

TOP 5 WAYS TO DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF FROM THE COMPETITION

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As competition increases and the market seems to be recovering in fits and spurts, it is time to step back and evaluate whether your marketing and sales strategies are raising your brand to primetime. Beat the odds and cut through the clutter to realign with the path to success.

Figuring out how to differentiate your company from the competition is critical. Here are 5 tips that will inform how you can build a unique and powerful company brand.

ONE “TABLE STAKES” ANSWERS TO WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT WILL NOT WIN DEALS

- a.** Companies cannot separate themselves by claiming they are different on the basic requirements they must meet to be in business – e.g. price, customer service, expertise.
- b.** Sometimes it’s about “who” the company is and “how” they interact with clients. In crowded markets where parity is rampant the difference between companies can legitimately be about the nuance and the experience in working together. This intangible confidence can give them reason to buy from you – and not from others.
- c.** “People buy from people” – so be sure your best talent is interacting with clients and are equipped with the right answers and the ability to build trust and rapport.

TWO KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- a.** Understand who you are competing with and be ready to articulate how your approach/services are better. Handled properly, the best offense can be a great defense.
- b.** Have a “playbook” or “battle-card” handy to help handle client objections or questions about why another company might address their needs better.
- c.** Live your brand – be clear on what makes you different and demonstrate that as you interact with prospects.

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**THREE
UNDERSTAND ALL
YOUR PROSPECTS
CHOICES TO
ADDRESS THEIR
NEEDS AND WHERE
YOU MAY FIT**

- a.** Often times there are multiple ways to solve their problem – make your approach the better choice – but be prepared to have a point of view for:
 - i.** When a prospect's choice is to do this work themselves.
 - ii.** When they think engaging a well-known brand will provide security and peace-of-mind.
 - iii.** Why they should not break up the tasks and work with several providers.

**FOUR
CREATE AWARENESS
TO DRIVE DEMAND**

- a.** “Best kept secrets” never win the deals – you have to promote who you are and what you do to your key audiences and influencers to get invited to opportunities.
 - b.** Don't be intimidated to share what makes you different – some of our clients have said that they don't want to share what makes them different externally because they fear being copied. Our response is “so you want to promote yourselves just like your competition?” If so, you will position yourself just like them and the buyers will approach you like you're a commodity – they may just buy on price or speed – without understanding what they are missing the value you could provide them.
- There are absolutely ways to share what makes you different without putting your value proposition at risk.

**FIVE
COVER ALL BASES
BY COMMUNICATING
THROUGH ALL
CHANNELS**

- a.** Get your value proposition, top 3-5 messages and expertise out into the marketplace consistently and compellingly through all outreach channels:
 - i.** Online – your website, partner channel's websites, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Pay Per Click (PPC), interactive/social media, and community building
 - ii.** Offline – Marketing, events (targeted and trade), public relations, select advertising, etc.
 - iii.** Sales – in person rapport, trust and integrity that you live your brand and its differentiation
 - iv.** Employees – internal communication programs so everyone understands and can repeat who you are, what you do, and what makes you different.
 - v.** Community – goodwill, charity and other efforts to share prosperity.