

Perry Marshall Special Report

The Power of Personality in Marketing

Do you remember when Chrysler nearly bit the biscuit in 1979? They had to secure a billion dollar loan backed by the U.S. Government, and the company's stock dipped to \$4 per share. Things looked pretty bleak for awhile.



Enter Lee Iacocca, who for years was a top-gun executive at Ford until Henry Ford was seized with paranoia and fired him. Iacocca moved over to Chrysler and found himself at the helm of a deeply troubled company.

He stepped into the public spotlight and made *himself* the face of Chrysler. He said, "The buck stops here." On TV spots, press interviews and Senate hearings, Lee Iacocca was the man.

He stood in front of his K-Cars and LeBarons and proclaimed, "These are quality American cars and I'm proud to be associated with them. I'm piloting this ship to glory or sinking with it. This is my legacy."

He confronted the union: "I'm giving myself a salary of \$1.00 this year. I have thirty thousand jobs at \$18.00 per hour and zero jobs at \$20.00 per hour. I'm asking you to make some concessions."

Brick by brick he rebuilt his damaged company into a powerhouse operation. Inspired with boldness and confidence, Americans began buying Chrysler cars again. He turned the company around and became an American business icon.

I'll never forget reading his autobiography at age 17 and admiring his skills and the power of the story. The chip on his shoulder that he had towards Henry Ford, the dire straits of getting thousands of banks to cooperate in the loan, the marketing programs, the bias of the press, fist fights in the board room, the agony of defeat, the joy of victory.

I'm not sure Chrysler would have survived without one strong leader stepping forward and putting his face on the company. And the fact that nobody is stepping forward and taking the lead now in Detroit (hey, the situation now is no worse than Chrysler's was in 1979) seriously worries me.

You have three choices in regards to personality in your marketing:

- 1. No personality at all**
- 2. Individual personality**
- 3. Corporate "brand" personality**

If you choose Option #1 you are elevator muzak. You might as well run an obscure Chinese factory that produces commodity parts at commodity prices, subject to the whims of the market. It's the *worst* positioning you can have.

One of the first arguments I ever had with Laura concerned my hatred of muzak (a form of sonic misery which has almost entirely disappeared, having now been replaced with "Smooth Jazz" which is, OK, not exactly as awful). I would vehemently criticize it whenever I heard it and one time she challenged me to define "elevator muzak."

I thought for a long time and replied, "Music in which the identity and personality of the musicians is intentionally irrelevant."

Muzak is churned out by union musicians at union rates, with arrangements intending to sound familiar but are less noticeable, less obtrusive, more bland, more "wallpaper." It keeps musicians on the dole but it makes them interchangeable.

I believe it kills their brain cells. It induces in me a desire to vomit every time I hear it.

Need I say any more about people whose highest aspiration is bland-ness?

Which brings us to #2 and #3. Both can produce results, no question about that.

But most people want to skip #2 and go straight to #3.

Let's talk about #3 for awhile:

- **Starbucks is a Corporate Brand.** Yes, its founder Howard Schwarz is well known but most people who walk into Starbucks have no idea who he is. His picture isn't in the stores and if he vanished tomorrow it would have no impact on the customer experience.
- **Google is a Corporate Brand.** Larry and Sergey are reclusive and Google is branded as a friendly machine. Their tutorials say things like, "Sitemaps are a way to tell Google about pages on your site we might not otherwise discover." There is actually a very exact protocol for how Google refers to itself. Google is most emphatically *not* a person.
- **Wal-Mart is a Corporate Brand.** People are aware of the Walton family, but it's hardly part of their marketing.
- **Harley Davidson isn't a person, it's an incredibly distinctive motorcycle.** May be the most "cultish" corporate brand that exists.

The chief advantage of a Corporate Brand is that it's systematic and makes people replaceable.

The disadvantage is, it takes YEARS to build a corporate brand.

A personal brand can be built in a few minutes or a few hours. Consider how quickly Barack Obama ascended from complete nobody to world's most-famous man. He did it in about four years. No corporation has ever done that.

Seriously, people *can* become enamored with you after seeing you on TV or YouTube for 10 minutes or hearing a radio interview or podcast.

A faceless corporation cannot achieve this kind of bond that fast. No way, no how.

With a gun to their head in 1979, Chrysler appointed Lee Iacocca to be their spokesman and hero.

With a gun to their head in 2009, the Automotive Industry appointed Barack Obama to be their spokesman and hero. More or less, anyway.

(Though if they go under Obama will not hold himself responsible.)

Gun to your head, what's the fastest strategy to grow your sales?

Door #2. Personal Branding.

Just yesterday I told someone, "I'm the Oprah of Google AdWords." I fully understand that I'm in the Oprah business, the Dr. Phil business, the Rush Limbaugh business. I do the same thing that Dr. Laura and Larry King do – I bring interested and trusted experts and personalities to my audience, I say interesting things as often as I can, I do whatever I do with flair.

When you're in the "information marketing" business you ARE in the personality business. Just like me.

Why? Because hardly anyone will pay money for a "Muzak" version of information. You can get that on Wikipedia and although it's necessary and valuable, nobody will spend money for it and that's why it's free.

But what if you're not selling information (CD's, DVD's, seminars, e-books etc.)? Does this still apply?

Yes it does. Because you can add an "Oprah" element to ANY business. A little or a lot.

- If you sell radio controlled airplanes, you're catering to a topic people are passionate about. Becoming the Oprah of radio controlled airplanes – that's a good gig.
- If you sell management consulting, same thing applies. In his own way, Peter Drucker did exactly that. (My favorite Drucker quote, from a video I once saw: "Half a loaf of bread is half a loaf of bread. Half a baby is a dead baby.")
- If you sell coffee, you can sell it with personality. Coffee.org has "Miss Ellie" (Ellie is actually the president and the daughter of the founder, Bill McClure.)

Bottom line is, if you sell anything that people can have a lengthy conversation about, you can do personal branding. You add an Oprah element.

You will instantly polarize people. Trust me, there are people who hate me. But it's OK because nobody's going to love you if you're not willing to give other people the opportunity to hate you.

My brother-in-law Ted is a Jazz Mandolin guru – jazzmando.com. He has a rabid following of Jazz mandolin players who've "seen the light" as a result of learning his fingering techniques. His wife, my sister Robin (a.k.a. "Dagny Taggart") – just about the most thick-skinned, hard-nosed, pragmatic person you'll ever meet – she thinks the whole guru thing is a sham of smoke and mirrors.

She shakes her head at the thousands of sad-sack minions who actually pay her little brother real money to learn how to do marketing. And she doesn't 'get' people who follow Ted's mandolin thang either.

So we're talking about this, and I explain to him: "Ted, when someone is groping around in the dark trying to master Jazz mandolin and they're in trauma over it – and suddenly you're the first guy who gives them something that actually works – something *very powerful* happens to them.

"An emotional mechanism shifts gears and that early success bonds them to you. And you know what you've done? You have established a proprietary communication channel with them and nobody else has it. They 'get' your mannerisms, your lingo, your whole approach to playing Mandolin. It takes almost zero effort for them to internalize whatever you say.

"It's a hyper-efficient channel for transmitting information and teaching. It's the 21st century equivalent of apprenticeship – learning a craft from a master. You literally can teach them mandolin better than anyone else and that has REAL value."

If Ted continues to do his job, his students will never trust anyone else as much as they trust him.

Consider the well-known personalities behind these large corporations:

- Bill Gates of Microsoft
- Warren Buffet of Berkshire-Hathaway
- Jeff Bezos of Amazon
- Jack Welch of GE
- Dave Thomas of Wendy's. Died 8 years ago, but EVERYBODY remembers him. Heck, they even have his quotes on the wall at Jimmy John's Sub Shop.
- Ted Turner of Turner Broadcasting
- Steve Jobs of Apple
- Thomas Edison (most people think of him as merely an "inventor" but in reality he was a shrewd businessman, employer of inventors and developers, and relentless publicist)

Also, let's look for a moment at people in other fields:

- Albert Einstein is known as much for his humanitarian concerns as for his discoveries in astronomy, relativity and quantum physics. Einstein is a trusted brand.

- Stephen Spielberg is at least as well known as any of his movies
- Consider the difference between reclusive musicians who play their instrument and otherwise keep quiet, vs. flaming personalities who get out and sound off. The Edge is a revered guitarist but most people don't feel as though they know him at all. Bono is as big as U2 itself, if not bigger. Mick Jagger *defines* the Rolling Stones.

As I survey the great achievers in the world I see that their accomplishments grow out of the force of their personalities.

I'm not saying you have to be a flaming extrovert to be successful in business. But even in physics where most people tend to be introverts, you find that the most influential physicists (Bohr, Feynman, Einstein) have very memorable, eccentric personalities.

Never forget: If you want to accomplish anything significant with your life, your eccentricity is a GIFT. Advertise it, celebrate it, bank on it.

I cannot overstate this. I do not know very many entrepreneurs who were the "cool guy" in school, the high school valedictorian, the fraternity president. Most of us were geeks, freaks and misfits.

When I was growing up people would constantly say things to me like, "Man Perry, you are one *strange* guy." This was, uh, not usually presented to me as a compliment.

I'm not saying I was a total reject, 'cuz I wasn't. But I definitely was not one of the "cool people." I was deeply interested in geek stuff like building speaker systems. I would sit in the school library during lunchtime and have debates with my friend Pat Humphrey about religion. I was only one step away from being the proverbial kid who ran the film projector at school. Now here I am, an unashamed friend of geeks, freaks and misfits.

A particularly well-executed example of personality marketing is **Travis Miller and Jimmy Vee's** Gravitational Marketing. Jimmy is the short guy (5FootMarketingGuy) and Travis is the tall guy (BigIdeaGuy).

Together they look like Penn & Teller. Check out some of their videos on Youtube, they're hilarious and informative at the same time.



When you're the relentless, tireless spokesman for your point of view in your company, eventually you become "larger than life." You're the evangelist. You're the #1 advocate. You become a celebrity – even if you're only a "micro celeb" known only inside your industry.

Trust me, when Jimmy was 12 years old, he didn't regard his eccentricity of being a foot shorter than everyone else to be a *gift*. But he does now.

If you want to know what you're good at or what you should try to become famous for, make a list of all the things you ever got in big trouble for.

In 1990 when I worked in the warehouse at W.W. Grainger Inc., I sent a fake fax allegedly from the CEO of the company saying that the stock had dropped and the company was closing all the branches. This clever little fax got circulated throughout the company and I got fired.

My first lesson in electronic viral marketing.

It didn't occur to me until fairly recently that the whole incident was an early example of what I'm really good at: Writing and sending provocative messages.

There's a fine line between fame and infamy, isn't there?

Most people don't think of the raw material of their life and their story as being particularly interesting or useful. But trust me, it is. And *some* people will relate to it. It only takes 5-10% of your audience to find it interesting and you're off to the races.

Recently I introduced a lot of you to my close friend and copywriter John Fancher. John has become a reliable Go-To guy in the copywriting department around here. He wrote the templates for the Autoresponder Boot Camp and has written copy for me and quite a few of my customers.

The other day he wrote a report called **"99 Questions to Jumpstart Your AR Brain"** for all those who scratch their heads trying to figure out what to say in an email. (Pick it up at www.johnfancher.com/99questions.html.)

To all those who subscribed, he announced that every day for the next 30 days, he was going to write an email and he invited everyone to subscribe. And he further challenged everyone to write their own 30-day AR sequence and promised to subscribe to theirs if they committed to do it. (20 people took him up on the offer. I think most of them will find it transforms the way they experience their business and their customers.)

I subscribed to his series, interested to see what he would write about.

John is a poet, songwriter and musician. His favorite musician is Bob Dylan and his eldest son is named Dylan. His 2nd fave musician is Lou Reed and his other son is named Reed.

What did John write about?

Poetry and music and songwriting.

What do these things have to do with autoresponders?

Quite a bit, actually. Especially in John's world. When you crawl into Planet John, you see that. If you grew up in the 70's and 80's you'll also understand where John's coming from and you'll connect with him.

He is unashamedly bringing his passions and his personality to the forefront and there is no better way for him to bond with his audience.



Here's a sample of John:

I was poking around YouTube the other day watching a documentary about Iggy Pop. For those who don't know him, Iggy's one of the grandfathers of punk. In the late 60s and early 70s, his band, the Stooges, pounded simple, sledgehammer riffs over Iggy's (often even simpler) lyrics about teenage angst and alienation.

It's definitely NOT for everyone, but their album "Raw Power" is generally considered one of the landmark albums of hard rock.

Anyway, in one of the interviews, Iggy says he remembers when he was a kid in Detroit watching Soupy Sales on TV. Soupy would say "send in your letters, kids, but remember to keep them under 25 words!"

When he grew up, Iggy thought, "What a great rule for songwriting".

So he would count his words and use repetition (boy did he use repetition!) of phrases to keep his word count down.

"No fun, my babe, no fun."

"See, if you repeat the first two words, then you've only used up 4 words!" - Iggy Pop

SO, HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ARs?: Well, when writing ARs, or most any sales copy, a lot of writers try to do too much. Rather than focus on the one key, USP-related message, they try to say everything...droning on and on...and they lose the reader...and the sale.

Who said songwriting has nothing to do with business?

I know what you're thinking:

"That's nice Perry, but I'm not as interesting as Bono."

I'm not either. But let me ask you a question.

Have you ever had dinner or beer with your customers?

(I sure hope so...)

What did they want to talk about?

Did they just want to relentlessly pepper you with product and industry questions? If you wandered off-topic did they scold you?

Or did you find the conversation meandering into other topics – like the vendor shipment nightmare from last week and the teenager who threw a party at your house while nobody was home (you didn't find out until the police called you) and Keith Ledger's smashing "Joker" performance in Batman?



When you weave all these fun things into your communication with customers, they'll love you for it. Because it's all one big conversation.

Your website is not an object to hide behind. It's a medium for broadcasting the real you to the whole world.

Personality is instant USP. It's incredibly hard to knock off. As a matter of fact once you find your voice it's almost impossible to imitate.

Celebrity or micro-celebrity status is the #1 way to charge the highest fees in your industry. If you're a bona fide celeb within your industry (even just on certain blogs or trade magazines) your fees are 2X to 4X what anybody else charges. If you're in a business where a good consultant costs \$100 per hour, you can charge \$250 to \$400.

How to Be Famous

- Conferences and Meetings: The fastest way to become famous is to speak
- Publish a book with a major publisher, get yourself in the bookstores and on Amazon: that's the most enduring way to become famous
- Build a huge email / snail mail list (this is the most pragmatic, ongoing profitable outlet for your fame)
- Webinars & Teleseminars
- Host your own conferences (makes you the Grand Poobah)
- Radio interviews
- Mentions in newspapers and magazines
- Do a Podcast
- Get yourself on TV
- Host your own radio or TV show, publish your own magazine

The most important thing you can know about any kind of press exposure is this: **Making the fact known to your customers and prospects is almost always more valuable than the press exposure itself.**

Press exposure perishes faster than fresh avocado turns brown. Many times its benefits last only hours or days, then it's gone. *But the fact that you got it is permanent.* Get copies of the videos, the audios, the newspaper articles or what have you. Then distribute those to your customers.

Someone is Choosing Between You and The Other 5 Guys Right Now...

A high-quality prospect comes to your website. He fills out a form requesting a packet of information. He's trying to decide who to appoint as his chosen "expert."

A meeting planner is trying to decide who to hire for her annual convention. She's looking at all the different options she has for speakers. Who's she going to go with?

Both of these people are going to go with the person who has the largest QUANTITY and QUALITY of proof of their celebrity status.



If they have no celebrity status then she's just going to go with recommendations and credentials.

Trust me, if you have celebrity status, all kinds of opportunities arrive at your doorstep by default. Everyone else is having petty fights over things that naturally fall into your lap. It is truly an enviable position. It can be created in a few weeks or months, from scratch.

So here's your goal:

**Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to have 2 POUNDS OF PROOF that you are THE guy.
Proof that makes a THUD when it lands on her desk.**

Imagine sending her a FEDEX package. That FEDEX package contains:

- A copy of an article in the Wall Street Journal mentioning your company
- Copies of 3 different articles you wrote in for industry trade magazines
- An issue of a trade magazine with your back page column bookmarked with a Post-It note
- A DVD of your presentation at a breakout session at the Consumer Electronics show
- A booklet of testimonial letters from customers telling how fantastic your product is, and how responsive the service is
- A list of all the magazines, newspapers, websites and blogs that talk about you and your accomplishments
- A copy of your book
- If you *really* want to make an impression: A portable DVD player for the DVD, or a video iPod with the video presentation pre-loaded

Two pounds of proof. Literally. How many other experts / authors / speakers / vendors are going to equal that?

The first question in her mind is not going to be: "Is this guy good enough?" It's going to be, "Can we afford him?"

You ALWAYS want to be perceived as "too expensive for the average bear." That positioning will furnish you a comfortable living for many years.

Most business people can only come up with 10% of this 2-pounds-of-proof list on command. Almost everyone can at least produce some testimonials and a list of press / web mentions.

But that's a *start*.

Because most business people could also assemble the entire 2 pound stack in a year's time.

One Year to Juggernaut Status

This time next year, you're a celeb in your industry.



What would that be like? It's possible.

There's a snowball effect that happens with this. Once you get ONE thing on this list knocked out – anything at all – the next item gets that much easier to accomplish.

If you get ONE magazine article published, it's a lot easier to get the second one.

If you've published 10 magazine articles, any book publisher will at least take you seriously.

It's not hard to be a speaker at a conference. The first conference I ever spoke at as a marketing consultant was a little breakout session at National Manufacturing Week. I think 17 people showed up.

But I recorded it.

Just the existence of a video or a recording gives you credibility. From that point forward I could give away my "Seminar Presentation at National Manufacturing Week in Chicago."

Once you have some exposure, all the other authors, speakers and experts in your biz know you and you're part of the club. You become an insider. You find out the industry gossip faster than everyone else does and you get first dibs at interviews and events in the press. You're invited to be on panel discussions.

He who has the biggest stack o' proof wins.

When I first began doing this I was just a guy in the Dilbert Cube, and I was working like crazy to be the "obvious expert" on industrial networks.

Upon leaving my job I made an unexpected discovery:

So long as there was any company who could afford me, I would never be unemployed again.

Which meant that so long as I was asking for a reasonable salary, I would *always* have a paycheck. I had unwittingly insured myself against unemployment.

After having been fired from 5-6 different jobs, dang was that ever a relief.

Instead of accepting jobs, I rented out my very modest, tiny celebrity status to paying clients. (Remember, I was just a guy who'd written maybe 25 magazine articles, given a few presentations and been on a couple of panel discussions at industry meetings. That's it. I was *not* well known in the way that I am now.)

I rented out access to my press contacts and my ability to get articles published. That's how I became self employed in the fall of 2001. No more J-O-B. A thrilling event!

Once I'd committed myself to achieving industry expert status, it only took 18 months for all of it to happen.

Your 2 ounces of proof grows into 8 ounces of proof which becomes 2 pounds of proof. Soon there's more proof than you even have room to stuff in the FEDEX box. It takes up an entire desktop and it goes on for pages and pages on the Internet.

Nice little side benefit of all that: Someone Googles you and they figure out in about 3 minutes that you're THE GUY. You're THE GAL.

One Last Thing About Making Yourself a Celebrity in the Press...

You don't have to be right. You don't have to even be a certified Ph.D. "expert." All you need is an OPINION.

Whatever controversial is going on right now in your industry, if you have an opinion about it – if it's spicy and colorful – the press is going to like it.

I'm not going to name any names – you can fill in the blanks with whatever *you* are interested in – but I am consistently appalled by the low quality of the experts they put on TV, quote in newspapers and radio, etc. In the non-niches that I'm familiar with, the alleged "world experts" make me furious. Most of them are idiots.

In general, lot of the people who get maximum press exposure are *knuckleheads* at everything except... getting press exposure. Actually the *real* experts – the people with Ph.D.'s who've studied things for 20 years and published papers and really *do* know what's going on – usually hate the people that the press is proclaiming to be experts. Like, for good reason!

Bose: The Audio Industry "Expert Status" Company

When I worked as an acoustic engineer designing speakers, my friends would always ask me what I thought about Bose.

Well the truth is, most engineers on the inside of the industry hate Bose. Not so much because their products are *bad*. (Personally I think they're basically OK.) But because they're *overrated*. (Truthfully, they *are* overrated.)

The average guy on the street thinks Bose is the cat's meow and that it's the ultimate in state-of-the-art technology ("Better Sound Through Research") when in fact it's the Paul Harvey Endorsements, the Wife Appreciation Factor industrial design and the mystique that makes them think so. That, and the highish prices.

Those people who truly hate Bose are the "purists." Purists espouse high, lofty ideals. Purists hate pragmatists. Bose is all about getting things done, not embracing the theoretical ideal. So Bose makes compromises that make purists hold their noses.

I'm not a purist anymore, I'm more of a pragmatist and I increasingly admire Bose for its extreme practicality. For example if you feel that having your wife *like* your speakers is a desirable goal, Bose makes just about most loved-by-women speakers of any manufacturer out there.

Naturally, I understand that what women want is completely irrelevant to the purists and that's fine. But considering roughly 50% of the occupants of Planet Earth are women, to some of us that may be considered a virtue.

You'll find my tongue-in-cheek article about Bose at www.perrymarshall.com/marketing/bose.

OK so why am I telling you all this?

If you want to be a celebrity in your business you need to be OK with the following:

1. Being "over-rated"
2. Hacking off the purists
3. Providing simplified explanations of things that normal people can understand (again, this really hacks off the purists)
4. Saying the same things over and over again a million times
5. Being the target of resentment and even hatred by some people
6. Not maintaining control of what other people say about you
7. Getting recognition, fees and exposure far out of proportion to what you logically "deserve"

Dear Renaissance Club Member: How do YOU feel about having an "unfair advantage" over other people?

Most of us are trying pretty hard to gain an unfair advantage over everyone else. That's why we go to college and better ourselves and all that. But once we actually achieve a real 'unfair advantage', it's usually uncomfortable. Seriously, I've seen a lot of people go from rags to riches and suddenly find themselves ill at ease with their new position in the world.

Just the other night I met a guy, Darren Wilson, who produced an indie film on a \$20,000 budget. His highest hope was that it would break even. But in the space of 2 years he sold 60,000 DVD's. He went from being a nobody to being a quasi-celebrity overnight. Suddenly for the first time in his life he had money. He explained how this sudden success made him feel guilty. "What did I do to deserve this???"

In one sense it's obvious what he did. He produced a film and people bought it. In another sense, the answer was, "You didn't really do anything to deserve this." Why did his go viral and so many others didn't? Not based on anything he had control of. He had to learn to become OK with that.

You need to become OK with success that you don't "deserve" as well.

Just accept it.

And cash the check when it comes.

