

10

Don't Be BLAH!

WAYS TO STAND OUT IN THE MARKETPLACE AND BE ANYTHING BUT BORING

1. TURN IT SIDWAYS.

If everyone does it vertically, turn yours sideways. If everyone else is sideways, well, make yours vertical. Remember, the more two things are alike, the more important every tiny difference becomes, and the more impact it can have on setting you apart.

2. CONNECT BEFORE YOU CONVINC.

People don't care about you or your business. They care about themselves. Instead of describing your experience, product or service and focusing on how great you are, connect to something they care about (which isn't you.) Focus on what they want, not what you do.

3. CHANGE YOUR VOICEMAIL.

Don't give instructions. We know what the beep is for and what to do when we hear it. People are so used to hearing the same boring greeting that even a slight variation will have a huge impact. No sales pitches, though. You want them to WANT to talk to you when you return that phone call.

4. TOSS YOUR TYPEFACE.

If you're using Times Roman or Arial, you look like eleventy million other emails, proposals, resumes and companies out there. Computers come with plenty more. Pick one. This one, by the way, is Trebuchet. Pick only one—not a cornucopia of script and serifs and sanserifs and icons. Pick one.

5. HAVE A CONVERSATION.

The best marketing sounds and feels like a conversation. A letter from a good friend. Not a term paper or spec sheet. Be conversational in all your marketing messages. Read what you wrote out loud. It should sound natural. Think dialogue, not monologue and practice what you're going to say.

6. USE INTRIGUE.

Don't be so obvious or expected that people know what you're going to say in your marketing materials. If they can "get it" in a glance, they can toss it just as fast. Make them wonder, spark their curiosity. That's why it's called the "power of the reveal," because it is, indeed, powerful.

7. HAVE A PERSONALITY.

Your company has a personality, a unique "voice," if you'll let it come through. It's the single most effective way you can stand out from your competition, and if you're in a we-all-look-alike category, it's the only thing.

8. EXPAND YOUR DEFINITION.

Marketing is not something you "do." As in brochures, ads, publicity, mailings. Marketing is anything that helps or hinders the sale or use of your product or service. Anything. When you look at it that way, you'll find plenty of things you can "do" to improve your marketing.

9. BRING YOUR BENEFITS TO LIFE

Benefits attract. Features or attributes repel. A flower does not attract a bee with a long list of pollen attributes. "Attract" means to not just "draw the eye," (or ear) but to please it, as well. Convert a feature into a benefit by asking "why is [feature] important, personally, to my target audience or decision maker." And keep on asking it, until you have a list of wants and needs that mean something to the prospect.

10. BE BRAVE.

What would you do if you weren't a _____? What would you do if you were brave? Go for it.

TERRI LANGHANS, CSP speaks to business audiences who want to stand out and get better results in the marketplace—right now. She's known for packing her programs with plenty of laughs, powerful insights, specific strategies and tangible tools people can use right away to be more effective less ordinary. Terri is the author of the book *The 7 Marketing Mistakes Every Business Makes and How to Fix Them*, and is the former CEO of a national ad agency and marketing firm she started from scratch and sold to a Fortune 100 company. As a Certified Speaking Professional, she is one of only 201 women worldwide to have earned the designation awarded by the National Speakers Association and Internat'l Federation of Speakers. Call or click: Terri@BlahBlahBlah.us
Speaking: www.BlahBlahBlah.us 1:1 Marketing: www.MaverickMarketing.com (800) 207-0015

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