

The Three-R's of Consultant Marketing (1-1-14) (How to Market Yourself as a Consultant)

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Startup consultants have valuable expertise, but most are unskilled in the methods, tools, and arts of Marketing. They may have marketed for a large organization, but much that marketing isn't useful for solo consultants. They usually don't have money and resources for advertising campaigns and mass mailing. Independent consultants must find cost-effective ways to have impact on prospective clients.

Consultants sell ***their own solutions*** to a client's problem or situation, not the well-known services of larger organizations. So, how might prospective clients gain a reasonable degree of confidence in a consultant? Three major factors drive their hiring decision (along with cost): **Reputation, Recommendations, and Relationships**. Here's how you can build the "Three-R's" of Consultant Marketing.

Reputation

Build your reputation by being recognized as an expert in your field. Acquire recognition from credible people in the form of testimonials, endorsements, media interviews, awards, advanced degrees, etc. Further develop ***credibility*** by speaking, training, writing, publishing, posting, etc. These all help you establish a reputation as "knowing your stuff".

Recommendations

Ask people who know your work to recommend you to potential clients. When they cite specific benefits, they enhance your esteem in the eyes of a prospect. They have additional impact because they risk ***their*** reputation when they recommend you. Clients, managers, et.al., who give details about your skills and results, help convince a prospect that you're the "real thing", and worth a try. Notable people who endorse your value can nudge a prospect to hire you.

Relationships

Prospects are more apt to hire consultants they know, respect and trust. You build relationships in many ways, but personal contact is best. Follow up with attendees after giving presentations and training sessions. Network in-person at (and after) professional events (connecting on LinkedIn helps). Volunteer in professional organizations - this can put you working along with potential clients and people who can connect you. (Plus, you can showcase your talent while you volunteer. I've acquired paid strategy facilitating for Boards of Directors as a result of doing it pro-bono for my professional organizations. The trust I built while volunteering was a major factor in hiring me).

How Should You Start?

You can learn to market yourself as a consulting entrepreneur. Start with methods that suit your personality and skills. Learn others as needed.

- If you write well, but don't like speaking to groups, write a newsletter or articles.
- Post to blogs & social media groups like LinkedIn.
- Attend events to network with potential clients or people who can connect you.
- Display your professional skills and benefits on your website & LinkedIn.

Try ***combinations*** of marketing methods that work for you, and ***be persistent*** (always be marketing). It will pay off with consulting projects. Remember to build the "Three-R's".

Take the opportunity to learn how to Market Yourself as a Consultant at the February 2014 **MCC / RPCN Consulting Business Boot Camp** at Monroe Community College. Successful consultants show you what works for them. Go to www.RochesterConsultants.org home page, and click on "Boot Camp, Get More Info".

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