



By Christine K. Clifford, CSP

MARKET
YOURSELF
LIKE
CRAZY!

**By investing in your business,
you demonstrate your confidence
in what you offer.**

I received an email recently from Vicki Rackner, MD, CNN health advisor and founder of The Caregiver Club, who asked, “Is there is anything I can do to support your work in our fight against cancer?”

Moments later, another email inquiry arrived from Acharya Sri Khadi Madama, author of *Finding Shangri La: Seven Yoga Principles for Creating Success & Happiness*, recipient of the Jewel of India Award, and TV host of “Yours Truly, Yoga,” asking “How can we work together?”

Then, I received another email query, this time from Dr. Louis Turi, clinical hypnotherapist, astropsychologist and personal counselor to celebrities, including Ivana Trump “and Peter Fonda. He asked, “Can you help me launch a career as a “professional speaker on the topic of surviving cancer?”

After receiving another request from a former U.S. Bank president to help him launch his speaking career and get his book idea published, three radio interview requests, six inquiries to speak and a proposal to be a regular columnist for a national magazine, I wondered, “*What recession?*”

Is this good luck, timing or sheer coincidence? Or was this a strategy established years ago to perpetuate ongoing business?



ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE BRAND

You’ve perfected your speech, penned a best-selling book and created a one-of-a-kind product. How do you get the world to sit up and take notice?

Start with establishing a sustainable personal brand. The problem with most speakers, however, is that they want to be a Jack of all trades. And because they want to be everything to all people, they are masters of none.

Ask the average speaker, “What do you speak about?” The answer will fascinate you. “I speak about sales, marketing, leadership, teamwork, product innovation and change. I also do humor in the workplace.” With so many topics, this speaker is not likely to be an expert in one.

Instead, consider becoming a Jack of one trade. I speak about using humor to endure the cancer experience. Who is interested in that topic? Dr. Rackner, Khadi, Dr. Turi and a large enough portion of the general population to keep me in business until the day I retire. I’ve spent years focused on establishing my brand

and now people and companies world-wide view me as an expert in my field.

By focusing your resources (time, money and people) on one topic and becoming branded with that topic, you can attract the type of attention that allows you to speak, consult, teach, write and train others.



CREATE A SPECIALTY

My brother, Greg, is a carpenter in the small town of Columbia Falls, Mont., located next to upscale White Fish. For years, Greg helped builders construct multimillion-dollar homes. After the housing boom bombed, I visited Greg, who hadn’t worked in weeks.

Driving around town, Greg pointed out his fine woodwork on these houses, including shutters, decks, stair rails and custom windows. I advised him to create a brand that says nothing more than “specializes in fine woodwork.”

Guess what happened? Greg’s phone started ringing off the hook! When he

got his foot in the door, homeowners would ask, “Can you fix my leaky faucet? How about a broken pipe in the basement? And my furnace isn’t working.”

Greg knows how to do many things, just as some speakers can speak on many topics. By branding himself as a creator of fine woodwork, he opened the door to other business opportunities. He now has six full-time employees.

Identify your one area of expertise and promote yourself in the following ways:

Write a succinct, content-rich article that can be used in numerous publications. Then, send the article to every organization and association you have ever belonged to for publication in their newsletters: high school, college, sorority/fraternity, church or synagogue, associations, sports affiliations, health clubs, etc.

Purchase a specialized list of contacts who are decision makers in your specialty. Thirteen years ago, I purchased a list of directors of oncology at cancer centers nationwide. I don’t have to keep the names up-to-date, and I still use that list for quarterly mailings.

Create products in your industry that can be used as product premiums for larger corporations that sell their products or give away products in your industry. For example, I recently spoke in Carrollton, Ga., on behalf of a cancer center. The center’s director asked me for a tape of my speech. I told him I’d get one. The next time I spoke, I taped my speech. The director purchased 5,000 copies.



DON'T THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Your box—your way of thinking, working and living—has worked for you. It’s the

box in which you were born, a product of your DNA. You can change your box about as easily as you can alter the shape of your head. You are who you are.

Instead, “grow” your box. Consider singer-composer Paul Simon, who wrote dozens of songs, including the classic album, “Bookends,” which became the background music for an entire generation. Simon flourished inside his box until it began to close in on him and he started producing stuff like “Kodachrome.”

Then, he changed his box by filling it with new things. He flew to Africa, where images and sounds startled, moved and overwhelmed him. Inspired by the African group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, he created the landmark album, “Graceland.”

Grow your box with new ideas. Study different cultures. Find out what works for other speakers. Talk to your competitors and see if there is a way you can work together.



THE BUSINESS OF ONE

Ask an advisor to small businesses, “What is the biggest mistake they make?” You will get an important answer: “They didn’t invest enough.”

This lesson has a powerful impact on the “business of one.” By investing in your business, you demonstrate your confidence in what you offer. The premium prices you pay are literally “premiums.” They are your insurance in your success. Pay more now, so you can reap more later.

Case in point: I hired an administrative assistant this year. I pay her \$10 per hour, plus 30 percent on sales resulting in confirmed speaking

engagements. A former PR mogul and a cancer survivor, she knows every television and radio personality in my city. In her first month, she scheduled speaking engagements and book signings for me at hospitals, clinics and cancer organizations I hadn’t done business with in years, if ever. Why? Because we get stale and forget to call people in our own backyard. Take a leap of faith by investing in people.

I also invested in 5,000 postcards, which cost a small fortune in design, printing and postage. I only needed one booked event, however, to come out ahead.

The postcard read: *In honor of Christine’s 15-year anniversary of being a cancer survivor, she has a special offer if you book an event in 2010: You choose your fee (expenses not included).*

Guess what happened? My phone didn’t stop ringing!

“Hi, we’re a small, rural hospital in the Quad Cities, and we’ve wanted to hire Christine for years, but didn’t think we could ever afford her. Will she speak for \$____ (insert figure)?”

So far, I have booked 16 new events at organizations that might never have called me without reading about my special offer. It resulted in increased book sales, spin-off business to higher paying customers, and dozens of new names in my database. Because I was “celebrating” a special occasion, I didn’t feel I was compromising my fee or my integrity. I was genuinely interested in giving something back.

So, what’s *your* special occasion?



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Selling Yourself and Not Now ... I’m Having a No Hair Day! Visit www.christineclifford.com, www.cancerclub.com or email her at Christine@cancerclub.com.