



Ask Yourself the **Why** Before the **How**

by Diane Bridgwater

Is this you? You created a flier to announce your product or service, then maybe you decided a tri-fold brochure might be better....wait, that didn't work, so you created a website from a template you found online but no one found you, so you got frustrated and decided that marketing your business was a lot of time and money with no financial rewards? Does this sound like what you might be doing?

If you are a small business owner who never created a budget for marketing your product or service, you probably are spinning your wheels on a variety of tools that you hope drives some customers to you, right? We've all done it, even me! When we have no cash, how can one expect to spend money on professional design or marketing services, right? Well, you must know your marketing message and have a plan before you market to customers. There are two critical points you have to do if this is all you do.

#1: Can you define your ideal customer... in detail?

First, write down who your ideal customer is? Be specific. If you can't answer this question, then why are you spending any money on creating marketing pieces? Why put more time and energy into something that doesn't give you any return? Understanding **FIRST** who your ideal client is has to be done before you set off on creating that flier or brochure or even your website.

Without knowing who is going to buy from you, only creates frustration because you aren't communicating your message to them. Remember not everyone who breathes will be buying from you. Visualize who this person is. Is it a woman, man, teen? What is their age range, where else would they shop at? Think demographics, specifics and emotional ties. If you are a travel agent, your customer might be parents with 2 kids, ages 7-10 years old and who are working crazy hours, looking for some time for themselves and stuff for the

kids to do in a safe environment, so why not promote a Disney cruise to this customer. By knowing your customer, you can target your marketing tools to them and get results.

#2: Define your marketing message

Do you know what a marketing message is? It is a statement keeping you focused on what you want to communicate to your ideal customer, and the direction of your marketing efforts so that you can apply this to every tool you use to market your product or service. You want it to portray a positive message to your customer and you repeat this message over and over again.

One way to do this is by delivering this marketing message using a tag line that is repeated on all your marketing materials. For example, think "Just Do It" by Nike, we know what that marketing message is and who it's from. Or what about "Got Milk", who did that campaign? Your marketing message might also encompass visual messages, like colors, photos, and words. Your marketing message is one of the key ingredients to your success in your marketing efforts. If you don't have your marketing message, stop reading this and write it down now!

These two simple steps are the first you should be spending your time on. Without knowing this, you waste valuable time and energy on creating a flier, brochure, business card, website or any marketing piece that you

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Asking the Why Before the How continued

are trying to draw customers to you. I encourage you to spend your valuable time on these two steps now, then print it out in big fonts and post it near your computer or on a wall you look at often. Know these two steps inside and out, then go back to your marketing piece and ask yourself if this tool is answering the two questions of 1) is this targeted to my ideal customer and 2) is it expressing

my marketing message...if the answer is no, it's time to reevaluate if that is the best tool to use.

So don't get caught up in the **Wow** before you know the **Why**, and the **Who** if you answer the why and the who first, the wow is sure to follow.



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Author of the book, *Demystifying Graphic Design – How to Successfully Work with Your Graphic Designer*, and co-authored with Gina O'Daniel is available for purchase at http://www.vizcomdesign.com/Order_My_Book_.html.

Diane has 20 years as a brand strategist and graphic designer who is inspired to guide solopreneurs to use their marketing dollars wisely toward the right initiatives generating quality results and getting the biggest bang for their buck. Working together with her clients, she takes them step by strategic step to build a bold brand that stands above the noise and attracts the results her clients need in business now.

She owns and operates Visual Communication (www.vizcomdesign.com) and SpeakerPublisher (speakerpublisher.com) and has worked with small to large corporations. Her mission is to help demystify working with graphic designers and help educate small business professionals get the most out of their budgets by creating the best marketing tool that attract their ideal clients and communicate their marketing message. For more information or to schedule your Design Strategy Session with Diane today, contact her directly at diane@vizcomdesign.com.



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