



Why You Should Be Using Presentations As Marketing Tools

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If you're not using presentations to promote your expertise, you're missing out on one of the most powerful marketing tools available to professionals. Here are five reasons presentations should be at the top of your list for marketing activities.

Presentations cast you in a different role. Instead of being seen as a salesperson or a marketer, you're seen as an expert and an advisor. Presentations provide an especially effective way to make an audience aware of needs they might not even realize they have. With the right presentation, you immediately establish your professional reputation and credibility. The well-executed presentation provides an excellent start to building the relationships crucial to success in professional selling. Just as writing a book or article lends credibility to the author, speaking helps you build your status as an expert. Presentations also provide a key point of differentiation. The person who can clearly express her ideas is seen as more intelligent and more self-confident than the person who stumbles through a disorganized presentation. When you're competing for business, a well-crafted presentation can give you the advantage because better presenters are more persuasive. An architect once reported in one of my seminars that he was sure his firm was more successful in getting business because the people they chose to pitch for the business were highly trained in presentation skills.

Presentations allow you to customize your material. Unlike a print run of brochures or postcards, you can customize your talk for each specific audience you address. You can take advantage of a system of marketing that highlights the most effective approach for particular audiences. You can choose when to use examples, case studies or testimonials that will appeal to very specific audiences. Further, based on the feedback you receive, you can make on-the-spot adjustments to create the most effective message.

Presentations create opportunities for audience interaction. The interactive nature of presentations works to your advantage. In a face-to-face setting you can engage all three channels of communication--the verbal, the visual and the vocal. When these three channels reinforce one another, you'll be even more effective in making your message heard. The feedback you receive allows you to adjust your material and tackle objections as they arise. Presentation audiences are not passive sponges soaking up your message. They are involved participants in the communication process. Because they already want to be there, you can focus on moving them further along the sales process. Imagine having 30 minutes to educate your prospects about your services with no interruptions! Your audience often contains highly-

qualified prospects. People choose to attend a sales presentation, product demonstration or continuing education course because there's something of interest to them.

Presentations furnish high-value marketing at a lower cost. Compared to almost any kind of advertising, presentations produce a higher ratio of qualified prospects. What would 30 minutes of airtime on a radio or television station cost? When you send out 5000 pieces of direct mail, how much of it ends up in the recycle bin? Presentations require an investment in time, but if you plan properly, you'll receive a very high return on that investment. Presentations also lower the cost of acquiring new clients. This is the most direct way to be in front of your prospects. When you speak to a group, you'll often get three opportunities for publicity. First, when the event is advertised, you can provide a brief synopsis of your talk for brochures, mailers, the website and even a newsletter. Second, if your talk is newsworthy, you may receive some media coverage during the event itself. Third, there is an opportunity for exposure in a summary of the event for the organization's newsletter or annual report.

Presentations offer prospects the opportunity to "try before they buy." When prospects see you present, they get an idea of what it would be like to work with you. They get the opportunity to see your unique take on issues and to see how you interact with others. Past experience always influences the choice of a professional service provider. Also, because someone has seen you present, they often feel they can safely refer you to friends and colleagues.

Granted, crafting an effective presentation takes planning, preparation and thought. It's an investment of your time, but one that can provide significant returns.



Joe Sommerville shows professional services firms how to increase visibility, enhance credibility and close more business. Download the first chapter of RainMaking Presentations: How to Grow Your Business by Leveraging Your Expertise at www.RainMakingPresentations.com.