



## Marketing Messages

### MARY CHARLESON

#### *Why you need to create a personal marketing plan*

Despite the persistent flip-flops for some, summer is officially over. The kids, and even some of us, are back in school. There's a general feeling of newness and enthusiasm in the air that greets us in the fall. What better time to assess, reflect and plan for change? Although many of us are familiar with the idea of creating a marketing plan and strategy for clients or products, the idea of a marketing plan for ourselves seems foreign. But when you think about it, shouldn't you have a plan to market and sell what you do best in the marketplace?

If you were selling a new product or service, you wouldn't focus exclusively on what it had done for others in the past, you would tell people what it could do for them in the future. You'd create value. You'd create desire. You'd make people want to have it. And if you were selling against a competitor, you'd seek out market intelligence and know how to best position your product or service in the marketplace. The same principles apply to your own personal marketing strategy.

**Minto Roy, President and CEO of Premier Career Management Group** advocates a different approach to career management. PCMG, far from the traditional career placement agency, offers a unique blend of personal coaching and personalized matching of companies with business problems to the resources their clients are able to apply. PCMG actively seeks out businesses with needs. "They may not say they're hiring, but almost everyone has problems they need solved." PCMG simply helps people position their talents to create future value for prospective employers. Then they coach them on how to sell their features and benefits. Roy says, "Our clients have better market preparation, and in a one hour interview, they're better prepared to win the race." Although many of PCMG's clientele are new immigrants, the model they use can be applied everyone - at any stage of their career.

If you're looking for employment, instead of relying on a resume of what you have done, research the companies you want to work for and present them with a plan to solve a problem. Same thing applies if you are underemployed or looking for advancement with your current company. Know how to position yourself in the marketing place. Create value. Know your competitive advantage and the distinct features that make you unique and desirable. Then position those features in your competitive environment. Here are the issues to address in your personal marketing plan.

**1. Your environmental analysis:** Look at competitive forces around you. Assess the economic, political, regulatory, technological and sociological influences in your industry.

**2. Your target market:** Look at the demographics and psychographics of the people and companies you want to reach. Who are they? Where are they? What is their personality?

**3. Your marketing objective:** Do a personal SWAT analysis. Look at strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats. Match your strengths and opportunities, and convert your weaknesses and threats.

**4. Your personal marketing mix:** Decide who you are as a product. If you were a brand, what would you stand for and how would you make people feel? Know what you can offer that nobody else can. Decide what it will cost for an employer to hire you. Know where you will be seeking opportunities and how you will promote yourself.

**5. Implementation:** Organize your approach, responsibilities, and timetable for completion of your goals.

**6. Evaluation and control:** Set your own performance standards and financial goals. Monitor your progress. Know when to ask for change or advancement and know when to move on.

Having a personal marketing plan means taking control and responsibility for your own success. We do it for products and services all the time. Make now the time to do it for yourself.

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