

The Famous {5}}

5 things you can do today to change the way
you and your business is perceived



Simply Great Copy Ltd

copywriting for all business communications

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Introduction

Simply Great Copy works with business owners who are increasingly concerned that prospects, customers, investors and others who have an influence on the success of their business are just not getting it - they just don't seem to understand and appreciate what's on offer.

SGC works with them to produce a set of ideas and words that work together with a variety of media, so that the right message gets to the right people at the right time in the right way.

If you're not managing the way you and your business is viewed then be assured that others are and everyone should recognise that sadly you are probably not going to be in the room when people discuss you and your business and make important decisions that can have a dramatic impact.

This short 20 minute read is designed to get you to think about how you and your business is perceived and what you can do right now to improve those perceptions.

These are the 5 key areas you should consider:

1. Reviewing your leadership and management approach
2. Developing a confident and authentic business public speaking style
3. Paying all your debts ahead of time
4. Reviewing the current identity your business relies on
5. Considering your online footprint

Perhaps one or two may not be relevant to you, but in my recent experience, aspects of all of these should be of interest and concern. Just changing one or two of these within your business will have a positive impact – try them out and let me know what you think. You can contact me direct on **07828 019308** or find out more at www.simplygreatcopy.com

1}

Reviewing your leadership and management approach

If you have employees, please recognise that they can be the most powerful advocates for you and your business, or they can quietly and persistently rubbish you and your business – you decide, it's up to you – but here's the rub; you're paying them anyway.

It never ceases to amaze me that some business owners think that just because they pay a salary to an employee that they don't have to worry about leadership and management style.

Low quality leadership and management indicators include:

- Shouting and being short tempered
- Not having a clear vision of where the business is going
- Telling everyone that things better change or there will be problems – but never making or investing in change
- Going to the pub at lunch time and drinking in the office on a regular basis
- Hiring staff without an induction programme being in place
- Providing a working environment that is dirty, dull, badly ventilated, and badly decorated
- Having cheap and damaged furniture with poor seating
- Not investing in technology until the very last moment and then using poor quality kit and pirated software
- Not paying salaries that are 20% more than the local average
- Not using a simple performance bonus system
- Blaming staff when they leave
- Never praising staff for success – and worse, making out it was down to you when it clearly was not
- Never allowing staff to take the initiative
- Not being in the position to identify clear paths for future growth

High quality leadership and management indicators include:

- Always employing the best people and paying them 20% to 30% more than the local equivalent salary

- Identifying the key performance indicators that employees need to work towards
- Clearly identifying and quantifying the roles and responsibilities of everyone in the organisation
- Creating a really dynamic, pleasant, environment to work in with high quality office furniture
- Always having the best technology and the latest software and a policy to invest in training
- Making sure everyone has a personal development plan
- Investing in team building activities such as professional coaching on business public speaking
- Encouraging employees and financially support them to join networking groups – helping them to create elevator speeches and networking skills
- Arriving early and working hard – not just wandering around getting in the way
- Having a day to day understanding of what needs to be done and who needs to do it
- Delegating – if you can't because your staff do not have the ability then change your staff even it means paying more
- Making every effort to make your employees feel valued and supported
- Using a HR professional at all times
- Making sure you know where you are on the plan and always refer back to the plan you are currently using
- Creating and approving a set of vision and mission statements and make sure they are publicly visible
- Never threatening staff with dire consequences without being in apposition to identify the way forward to better times

I think you get the picture.

You and your business can either have employees that are advocates or, for the same money, you can have employees who will consistently damage you and your business.

And if you run a larger business – take a long hard look at your General Manager or line managers and start to ask yourself. are they an asset or a huge liability?

2}

Developing a confident and authentic business public speaking style

So, you get the call from the local Chamber of Commerce to speak at the next lunchtime meeting. Does it fill you with dread or do you accept with enthusiasm?

Fact is that very little can compare for creating and managing the way you and your business is perceived than standing up in front of 200 business people and making a great impression.

Now what usually happens is that you decline or find a way of never being asked in the first place.

But if you took a day out of your schedule and parted with a few hundred pounds, you could find yourself with the ability to stand up and deliver all types of business public speeches.

Remember how you felt about a speaker who intrigued and educated you; you may have been a little envious of their ability to get up and capture the imagination of the audience – well let me reassure you that in 99% of the cases, their ability was learnt and was the result of knowledge and practice.

You can do it – a little courage and some professional help and you will have the confidence to be able to stand up and make a great impact.

Imagine how you will feel when you suddenly realise you have people actually listening and perhaps even making notes. Imagine how great it will feel to know that you are creating such a positive perception of yourself and your business.

Or you could just make the classic excuse – I've got a client meeting on that day.

You could just give up the opportunity because you are scared. Well OK then - carry on being scared and let a competitor take the stage and make all the headway – what does it matter we are only half way through a recession!

Seriously – get yourself some skills in this area and you will discover so much about yourself and a really powerful way of promoting your business.

I recommend Vanessa Ugatti – you can contact her on **07957 672335** or find out more at **www.watchoutworld.co.uk**

3 } Paying all your debts before they are due

I can assure you nothing damages your personal reputation more and undermines the good standing of your business than paying your bills late.

I personally will not work for certain companies because they have a reputation as bad payers and when I meet the owners, I listen politely but am keen to move on.

And it's such a stupid thing to do financially. I recently asked how much extra interest an owner made by hanging on to the odd thousand for a few extra days – it transpired that he actually received no income as his current account was non-interest bearing – he did it in the hope that the other company might go bust and he would not have to pay: in other an individual not to do business with.

I try to pay all my debts within 5 days.

If for any reason it's later than that, I phone and apologise.

And I am not alone; I know many businesses that recognise the importance of prompt payment. In fact recently I worked with a web development company who have a policy of paying suppliers within 24 hours. I was so impressed I asked why.

The answer was astounding – they get lower prices because they pay so well, and that has made it possible to increase their margins. On reflection I would lower my cost by 5% if I knew I would be paid in 24 hours.

So please take a long hard look at the way you pay your bills. Just remember how you felt about the individuals who gave you a hard time last month when you tried to get paid – others might be thinking the same about you.

Not only will you improve the way you and your business is perceived, but you will get better terms and better service. If you are concerned that you need the money in first in order to pay an invoice, you can get the client to pay direct and you charge for your time and handling.

If that's not practical then get a part payment up front – but try not to be in a position that means just because you are not paid you have to have your reputation ruined.

4 }

Reviewing the current identity your business relies on

Why not try this little experiment?

Turn to your website and clear your desk.

Now on the desk put down every bit of current marketing communications material or collateral as some people call it.

Hopefully you have a business card, company letterhead, compliment slip, invoice, product or service brochure, proposal wallet folder, sales sheets for each product or service, press release form, order forms, newsletters, P.O.S. items, promotional gifts and even the odd banner or exhibition stand!

Now answer the following questions and be really honest.

1. Does everything look like it comes from the same company?
2. Does it look right or does it look dated and uninspiring?
3. Do you honestly think it represents you, your staff and your business in the best possible way?
4. Or does it look a right mess that adds no value to what you are trying to achieve now and in the future?

The problem is that we are bombarded everyday with high quality branding and top rate marketing communications material so that

anything less than excellent just looks poor. And if you are selling a premium service or product – you need something a bit better than a logo designed by your uncle’s best mate for £30 cash and a few laser printed black and white flyers.

I work with a number of designers who have different specialisms, but for most design requirements check out **Bunny Randall** at **Brandall Design** on **01264 362593** or find out more at www.brandalldesign.co.uk

A good commercial designer will help you to make sure you’re able to promote yourself now and into the future with an identity that is more than just OK. Great design can help you get your message across and create a strong identity. Companies who invest in design always outperform those who rely on an uncle’s best mate.

In addition, working with a designer can provide you with ideas and solutions to communications issues you might be having. There are so many innovative print and other media solutions available, you really need someone to guide you.

Having a professional set of integrated marketing communications material is absolutely essential to managing the way your business is perceived.

5 } Considering your online footprint

A few years ago it didn't matter, but now it does.

A few years ago you could argue it was more about ego, but now it's more about common sense.

A few years ago only geeks did it, but now grannies do it every day.

A few years ago if you couldn't find out about a person or a business it didn't matter – but now it does.

So ignore your online footprint at your peril and consider making sure you have at least the following:

- A company website that has some elements of design and good content. Include educational downloads, links to other useful sites, testimonials, and some form of basic engagement
- A LinkedIn account with a complete profile and as many testimonials you can get
- A personal or company Facebook account

In addition you should consider

- A personal information site see - www.chriscrossland.info
- A personal and or business blog
- A Twitter account either personal or business
- An E-zine account where you can publish White Papers

- A Google + account
- Updated Google profile and a Google Maps presence
- Join in and participate in relevant groups on LinkedIn

The list can go on and on, but frankly you have to get on and get this stuff done and the more disciplined you can be about updating it, all the better.

Does it work, well yes and no. Yes I personally have grown my business because of what people have found on the web, and I know others who generate significant amounts of business through online marketing activity and maintaining a good footprint.

The bigger picture here is that if you don't do this you create doubt in prospects minds about your credibility – some would say that's sad and a poor reflection on society and I would agree – but we have to deal with the reality of how people are making decisions that have a profound impact on us as individuals and the businesses that we run.

So what does your online footprint say about you and your business?

The good news is you can change it today and if you work hard you will be able to leave enough information and evidence in the clouds so that the way you and your business is perceived is enhanced.



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