

Adapted from Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing. Visit Robert's web site at <http://www.actionplan.com>.

II How Confidently Do You Speak About Your Strengths?

How easy is it for you to talk confidently about your personal and strengths and the benefits your business provides? My guess is probably not very. For most of us, publicly acknowledging our strengths is one of the most awkward things we do.

Many of my Business Bachelor Students at Seattle University struggle in the interview role play when I ask: “So, tell me about your strengths?”. Society has trained us well by ‘putting us in our place’ on countless occasions.

Yet, put yourself into your clients' shoes: Would you want to do business with someone who is vague, who sounds uncertain and insecure about what they are good at and what benefits they can offer to you? (Or in my view even worse: someone who is overcompensating his/her insecurity by being too boastful and full of him/herself?)

The answer, of course, is a resounding "No."

There is nothing more attractive -- both on a personal and professional level -- than people who are able to talk confidently (not boastfully) about what they are good at, what they have achieved and how they will be able to provide value.

Consider the following story, about a U.S. football player known for his modesty and humility (quoted from Michael Neill's Coaching Tip # 362, www.successmadfun.com). He was called to the witness stand during a civil trial. After taking the oath 'to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth so help me God', the player was asked a few preliminary questions:

"Are you a football player?"

"Yes Sir, I am"

"Are you any good?"

The player paused and looked uncomfortably around the room.

"I am, Sir. Probably one of the best in the country."

Everyone in the room laughed.

After the trial, the local football coach came up to the player and told him how surprised he was at his response.

"What could I do, coach?" the player replied sadly. "I was under oath!"

Do you need to be under oath to speak freely and confidently about your strengths and the benefits your business provides?

For your business:

- Name the three main benefits clients get out of working with you. (remember: NOT features but *benefits!*) Write them down now.

- How confident are you talking about these benefits and how your personal strengths tie in with them?
- If the answer is “not very confident,” identify what is holding you back and commit to taking one concrete action step over the next week to address what is holding you back.

III New Project: Group Coaching for Business Owners

I am excited to announce that I have started working as a group coach on behalf of Business Resource Services (BRS), a Seattle based financial education firm.

This is a service that will complement my 1on1 coaching with small business executives.

I am in the process of becoming the lead coach for two BRS Performance Groups. These groups consist of business owners from like industries that meet regularly (face-to-face, online and over the phone) to share and support each other in financial, marketing, operational and staffing issues. Group members act as an informal board of advisors for each of its members businesses. For more details: <http://www.brs-seattle.com/perform.html>

I am looking forward to the buzz of working with these groups!

If you struggle with getting a handle on your own financials, I highly recommend Business Resource Service workshops, which are held at regular intervals all over the country. I have now participated in two workshops and highly recommend them!

For a list of workshops see: <http://www.brs-seattle.com/workshops.html>

IV Upcoming Workshops

For Seattle subscribers:

BUSINESS PLAN WORKSHOP AT THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA) – “BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS PLAN.”

- May 12th

I will be teaching the Marketing Plan and Operation Plan section of the Small Business Administration workshop 'Building a Business Plan' in downtown Seattle. To register and for more info on this and other small business workshops, see the SBA and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) website: <http://www.sba.gov/wa/seattle/>, <http://www.seattlescore.org/index.htm>, or call the SBA at 206-553-7310.

BUSINESS START-UP WORKSHOP -- "THINKING OF BECOMING YOUR OWN BOSS?"

If you are thinking of, or are in the process of, starting your own business, or if you want to learn how to run your business better, please join me for this 3 hour workshop at Centerpoint, Seattle's leading center for life and career renewal, based in downtown Seattle. For more information, please send me an email or check out: www.centerpointonline.org

The workshop will be offered on:

- June 22nd
- August 10th

The fee is \$54 for non-members and \$45 for Centerpoint Associate Members.

+++++LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK+++++
Simply reply to this newsletter. I welcome your feedback!

ChangeAbility is a publication of Redpoint Business Coaching, which is run by Urs Koenig MBA, PhD.

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