

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Kristy Short • Sep. 05, 2014

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us



Marketing is all about making a name for your business, and making a name requires telling a great story. You may have the most progressive and unique firm in the

world, but that won't do you a bit of good if you don't know how to convey that to

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

What Makes You Different?

What makes you different could be anything from offering client portals to café-quality coffee in your waiting area. And whether you have a long list of value propositions to share or a unique few, be sure that you are telling people what they are. If *you* don't, who will?

In a profession like accounting, it's important to understand that prospects rarely buy based on cost. It's all about the quality of service. Clients want to know that their financial information is in good, reliable hands. They want more than an accountant; they want a trusted advisor to work with them year-round — providing a clear picture of their financial health, helping them develop a sound tax strategy, and offering guidance.

Really think about what makes your firm different. What do you have going on? The following list offers a few examples of great value propositions that are useful when crafting marketing communications and developing your story.

- **24/7 Document Access.** Portals represent a big value prop. Big! Huge!
- Offering clients round-the-clock access to their financial documents through a secure online system accelerates the convenience factor, and clients love that. Your clients are busy people so the more convenient you can make it for them, the better. If you offer portals, scream it from the rafters. It's a solid selling point.
- **Virtual Flexibility.** Firms that offer virtual meeting alternatives have something to brag about. Onsite face-to-face sit-downs with clients are very valuable. No one is suggesting going all virtual all the time, but it's nice to give clients a choice on where to meet: in-person or web-based. When time is tight, some clients may opt for a more convenient online alternative, like Skype or GotoMeeting. Offering a

menu of options puts you ahead of the competition ... not to mention makes you

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Recently, many accounting professionals are transitioning to a more way of doing business — focusing on defined industries to grow their client base (e.g., veterinarians, restaurants, medical practices, etc.). If you have expertise in a given niche, hit that point hard in your marketing initiatives. For example, restaurant owners will want to know that you are intimately familiar with tip reporting, food and beverage tax audits, sales tax, and so on. Hit the key buzzwords, and position yourself as a leading expert.

- **Custom Client Communications.** Firms that create regular custom messages for clients, like a newsletter or blog, quickly get a reputation for caring about their clients. These types of communication offer timely, helpful information like tax breaks, new laws, or workflow tips for small businesses. Communicating regularly enhances the feeling of personalization and intimacy, and clients will like that part of your story.
- **Unique Extras.** If you offer any special extras, no matter how small, market it. You'd be surprised what will get a client's attention. It could be high-end coffee in the reception area or the ability to IM (Instant Message) a designated person in your firm for immediate support. If it's a unique offering, it will further set you apart from the accounting pack, so talk about it.

When All is Said and Done...

At the end of the day, great marketing means telling a great story. More importantly, your story must resonate with the client ... emphasizing what's in it for them. By clearly stating your firm's key differentiators, you make a direct connection between your services and the value offered to clients. That's what marketing is all about.

So really think about what you've got going on in your firm and start your list. Once you have a few value propositions down on paper, it's much easier to develop your own unique story. Remember, if you don't tell people why you are a rock star, no one else will.

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved