



coolwater creative^{LLC}
web development + graphic design + marketing

“How to Make a Splash in Your Market”

5 tips by Coolwater Creative^{LLC}



As a mission-minded, family-owned business, we know what it's like to be standing on the edge of that proverbial dock with a mission, a vision, a hope.... We know what it's like to dread jumping into the unknown, and to fear sinking. But we also know what it's like to take that exhilarating leap into the big pond again and again.

Starting a new business...Increasing your client base...Creating new products...those are all points of growth that require a leap of faith. They also require logos, brands, websites, brochures, and social media to be successful. Many times, clients jump right into the development of all their marketing materials before they fully understand how to really make a splash.

Before you leap, get a running start! Read these 5 Coolwater Creative steps and make sure your advertising dollars ripple the pond effectively.

1. Know your value

Many businesses know what they do, but have a hard time translating that into a value proposition...for example, a grocery store could say they sell food. (But so does the fast-food chain next door, the gas station, the coffee shop around the corner and the farmer's market).

In reality, the grocery store sells its customers time, freshness, and variety. That's the value proposition for the grocery store...not simply that they "sell food". Customers want food, but they also want time, freshness, and variety. The last two "value propositions" distinguish the grocery store from all the other places that sell food. Do you see the difference?

Reframing your "do" into your "value" is critical in allowing others to catch your vision and to realize the value of your business.

2. Establish your brand

Your brand is like your face. People know you by it. They associate your name with your face. It's what makes you unique and recognizable at-a-glance. It becomes familiar to your friends. It's how they distinguish you from another person.

Most people want their face to look good. Be distinctive. Represent them well... Why? Because everyone looks at your face.

So it is with a brand! Without a brand, your message, products, and services all get lost in the sea of choices, in the droning, loud voice of media. Advertising dollars are wasted. And you get frustrated...asking the question, "Why am I not getting the results I desire?"

3. Maintain your brand identity

So, maybe you've established a solid brand. That's great! However, your brand is only as strong as you keep it. Your logo needs to be seen consistently in order for customers to recognize you.

Taking the "face" example again...if you would disguise yourself (put on makeup, a wig and glasses) people would have a difficult time recognizing you...even your friends might be confused.

Small businesses and non-profits accidentally disguise themselves when they take their company name and use different fonts, colors or even different images or icons in their advertising. This practice hurts their brand! It also hurts their business. It's not good stewardship of advertising dollars. Customers have a hard time recognizing and remembering companies that don't maintain their brand identity.

If you don't have the time to maintain your brand effectively, hire someone who will protect your investment. Understand that brand identity should be created and maintained by people who know how to do it. Invest in that process, and then, listen to them when they tell you how to maintain and protect your investment.

4. Feed your friends

Some of the best marketing is done among friends and affiliates. Once you've followed steps 1-3, look around your circle of influence and start reaching out to the people who know you and like you best. Go back to previous clients or members who enjoyed working with you.

Make alliances with other professionals in your industry or sector. Find someone who does something just a little bit better or differently than you and learn from them. Kindness and generosity always find their way back. So, let go of the scarcity mentality and develop the relationships you already have established.

5. Face your fears

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube are fearful to some folks. The idea of social marketing in general has given some of our clients the willies. It's new (sort of) and different (sort of) and well...just not comfortable for some people.

But, it is comfortable for nearly 250 million people*, for 700 billion minutes* each month. Many of your potential clients, members and associates are there. They are in social media, and you are missing out on a chance to connect and engage your market.

Face your fear of social media and start small by reaching out to online users interactively by using one of the social media channels. Taking the leap into social media may feel scary, but it has proven profitable for many businesses and organizations.

(*) – stats taken from DigitalBuzzBlog (www.digitalbuzzblog.com)

Jump in!

Successful communication of your message requires excellent brand awareness and educated risk taking. Knowing your value proposition, maintaining brand identity, developing affiliate partnerships and overcoming your fears will give you a running start as you begin or refresh your marketing. So, jump in, make a splash and ripple the pond!