

# Be a Person of Influence

Who are you and what do you stand for?

We're all exposed to continuous advertising. Yes, it's now continuous (rather than "continual") because it's impossible to escape. You know it. I know it. It's everywhere. And the businesses that are most effective are the ones that have established their brands. Brands are critical to recognition, and recognition is critical to successful advertising.

There has to be something that sets you apart from your competition. Who are you? What is your USP (unique selling proposition)? What's your field of expertise? When people mention your name, what's the first thing they associate with it? No matter what type of business you have, figure out what sets you apart and establishes you as the expert, the go-to person of influence. What do you offer that your competitors don't?

Review your strengths. Review your competitors' weaknesses. By doing so, you'll quickly hone in on your USP and have a clearer sense of your brand.

When you figure out who you are, speak up - - boldly, confidently, and continuously promote yourself to your customers and prospects. As you define who you are and build your brand, the goal is to have it linked, so that if someone says your name, a prospect will say, "Oh yeah, he's the \_\_\_\_ guy," or "She's the one who. . . ." And fill in the blank with whatever your expertise is.

What you stand for is now as important as what product or service you offer. Marketing is more about talking to your customers and prospects, not talking at them. It's all about interactions and building trust. Be honest about who you are, what you stand for and what you offer - - or your customers will see right through you and walk away.