

IT'S OK TO SELL YOURSELF

Wouldn't it be nice if effective small business marketing and self-promotion practices felt natural and authentic? **If** you truly care about your customers, self-promotion deserves your attention.

Many negative connotations typically come to mind when thinking about self-promotion, all of which keep many people from feeling comfortable and confident when talking about themselves. You've heard all the name-calling: conceited, show-off, braggart, arrogant, egotistical.

Maybe you feel that it is inappropriate to promote yourself in any way, especially when you meet new people. Have you ever you met someone who asked about what you do, and watched their look of confusion when you gave them a barely adequate answer, all because you didn't want to seem pushy or conceited?

If you are good at what you do, then it is essential that others know about it. This will help increase your business - and it is not necessary to feel guilty or shy about promoting yourself.

Most people avoid self-promotion out of fear. Know that the fear of being denied what you want is not the same as the fear of rejection. Being told "no" in response to a sales pitch does not signal the end of a relationship. It doesn't have anything to do with accepting or rejecting you as a human being. It doesn't even have anything to do with increasing or decreasing your perceived worthiness. All it means is "No. I do not want what you are offering."

So what do you do if you are uncomfortable promoting yourself? Ask your internal monitor to nudge you when you move away from instead of toward selling or self-promotion. Don't try to change anything yet, just notice. **"Just noticing" will allow you to acknowledge your current attitudes toward selling and self-promotion.** As you become more aware of how avoiding self-promotion keeps you from authentic engagement with your best clients and customers, your reluctance will shift into eagerness to reach and support the people you serve.

The last and perhaps most important issue to realize is that you've earned the right to celebrate your accomplishments. Many times when something great happens to us we can't believe it and we wind up questioning ourselves as to whether or not we deserve it.

Be proud of yourself and your accomplishments. You've earned it and you should share it with others.