

small business **BiG BRAND**

**Get noticed
Get more business**



CAROLYN STAFFORD



CAROLYN STAFFORD IS AUSTRALIA'S LEADING MARKETING EXPERT FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM BUSINESSES.

She is a regular media commentator and has a fortnightly advice column in the Business Network section of *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Her ***Small Business, Big Brand*** series is fast becoming the most well respected marketing program for small business. Carolyn is the Director of Connect, the largest on-line marketing resource for small businesses.

The Author

After 20 years in marketing – much of it at the big end of town – Carolyn says that the past five years working exclusively with small to medium business owners have been the most rewarding.

“Working with small businesses is much more dynamic and interesting. There are no committees deciding if they prefer the blue to the pink and then waiting five months for a decision to be made.”

“The results for small businesses that use smart marketing techniques are immediate. It impacts positively on their bottom line and sets them up for the future. These marketing techniques don't have to be expensive, just creative.”

About this booklet

There are more than one million small businesses in Australia and each share the same challenge: how to get noticed by the right people.

Like our baby green elephant, we want you to stand out and get noticed. She's small but you can't miss her. And she'll get bigger.

The tips in this booklet offer you some fresh new ideas to change the way you think about marketing your business. *Small Business, Big Brand* is for those of you who want practical, down-to-earth marketing strategies that work without breaking the bank. These extracts from the book of the same name (to be released in December 2006) give you a taste of what's to come.

Feel free to pass it on and share it with other business owners. It can also be downloaded as an e-book from our website at www.connectnetwork.com.au

Happy marketing!



Carolyn Stafford

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Get a name people will NEVER, EVER forget

WHAT'S IN A NAME? A LOT. IT CAN BE SOMETHING THAT TRULY STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD LIKE HELL'S PIZZA, BOOST, SUPERWOMAN, SHEDRIVES, POW WOW EVENTS OR BOW WOW MEOW (ALL REAL BUSINESS NAMES) OR IT CAN BE DULL AND BORING LIKE JOHN SMITH & ASSOCIATES.

Sorry, to the many lawyers and accountants out there who have creatively named their business after themselves, but it's not really knocking my socks off. It doesn't tell me what you do and if, like most people, you have trouble remembering names then how can you expect others to remember your business name?

I know there are many examples of hugely successful big businesses that have used their name and are now household brands: Coles, Myer, David Jones - to name a few. But they have invested millions, and billions, of dollars on brand building over many years to achieve household status.

As a small business you don't have that kind of money, so by getting a knock out name like Superwoman you can define your whole marketing and communications strategy, generate a cool brand personality and create huge enthusiasm among your people and your clients - all without having to break the bank.

Now take everything I have said above, toss it around and make your own assessment.

Whatever you do and whatever your name, one thing is critical, you must love it! Oh and whilst I am not going to go into the details of protecting your brand name, make sure you do it. Anyone know a good lawyer?

Case study 01

Superwoman & Tim Harrison

03

Tim Harrison owns Superwoman, a business that specialises in complete financial planning services for - you guessed it - women. Over the next ten years Tim sees the Superwoman brand expanding to include health, travel and real estate. And he's talking *world-wide*.

Before Superwoman, Tim had worked as a financial planner, specialising in advice and support to female workers in a range of health-focused occupations. When superannuation became more flexible and attractive in 2005, he and his wife realised there was a ready market for women who wanted to make the most of their financial position, but felt patronised, disenfranchised and intimidated by financial planners.

"So it was a natural fit. Super and Woman," Tim said.

Eventually securing the brand name (and not without some tenaciousness and heartache along the way) Tim opened Superwoman for business in 2005 and is about to celebrate her 1st birthday.

"Our female clients are completely loyal to the brand," he said.

"Subconsciously the Superwoman brand has developed her own momentum and given us an opportunity to create an organisation that will become Australia's largest female on-line community.

"Women find the name and the concept of Superwoman hugely empowering. They are taking control of their own financial destiny. The staff and I feel passionate about working, interacting and supporting other women. We all love the brand, and have absolute faith and conviction that Superwoman, as a brand and a business, has longevity," he said.

"The name "Superwoman" is not just one dimensional. It works on such a range of levels – superannuation for women, independence, 21st Century, mother, sister, wife, someone we know, yourself. We all know a superwoman."

Stop wasting your money on ADVERTISING

OUCH! ADVERTISING AGENCIES WILL HATE ME FOR THIS ONE.

Think back to the last time you watched television. What was the last advertisement you saw? Did it inspire you to get off the couch and buy whatever it was being advertised? Maybe you didn't see the ad because you were channel surfing or in the kitchen? Do you even watch TV?

I really don't believe all money spent on advertising is wasted, particularly if it's of the online variety. My main point here is that the traditional ways of advertising (TV, print and radio) no longer cut it on their own.

In the past when consumer choice was limited, many brands were built on the power of advertising on TV. But over time the power of the television advertisement has been eroded by new media. You only have to take your lead from the big guys to see how major organisations such as Channel Nine, News Limited and Fairfax have embraced the internet. Channel Nine and MSN. Channel 7 and Yahoo. Even YouTube has a big media partnership.

All of this is, of course, is great news for you, because you probably don't have the big budgets needed to produce and air the stuff anyway. If you've tried, and tired, of the old ways of advertising and they're not working, start looking for new ways to market your business.

If you are still committed to traditional advertising methods, here are a few tips to make your ads work:

- Make sure you have an unbelievably compelling offer in the first place
- Get specific on your target markets and advertise in the niche media your customers read, watch or listen to
- Get a knock-out headline (70% of your effort should be spent on this alone)
- Write compelling copy that is response driven and incites action NOW!
- Include coupons, website addresses, 1300 numbers and more
- Test a few small ads with different headlines then measure which one is getting the best response, and only then run some bigger ads
- Use at least four other marketing tactics (such as google adwords, editorials, tele-marketing or direct mail) to work in tandem with your advertising.

Case study 02

Future Exploration Network & Ross Dawson

06

Ross Dawson is a globally recognised business strategist and authority on the future of technology and business. He is a best selling author and international keynote speaker.

Ross is a firm believer that there are plenty of ways to market your business without using 'old hat' advertising techniques. His 'Future of Media Summit' was a highly successful, high profile, sell-out event that relied on a whole host of marketing activities other than advertising.

So how did he market it? He produced an enticing brochure and mailed it to his highly targeted data-base. He formed alliances with more than 20 other companies, industry associations and suppliers to market the event to their clients via printed invitations and on their websites.

He invited media identities and high-profile industry experts to be involved on the panel discussions (thus ensuring him very strong media coverage both before and after the event). He built a knock-out website and ran a series of email campaigns and got blogging about the event. He also offered a free ground-breaking report available in print format and online.

"The summit itself was just the beginning of our marketing efforts and it really positioned us as the global experts in the future trends for online media," said Ross. As a consequence Ross and his team have become the "go-to" organisation for comment on trends and issues.

"The response to the summit was overwhelming. Within two months of the event we had over 20,000 downloads of our 'Future of Media' report – and it has generated online discussion in five different languages across more than 20 countries. We've had media coverage all over the planet, and we keep on getting interview requests," said Ross.

Ross says his two biggest marketing success factors were the report and his own blog.

"The information we provided in our reports, on our website and in my blog were invaluable and gave real insights into the industry. People were hungry for it," he said.

Get DEEP & NARROW - target a niche market

MANY BUSINESSES ATTEMPT TO CAST THEIR NET FAR TOO WIDE WHEN TRYING TO HAUL IN NEW BUSINESS.

They market to anyone who will listen and define their ideal client simply as someone who has a pulse, is breathing and has a bank account (size not important)! Very dangerous tactics. Why? Because it means you'll end up with a whole heap of customers who only buy once, who want the cheapest price possible and who you don't even want as customers in the long run. Sometimes it pays to be narrow and deep and to focus on markets where you have a real opportunity to stand out from the competition and to cement your position as the leader in your field.

Here are some examples of niche markets:

- A photographer who specialises in photography of buildings for architects and building companies
- A financial planner who becomes an expert in serving the English expatriate market or fine art investors
- A drycleaner who offers a free shirt pick up and delivery service to executives within a five kilometre radius
- A hairdresser who specialises in serving the elderly and does home visits
- A lawyer with expertise and experience in the advertising and entertainment industry
- A fashion retailer who focuses on petite women by having the best selection of petite shoes and clothing in the country

Operating in a niche market or markets (some businesses have up to three or four niche markets) helps define your real point of difference from the competition. Your marketing campaigns and promotions will become much more compelling and targeted and deliver a much higher strike rate.

This tip isn't for every business, but it's definitely worth considering. If you are going to do this, you need to be sure that you can deliver a compelling offer and that there are enough potential clients in the market you are after to ensure an abundance of customers for years to come.

Case study 03

Flying Solo & Robert Gerrish

09

Robert Gerrish is Australia's best known and most-loved expert for solo professionals. He helped coin the term 'solopreneur' which applies to business owners who operate on their own with no employees. Robert has co-authored a solo-specific book, *Flying Solo – How to go it alone in business*, is a sought-after speaker and has more than 11,600 subscribers to his weekly newsletter.

"Committing to the development of a niche has undoubtedly been the best single marketing initiative I have ever taken. Once I made the decision to focus on my niche it was remarkable how quickly circumstance began to lend a hand," said Robert.

"In every paper I picked up, in every magazine or book I read, I found topics of relevance to my new audience. It was akin to choosing a new car: once you decide on the model and colour, you're acutely aware of other road-users who've made the same choice.

"I realise now that these observations helped accelerate my knowledge of my target audience. In no time I was comfortable as a solo business expert and what's more I was being treated like one."

A number of business magazines approached Robert to write articles directed to his niche - exposure that led to a steady flow of clients to his coaching business. He began speaking to audiences of solo business owners at meetings and events and this too created more business opportunities.

As his profile grew so did his appeal as a media commentator. Appearances on ABC's *Four Corners* and Channel 9's *A Current Affair* did wonders for his profile, helped generate a publishing deal from Allen & Unwin and truly confirmed for him, the value of developing a niche.

Get a great website NOW

THERE IS SIMPLY NO EXCUSE IN THIS DAY AND AGE NOT TO HAVE A KNOCK-OUT WEBSITE.

Yet how often have you seen websites with holding pages that look like they have been up for years saying 'coming soon' or horribly designed sites that a primary school child would be ashamed to have built? Potential clients searching for products or services on the internet are skipping you in favour of the company that has an attractive website with relevant information that is easy to get around.

Now if you have a great site, and there are literally thousands out there, congratulations. You are well on the way to having a fabulous one.

Getting a great site need not be expensive and there are many web developers out there offering template designs from as little as a few hundred dollars for a simple 'brochureware' site (that means a site that has very limited functionality, if any, and is really just an online brochure).

If that's all you need and you're not ready to embrace everything that new technology has to offer, then that's fine. Beware though, absolutely every business has the potential to open up new markets and create huge revenue online, so don't just dismiss the idea.

On the other hand, if you want a site that brings in direct revenue, then you need to consider what you have to sell, who you are targeting and whether they are likely to buy your products online. Some products will just never sell online because people have to touch and feel the product before they make the decision to buy.

Consider what people buy online today and every single day: airline tickets, tickets to events, subscription products, ebay items, groceries and much more. Where does your product or service fit into the equation? Could it be sold on line?

Regardless of whether you decide to sell your products or services online there's a number of things you must do to make your website a new business magnet. Here are some of my top tips:

- Attract subscribers to your e-news by offering regular, free and valuable information that they simply can't refuse
- Make sure you have a 'make this your homepage', 'send to a friend' and 'subscribe' button on your site
- Provide a resource library with articles and links to other sites that provide complementary and valuable information
- Provide a secure login section on your site where customers can put in their personal code and access private information
- Run opinion polls and surveys on your site
- Set up reciprocal links with other sites
- Get into e-commerce and set up shopping carts for people to buy product from you (yours and other businesses with a good fit)
- Get your website ranked in the search engines
- Invest in online advertising such as google adwords

Down to Action

Think about your website as a new business magnet then look at the checklist and see what's missing from your website. Check out your competitors' websites and other sites you like. Can you do better? List your ideas, develop a plan and then find the best website developer to help.

Case study 04

Dynamic Small Business Network & Maria Lambides

Maria Lambides is a smart business woman. She has built an online business that is one of the most valuable resources a small business could ever need. DSBN is a one-stop resource addressing the essential needs of small business. With a national membership-based network, DSBN brings together a wide range of tangible benefits and services for small businesses such as significant savings on your telecommunications, office supplies, computer hardware, travel, accommodation, access to online legal services and even discounts on car purchases.

If you visit her site you will see that Maria has practiced every one of the hints outlined above and then some! To achieve online business success, Maria continually innovates to offer members new benefits, services and tools and valuable business information.

“Listen and respond to the market” has been Maria’s philosophy. DSBN is continually evolving with new benefits coming online almost monthly as it is driven by market demand”.

DSBN has one of the most highly regarded and well read e-newsletters around and they’ve developed a strong following and readership.

“The key to our online success is that we don’t bombard our readers with advertising. We focus on maintaining the integrity of our e-newsletters by providing not only great product but valuable information, articles and tools to help people build an outstanding business.

“After every newsletter we get lots of emails or phone calls from people saying how valuable they find the information and lots of new subscribers because people pass on the newsletter. Our subscribers appear to read them religiously,” said Maria.

Another key to her success is the long list of alliance partners she has established who either market the DSBN offering to their clients or who act as suppliers providing their services to her members.

Although the end user for DSBN is small business, an integral part of Maria’s strategy was to build a website that had the appropriate look and feel that would also attract the big end of town. Maria has attracted attention from many big companies looking to work with DSBN to support their small business clients.

If you don't have a POD (point of difference), GET ONE

POINT OF DIFFERENCE – OK, THIS SOUNDS LIKE A BIT OF THEORY CREEPING IN HERE, BUT YOU HAVE TO HAVE A POINT OF DIFFERENCE TO MAKE YOURSELF STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD.

Without being able to show customers how different (and better) you are to your competitors then you are just treading on each others' toes. A point of difference will mean you are standing on your competitors' shoulders.

So what's your point of difference? It's not really hard to get one. You just need a bit of creativity and to know that it is something that people really value. It will also help if it's something so powerful that it gets your customers talking about you and referring you more customers.

- If you run an Italian restaurant maybe your pasta dishes could be delivered by singing Italian waiters.
- If you are an accounting practice maybe you could run educational seminars to help clients understand the financial mechanics of a profit and loss
- If you are a graphic designer maybe you could provide 48 hour turn-around on jobs at a premium price.
- If you are a GP maybe you could ring your patients a week after they've been in to see you, just to see how they're doing.
- If you are a roadside fruit vendor selling apples your points of difference could be: "Picked fresh today", "Pick your own", "Free apple recipes with each bucket" or even a loyalty program.

It is not hard to find a point of difference but once you've got one, exploit it and flog it for all it's worth.

There are a myriad of companies who have created a point of difference and use this as their sole marketing strategy to capture their market and increase their profile.

Real estate agencies highlight their local knowledge. Private health insurance companies promote the extras they offer – gym memberships, quit smoking programs, no waiting lists for some conditions etc. Over 55? Then you probably know about the insurance company that targets you. That's their point of difference compared to other insurance companies. Tupperware, one of Australia's largest network marketing companies, has a unique point of difference in that their products come with a lifetime guarantee. Try and get that on the plastic containers you bought at a supermarket.

In some cases the point of difference might just be the price you sell your products for. The highly competitive hardware market has seen windfalls for customers. Why? Well, if you see the same product elsewhere they will take 10 per cent off their price.

And what about service stations where someone will fill up your car, check the tyres and fill the radiator? And I'm not harking back to the halcyon days of the 1970s when that was what you expected to happen at the service station. They still exist in a few places and while they charge more, they clearly have a point of difference to the major service stations. Their major clients? Female and the elderly.

Buying a new fridge? Then you probably want the salesperson to say they will take your old one away for free. Buying a new computer? Great, where's the six month, 24 hour troubleshooting service or the inclusion of delivery and set-up?

In the beauty business? Sending birthday cards to clients with a discount on their next appointment could be the difference between the customer calling you and not your competitor. A personal printout of skin type, suitable products and a cleansing routine – on your letterhead – becomes a ready reference for your clients, is unlikely to be thrown in the bin and when they need to make a new appointment they know where to find your number.

Profile: Elena Reed - Evolutzia

ELENA REED WAS WORKING FROM HER HOME STUDIO AT MENAI GENERATING BUSINESS MAINLY THROUGH LETTER BOX DROPS AND KNOCKING ON DOORS.

After attending a Connect Network breakfast and a session with Carolyn Stafford, Elena realised that she was in urgent need of a marketing overhaul.

"My business was called Image Affair and one of the issues that Carolyn and I talked about was the importance of getting the name and the brand of the business right – and I knew I could do better.

"I worked with Carolyn intensely over a short period of time and completely re-branded my business. Carolyn's professionalism and expertise gave my business a true image makeover.

"After redefining my target markets, I renamed the business "Evolutzia" which means evolution in Russian. Together with Carolyn, we developed professional marketing campaigns and worked on my promotional materials".

Elena is now a sought after speaker and a workshop facilitator. She helps companies and individuals to develop their personal and professional presence through colour, style and etiquette.

"I've moved my business from my home studio in Menai to a beautiful professional studio at Westfield Bondi Junction. Without Carolyn's direct input and support I would not be where I am today."

Visit Elena Reed at Evolutzia at
Suite 1701, Level 17, Westfield Plaza, Bondi Junction,
at elena@evolutzia.com.au or on (02) 9369 5553

About Connect

CONNECT IS AUSTRALIA'S LEADING PROVIDER OF MARKETING SERVICES TO THE SMALL TO MEDIUM ENTERPRISE MARKET - A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR BUSINESSES LOOKING FOR MARKETING SUPPORT.

Seminars, monthly networking events, consulting, marketing advice hotline, tools and information, specialist marketing services, keynote speakers and a range of **Small Business, Big Brand** products.

Visit www.connectnetwork.com.au to find out how Connect can help and subscribe to our newsletter full of FREE marketing information, tools and tips to help you market your business and MAKE MORE MONEY.

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