

SUM OF ITS PARTS

"Saltwater taffy, for example, does not taste good. Seagulls are not pleasant birds. Most people look better in clothes – a lot of clothes. But it works. The beach is the ultimate triumph in setting." –from the article, Sea and Be Seen What does this have to do with marketing professional services? A lot. Just like saltwater taffy, seagulls, and under clothed people, any one thing done in isolation to market your professional services won't work. When you take the sum of its parts, marketing works. Let's take an easy example: networking. Done in a vacuum, networking is just a "part." Without ways to sustain a new contact's attention, build their trust, or keep in touch – the other "parts" of your whole – you spend far more time and energy drumming up business than if you had other aspects of your marketing "machine" doing a lot of the work for you. Let's get specific. The biggest mistake I see is when people go out, network (or make cold calls, or send direct mail pieces), is that they simultaneously scare prospects off with an anemic poorly-messaged website, no value-adding resources to build your prospect's confidence, and new contacts that vanish into thin air because there's no systematic way to stay in front of them that's affordable and effective. The same "in isolation" principle applies to other marketing "parts." * If you invest in telemarketing, but send new leads to a lousy website (even if you don't send them there, they'll look you up), you're shooting yourself in the foot. * If you're a master at churning out brilliant weekly e-newsletters, but haven't "packaged" your services into a range of ways potential clients can buy from you, you're missing the point of using an e-zine as a smart promotional tool. * If you go to all of the time and effort to get booked as a speaker, then run around preparing for and delivering your talks, you'll get nothing but a nice ego boost and applause unless you target the right audiences and hit them with "What in it for Me?" messages. All of that time, money and energy wasted... but not if you pay attention to the sum of your parts! To avoid wasting your resources and to make the most of your individual marketing efforts, make sure you have all of these parts working together: * Positioning that sets you apart from others offering a similar service. From your target audiences' perspective, what makes you different? Why should they choose you? * Packaging in the form of a value-packed website that you can send new contacts to, demonstrating your value (again, through their eyes) and building their confidence in you as a good solution to their problem. * Promotion: An easy way to keep-in-touch with contacts and prospects, even if you're using other high-touch tactics, such as follow-up calls and meetings. The point is that not every new contact is a ready-buyer when you first meet. You need to stay on their radar, at least monthly, so that when they're ready to buy, you're there. A monthly e-newsletter or e-zine is the perfect vehicle. * Persuasion: You've got to turn contacts into prospects, prospects into clients, clients into referrers, and so on. Simply setting up sales calls and writing proposals won't do it, though. As any successful sales person knows, there are many moving "parts" to master. You've got to know who the decision makers are, what they're willing to spend, how buying decisions get made, how to stay in control of the selling conversation, and how to ask for referrals, to name a few. * Performance is the one "part" most of us in professional services rely on most – it's how we get referrals and maintain (or tarnish) our reputation in the marketplace. It's the marketing part that keeps me on my toes the most, above any other marketing challenge I take on, including writing this e-newsletter, upgrading my website, closing a sale, or giving a public talk. Why? Because it's all about managing and exceeding client expectations, two very tricky "parts" to master. If this doesn't ring a bell with you, then take this quick quiz to find out what it really takes to master Performance: http://www.turningpointemarketing.com/Is_This_For_You.html In isolation, I'm definitely not a fan of saltwater taffy, seagulls or bathing suits. But in the right setting and working all together, they're part of the most effective vacation I can think of. The sum of its parts works. So too can your marketing.