

Start marketing from the heart

Don't risk claims with your marketing. Instead, make an emotional connection.

By Peter Montoya

As a financial services professional, you can make very few claims. You can't guarantee anything. You can't imply endorsement. You may not even be able to refer to yourself as a "financial advisor" or "financial planner". So how do you market your true value? In truth, there are highly compelling ways to communicate your quality and your necessity, ways that don't risk a call from your compliance officer.

Character

This matters more than portfolio performance, fund manager selection, you name it. Even now, the public can readily associate the label "financial planner" with stories about poor Marines being sold inappropriate insurance products or cliches about a wealth manager furtively buying a yacht with client assets.

Take a few words to talk about your involvement in your community – or if you're not involved, your outlook on the way that your profession serves your community. Reflect on the remarkable level of trust and faith people place in a financial advisor, and how your work is a kind of pledge to the families, couples and individuals in your city or region. Or, talk briefly about a moment you had when you realized the gravity and essentiality of your work. Tell your prospects you enjoy listening to them and learning about their lives, and welcoming the chance to serve in a steward, fiduciary or advisory capacity.

Confidence

Behind the cold, impersonal label of "investors", we find maturing families struggling with college costs and LTC issues, time-poor executives and business owners inattentive to tax and savings issues, and retirees wondering if they'll outlive their money.

They all want confidence. You have knowledge they sorely seek at a crucial time of life. Promote it. Play up the fact that you have knowledge and education, the ability to search for answers, and the resources to solve lingering income, tax, and estate issues. You can talk about that as well as your desire to plan collaboratively with their existing advisors, or your desire to serve (licenses and education permitting) as their financial "quarterback" or officer.

Insight

You know what the layman doesn't. You can't be an authority on everything, but you know enough to awaken pre-retirees, new retirees, families and business owners to the potentiality of certain financial circumstances. Talk about these circumstances in your marketing. Alert your prospects, and let them know that your job is to help them prepare for transition and change.

These factors drive most effective financial services marketing. They have nothing to do with performance and everything to do with the creation and maintenance of a relationship. You want a relationship with every prospective client, right? Your A clients are the product of relationships; so is their repeat business.

There are many compelling financial issues you can talk about that are far from performance claims and compliance red flags. Don't just talk about them, refocus your marketing around them and share your perspective as your b/d allows. Present your honest interest in other people and your capacity to understand their lives, and you'll likely find out that your marketing will work better than ever before.

Peter Montoya is president of Peter Montoya Inc., the world's only Personal Branding agency. For information on Peter Montoya Inc.'s coaching and creative services, its One Year Marketing Plan Weekend, or the books *The Personal Branding Phenomenon* and *The Brand Called You*, please visit www.petermontoya.com or call 888-730-5300.