



Marketing Tip of the Week

Always do the right thing - even if you think it doesn't matter...

How often do you find yourself in the situation where you're asking yourself:

- ◆ Why am I doing this?
- ◆ Why did I agree to this?
- ◆ I'm not getting paid for this, so why should I bother going "whole hog"? I'll just do enough to get by - or
- ◆ Forget it; I can't get it all done - I'll just forget about it!

Even more importantly (and more stressful), how many times have you had to pick up the slack for someone else who has apparently made the decision NOT to do something they promised to do, but hasn't told anyone else about that decision? Whether we're sitting on a Board, serving on a committee, or just doing someone a favor, someone is counting on us to do what we promised. If we don't, we cause added stress to everyone else involved.

I know that in my own experience I am having to pick up the slack for more and more people recently - and I wonder why this trend is occurring...

I've heard a lot of excuses, including:

- ◆ The hurricanes in our area (while this was valid for months after they hit, they are not still valid an entire year later)
- ◆ I've gotten very busy at work
- ◆ I can't get reliable transportation

The same holds true for other areas in our lives. Many of us join networking and leads groups to further our careers and make our presence known in our markets.

- ◆ Do we make it a habit to arrive on time? To arrive at all? To fulfill our role, if any, that day?
- ◆ Do we leave early?
- ◆ If we do have to miss a meeting, do we let someone know - or just "no show"?
- ◆ Do we take phone calls throughout the meeting? (whether or not we leave the room to take the call)

What inadvertent messages (a.k.a. marketing) do we send by these actions?

- ◆ The group is not as important as callers trying to reach us
- ◆ This meeting is not important enough to attend every week/month/etc.
- ◆ They don't deserve the courtesy of a call if we're not going to show up

While there are exceptions to every rule, and I'm not trying to say we should be perfect (Heaven knows I'm not, either!), extending as much courtesy as possible in ALL our transactions will go a long way toward establishing our reputation within our own community. And while we all have occasional problems meeting commitments, there are ways to handle these situations, such as:

- ◆ Tell people ASAP if you will be out of commission for a while (even if you don't explain why, giving notice helps them plan)
- ◆ Help them find replacements to take over your duties while you're away
- ◆ Don't say "yes" in the first place if you know you just can't do it - or do it well. Many times I've had no one to blame but myself because I couldn't say "no"! (I've now started saying "no" more often, when necessary)

All of the above are perfectly acceptable ways of **doing the right thing**, even when you can't fulfill a role the group is asking you to fill. After all, it's unreasonable for any group to expect that we can ALWAYS do what they want. We need to be able to say yes or no, at the right times, and have everyone be OK with that. But it is not acceptable to SAY "yes", then DO "no".

After all, think about this: If you don't do the right thing when it comes to these "volunteer and/or networking" groups, and I only see you there (when it "doesn't matter"), how do I know you will - or even CAN - do the right thing when it does matter?

What messages do we want to send in our own communities? If we're not sending the right ones, we'd better take a look at the inadvertent "bad" marketing we're doing to ourselves in these situations... Start sending the right messages. Believe me, people will notice - and they will want to work with those who always (or at least usually) manage to do the right thing...

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