

# Chance favors the prepared mind.

Several of you have completed your physical inventory within your respective businesses. Have you started on your intellectual inventory? Your skill sets, expertise and the talents of those around you may be vastly underutilized if you don't recognize their value. Make no mistake, containing talent within your own four walls is an opportunity lost. When you or your staff can become an expert community resource on a topic of interest, and you MARKET that expertise, your business or organization can grow by leaps and bounds. Today, we will cover some basic preparations that you and your staff can utilize to market your expertise and drive traffic.



## 1. Inventory your knowledge (and that of your staff), and determine its "market value"-

In the midwest, we sometimes become our own worst critics and confuse pride for hubris. Most business people I know have a tremendous amount of industry specific knowledge that I could listen to for hours. That information has tremendous (and largely untapped) value. For media outlets, area clubs, general customers, conferences and even individuals in your respective industry, your knowledge is a marketable commodity. In some business types (law and investment counseling come to mind) you need to be careful about how you transmit that knowledge, but it still exists as a marketable skill.

**2. You have identified your inventory, now what?-** This is the area where most people make a mistake. They either A: wait for people to come to them and ask for a presentation or B: they approach people/organizations without a sample of their expertise. Start your alternative marketing with a powerpoint. Create a presentation that you think is interesting and practice your presentation skills. If you can create a funny, informative and/or useful information layout, you can utilize your presentation skills in a variety of formats.

**3. Expand your media reach-** Most media today are content starved. As the consumers desire for information continues to escalate, margins in a lot of media circles continue to compress. If you advertise with media, an occasional article or Q & A may be possible. You can also use e-mail or social media to reach out to your customers directly with expert advice. Have a strong concept BEFORE talking to different media outlets, but you could have the opportunity to strengthen your brand image and help create usable media content if you create an engaging presentation.

**4. Be opportunistic-** Last week, I got a call from the local Grape Grower's and Wine Maker's conference. Due to weather the first conference speaker had to cancel. Because the individuals associated with the conference had exposure to the Main Street concept, they asked me to step in. Normally, an event presentation with limited preparation time would be a bit nerve racking, but I already had a powerpoint on the topic they wanted me to cover. Keeping some presentation options handy on a hard drive (or flash drive) makes you and your organization a "go to" commodity. In this instance, I was very happy to help out a fantastic conference, and I got the opportunity to expose 100 new people to the Main Street development strategy.

**5. Update, update, update!!!-** Times change, businesses change and trends change. To keep relevant and entertaining, you must continually update your material. Continue to do research and write down ideas. Encourage your staff to do in-business training for other staff members on topics of interest and expand those presentations to meet the needs of different target audiences. As an expert, your relationship with the outside world is dynamic, and you can only maintain your "expert" status if you continue to adapt to the world around you.

Each time you do a presentation, contract your expertise with media or do an outreach with your customers you strengthen your brand. Your inventory is more than pencils, computers, desks and chairs. Utilize your intellectual inventory and grow your brand in 2010!.

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