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5 WAYS TO TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS BY DEVELOPING 'CELEBRITY STATUS' WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

You are a business leader, you know the competition, you know the other leaders in your market, but you far too often see your clients or customers drawn to others. Marketing produces leads, but you are ultimately often one of the 'also rans.' Your service or product is excellent and yet you have not become 'the person to see.'

The problem, according to personal branding expert Tim O'Brien: You have not effectively 'branded yourself.'

"Do a personal practice test, and ask yourself who the first person you think of is when it comes to various professions," says O'Brien. "When you think of the world's best lawyer, who comes to mind, and *why* does he or she come to mind? Or, bring it closer to home; who have you heard is the best real estate agent in your area? Why is it *that* person?"

O'Brien, author of the forthcoming book *The Power of Personal Branding: Creating Celebrity Status with Your Target Audience*, is essentially in the business of making business leaders and individuals irresistible. The founder of Rainmaker U., a coaching program which teaches professionals how to create compelling personal brands, he offers 5 essential tips for developing an effective and magnetic personal brand.

1.) Select the right 'domain' and target audience

The focus of your message must be carefully directed toward exactly who you want to reach. Especially in service professions, trying to be everything to everyone is a recipe for mediocrity.

For example, O'Brien often coaches financial advisors and insurance brokers in Los Angeles whose target audiences are high-net worth individuals. The problem: there are hundreds of thousands of high-net worth people in L.A. County. O'Brien coaches them to shrink their focus and hit a select target audience like a battering ram, while their competitors spray their message lightly everywhere.

O'Brien's philosophy is that once you start achieving success, go deeper, not wider. He uses designer Donna Karan as an example of what not to do. Karan virtually destroyed all of the cache her brand had developed by watering down her brand with line extensions, from umbrellas to men's underwear.

2.) Hone your personal descriptive qualities

Personal branding has nothing to do with what you think about yourself and everything to do with what your target audience *feels* about you. Cast aside bashfulness, and forget about appearing conceited. Your target audience wants who they perceive to be the best, and what you portray is what you become. If you are a commercial litigator, for example, do you want to be known as affable and easy going? Perhaps, but your target audience is probably looking for descriptive characteristics like tenacious and forceful. A public relations pro? You want to be perceived as sophisticated, creative, and personable.

3.) Crystallize the benefits your qualities provide your audience

If you want your personal brand to sell, it must offer your target audience something it wants and needs. People are only attracted to a personal brand if there is something in it for them. If for example, you are a business development consultant, a personal quality such as charisma provides a clear benefit to your audience. If you are charismatic, you can motivate.

4.) Pick a winning benefit

According to O'Brien, you must focus on just one benefit to build your personal brand. Select the one most relevant to your industry and which resonates with you the most. Trying to be more than one thing to your target audience dilutes the impact of your personal brand. You are a real estate agent, and you are perceived as being friendly, patient and relentless. What is the one quality which probably has the most benefit to your customers? Relentlessness – you are known as not stopping until a sale to a client's satisfaction or until you find the perfect home for a client.

5.) Develop a catch phrase

Developing a catch phrase does not apply to everyone, but think about your profession, make a list of phrases that capture your most important quality, and see if one resonates. Think of the movie 'American Beauty' and the character

who was known throughout the town as the ‘King of Real Estate.’ This isn’t a descriptive characteristic but a declarative one, backed up by a track record and market dominance.

Tim O’Brien is a renowned personal branding expert and author who knows what it takes to cut through the noise and create a lasting impression. He serves as President and CEO of Los Angeles-based The Personal Branding Group, Inc. In 2001, he created Rainmaker U – a coaching program that teaches top-level professionals how to position themselves as “The Person to See™” within their target audience. More information about Mr. O’Brien is available at www.thepersonalbrandinggroup.com.

The Power of Personal Branding is scheduled for January 2007 release.

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