



Expert Reputation  
Management

I've come to understand that marketing success boils down to an equation:

**Story+relationship+opportunity = profile**

Your story matters because it helps people understand why you do what you do. Your story matters because if people buy into your 'why' it's the basis of their loyalty to you and your products or services.

- Do you know what your story is?
- Do you know how to build a compelling story that people will remember and repeat to others?

Your story isn't a list of the things you do or the features of your products or services. It's about the benefits others receive from what you do. It's about the compelling reason behind your business, the one that gets you out of bed in the morning and keeps you going on those really tough days.

Your story really matters. I can't emphasise this enough. Once you get your story right it will transform everything you do.

Once your customers know your 'why' and have decided whether it's meaningful to them they will be interested in connecting with your brand. Suddenly you're not a cold caller, your a warm contact and the door is ajar. You have an opportunity to build a relationship with them.

This is not the same thing as pushing out content at them. Please don't spam them with a list of the things you do or special deals. Like any relationship, your engagement and communication has to have integrity. It has to mean something. It's based on trust, and it's got to involve a two-way exchange of energy.

If you just spend your time going on about yourself, that's not going to get you very far.

- Find ways to really hear and listen to your customers.
- Find out what they value and need.
- Find ways to show you appreciate them.

Lastly, we need opportunity. Opportunities aren't just what we can see in front of us. They are not only the things that we've seen other people doing. Opportunities are also created by us. There's a vast difference between grasping at ways to be busy and creating the real opportunities that will take your business forward.

- Ask yourself, am I creating an opportunity or a millstone masquerading as an opportunity?

We all know owning your own business takes energy, more energy than we have most of the time. If you're flat tack working in your business it can be hard to lift your head up for long enough to work out what your story is, to have the energy to build new relationships, or to have the ideas you need to create new opportunities.

It's true, it's a commitment at the start. But like the best relationships, if you put the time in to set up solid foundations, you'll reap the benefits.

One last tip: Choose collaborators you want to have around you for the long term. Those lasting relationships with designers, website providers, photographers, and, dare I say it PR people, are worth their weight in gold.