

The 10 Commandments of Marketing Yourself

By Mary E. Rauch
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She threw the club when she missed a shot. She stalked off ahead of her threesome when she was disappointed with a put. She talked when others were driving off the tee box.

She critiqued everyone's swing but never said, "Great shot!" And she drank 3 beers on the front nine, 4 on the back, spoke rudely to the cart server, and never gave her a tip.

When we finished the round—all of us relieved we would soon be out of her presence—she handed each of us a business card and suggested we give her a call the next week to discuss possible business alliances.

As we walked to our cars, my friend tossed the card in a trash can and said, "That woman needs to go to marketing school!"

Marketing one's self comes with the territory when we live and breathe in the corporate world. Some have marketing departments, some have marketing degrees, some read marketing books, but I have a basic marketing theory: "Marketing is Behaving Yourself....no matter where you are."

I have observed people kill off their chances to do business with others by simply doing the wrong thing at the wrong time, so I have come up with a simple list of do's and don'ts: The 10 Commandments of Marketing Yourself.

- ❑ 10. Know your alcohol limit...and drink one less
- ❑ 9. Treat all servers with respect and understanding
- ❑ 8. Don't think everyone wants your business card (no one is as interested in your wedding pictures as you are)
- ❑ 7. Extend your business card only after you have established a connection, or sensed an interest, or better yet, are asked for one
- ❑ 6. Don't litter
- ❑ 5. Play by the rules, whether it's golf, racquetball, or tennis
- ❑ 4. Learn a gender neutral, confident handshake and extend it to all
- ❑ 3. Don't dress down on a business flight
- ❑ 2. Save jokes for your good friends and family
- ❑ 1. Don't follow 90 % of what you learn in "Networking Seminars"

To some this might read like a Leticia Baldrige essay on good manners, but that is exactly the point. It is often said that building good relationships drives business, and how do we do that? We treat our customers and clients with respect and courtesy, consistently, so they become loyal advocates of our service or product.

That's the way we market for new customers and clients, as well. We ARE our service or product—whether we are at a conference after hours at a bar, on a golf course participating in a corporate outing, or at a wine-tasting dinner with potential clients.

We instinctively look to see how people act and respond when they are out of their public/corporate zone. Do they live by the principles they pronounce when the bottom line is primary, no matter where they are? If there is inconsistency or a disconnect, we do not allow ourselves to trust their work ethic, dependability, promised results, or true motivation.

Simple commitments can make a world of difference:

- ❑ Make sure you arrive on time for appointments and meetings
- ❑ Use Spell Check on all emails
- ❑ Use caution when forwarding “really funny” email jokes (and when in doubt—don't)
- ❑ Make real and respectful eye contact with everyone in a meeting
- ❑ Eliminate sarcasm and flippancy when communicating with groups and people you do not know well.

Back to our self-centered, rude golfer. If she had followed The 10 Commandments—particularly numbers 10, 9, 8, 7, and 5—she would have a fighting chance to get a callback the following week. But she mistakenly thought she had to market only when she had her suit on.

We really can never relax our professional alertness when marketing ourselves...no matter how many marketing seminars we attend. Marketing ourselves goes back to the most basic premise: who am I and how do I treat people. Only when that question is answered with positive trust will our business cards be kept...and not tossed in the trash can.

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