

When Times Get Tough...

I speak to a of personal trainers and fitness professionals and many of them are struggling on one level or another. Some are concerned, some are scrambling to get new clients and retain existing clients and others are verging on panic. In tough times such as these the tendency, from a marketing and business development perspective, is to make decisions reactively - based on worry and doubt. For many people this translates into doing things (or not doing things) that actually oppose what's in the best interest of their business. I know for myself that that when I start to worry about business, I tend to over-do and attempt to push myself past or through a difficult experience. These actions which are driven by fear often times have adverse effect on my business.

I also find myself and talk to a lot of people that treat the current circumstances as if something is wrong or broken. Unlike past recessions, it seems as if the current situation is different and may be more of a shift than a phase. If this is the case, waiting for things to return to the way they were can be an exercise in futility.

One thing that's for certain is that the circumstances - for the most part - are out of your immediate control and resisting can only amplify the tension and will have a negative impact on your attitude. Your attitude is one of the most important elements in marketing your business. Marketing typically involves a significant investment of time, energy and creativity and if you have a negative attitude it's almost impossible to muster the necessary internal and external resources to market successfully. Here are 10 tips to maintaining a positive marketing attitude:

1. **Market outside the box-** One of the biggest upsides to this recession is that it's forcing people to really think about how they market and promote their businesses. In the past, most people typically were able to use fairly passive marketing strategies - and were able to get by. Now is no longer the time to sit back and wait for business to come to you. In order to succeed in today's market it's very important to forget about surviving and focus on thriving - and you might just find that you could get more business than you ever imagined. I recommend implementing at least 1 new and creative marketing strategy immediately. Consider joining a networking group, setting up an email newsletter campaign or creating a new referral program.
2. **Work 'On' your business vs. just 'In' your business-** When times get tough and fear sets in it's easy to get caught up in the day to day survival mode of keeping your business alive. This drive to keep your business alive has its value and is a critical factor in developing a business, but the huge down side is that we tend to neglect the bigger picture and lose site of what needs to be done to grow our business. In other words, we spend so much time working *in* our business that we forget to work *on* our business. For many of us, we literally forget to step aside from the day-to-day in order to plan for our

- success. Put a list of projects together that are focused on the bigger picture and designate 1 hour per day to work on these projects.
3. **Use worry and doubt as triggers-** As I mentioned, my tendency is to work harder than ever when fear comes up. I'm now initiating a practice of using these emotional reactions as indicators or triggers to take a step back from my work activities. I might do a few yoga poses, go for a walk, or lie down for a few minutes. It seems to be much easier to process these fears in a reflective state and to even transmute them into something constructive for my business and for my own personal well-being.
 4. **Don't take anything personal-** There's no doubt that in order to succeed in this market that you'll need to put yourself out there more than in the past. This mere fact will cause you to be in contact with more prospects and some of them may project negativity and express dis-interest towards your service. This hardly ever has anything to do with you so don't let it slow you down. I like to remind myself that *what other people think of me is really none of my business.*
 5. **Be grateful for what you have-** I've recently incorporated a daily practice of reflecting on and acknowledging things that I am grateful for. One of the first things that I noticed is that the list is bigger than I imagined and seems to keep getting longer all the time. This one practice, more than anything else fills me with a sense of well-being and almost immediately turns my attitude around when I am feeling down. I have heard and now truly believe that the greater your gratitude, the more you receive that which you are grateful for.
 6. **Show up and let the universe take care of the rest-** some of us tend to get way ahead of ourselves when planning for success. Setting goals and creating action plans are important practices but the most important step is the one that's right in front of you. It's easy to get caught up with what you're going to do in three or six months and lose sight of what needs to be done tomorrow. In many cases over-planning is rooted in denial and procrastination. The most important aspect of marketing is to show up and to put yourself out there in front of your prospective clients in the form of sales calls, presentations, networking meetings, writing newsletters, etc... There's a saying that goes 'Take the first step and the next will be revealed...'
 7. **Educate yourself on sales & marketing-** Your ability to market and sell your service is actually more important than the quality of your service - especially when it comes to growing your business. Look for e-books, books, courses, webinars or workshops that focus on marketing and business development and do 1 thing per month to expand your knowledge. You'll find that the confidence that it will instill will be worth all of the effort.
 8. **Diversify your marketing strategies-** In the past one or two marketing strategies may have done the job, but in today's market it's important to have at least 3 different strategies in play at any given time. You should also consider incorporating a balance of on-line and off-line marketing strategies. Don't put your eggs all in one basket...

9. **Automate/Simplify Whenever Possible:** There are many ways to automate and simplify marketing processes and the more that you can do to take a load off your plate, the easier your work life will become. Here are a few ideas:
- Hire a personal/virtual assistant to work on low-skill items that take up your time. Realize that your time has to be worth more than \$10-\$15 per hour.
 - Initiate auto responders and opt-in forms into your email marketing program.
 - Use auto responders in your email program to let people know that you will only be responding to email a few times per day. Email can be the biggest time waster.
 - Use a CRM (contact retention management) program to manage all of your prospects. Your prospects are like gold and you should have some type of system to manage the follow up process or it just won't work out. Check out systems such as www.salesforce.com or www.act.com.
 - Use an email service provider such as www.constantcontact.com to manage your email marketing program.
 - Use a schedule program such as outlook to manage your time and activities.
 - Incorporate a daily to-do-list to get your day-to-day activities off of your mind so that there is more space to enjoy your work and your life. Be sure to update the list every day. I use a simple word document and print a new version every day and post it next to my computer. I also have it broken into things to do for the week and month. In addition I have my daily, weekly and monthly goals listed on the document so I am able to stay focused on them as well.
10. **Embrace the challenges-** I believe that the changes that are upon us are for the greater good and are all part of the natural evolution of humanity and consciousness. This more than anything else allows me to have a positive outlook and takes a load off of my mind. It seems pretty obvious that there are forces beyond our control that are guiding transitions that are beyond our understanding. I like to believe that these forces are ultimately in line with our best interests and happiness. A Sufi poet by the name of Hazrt Inayat Kahn sums it up pretty well:

*I asked for strength and god gave me difficulties to make me strong
I asked for wisdom and god gave me problems to learn to solve
I asked for prosperity and god gave me a brain and brawn to work
I asked for courage and god gave me dangers to overcome
I asked for love and god gave me people to help
I asked for favors and god gave me opportunities
I received nothing I wanted
I received everything I needed*



Now is the time to do what takes to break the chains and shackles of limiting beliefs and patterns around your business - which is just a reflection of you.

Mikel Bruce
WebFlexor PT
888.282.7818
www.websitesforpt.com