

Do your brochures stink?

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How do you approach marketing your care business?

Do you rely on word of mouth and little else? Do you have a web site? Do you use brochures?

If you use brochures, does your heart sink when you need to send out a brochure to families of your potential clients?

Your heart sinks because you know that very few people actively read your brochure. They can be expensive and you just know that of the 10,000 printed, you'd be delighted if as many as two-thirds, that's only 6,666 reached those you are targeting.

Without a doubt, brochures are often necessary because clients expect them. It's the price of entry into the conversation. There are times when brochures can be expunged from an organisation, but it must be well planned and tested before implementation. The last thing you want is your prospect list looking like a Sahara landscape.

Here's three fresh perspectives on your brochures that will help you look at them through new eyes, stop the waste and ensure they make a return on your investment.

- **Experience perspective.** It doesn't matter whether you are marketing a product or service, when it comes to your client making a decision, specifications are only part of the story. Clients are also interested in added features - how it will make their life easier and more comfortable. In short, explain how your experience will benefit them.

Action: Design a brochure so your clients can experience your services. Get tactile. Think about a brochure that allows your client and their family to see your service at just one step removed from 'the real thing'. Guided tours of your facilities or making use of available technology might help you make that vital connection with prospects by personally involving them. Why not consider a DVD or an audio seminar available for download explaining how you can solve their problem?

- **Target perspective.** Never ... ever ... forget who you are talking to. It seems obvious, but it's easy to forget that your prospects don't know all the stuff you do about your service. Assume nothing. Don't get caught up in designing communications that you'll be proud to take home to show your life partner. Awards don't count and your partner's opinions don't count either (unless they happen to be your target audience).

The only opinion that counts is that of your potential clients ... and that can only be measured by their response.

Know exactly what you want them to do. How should they respond? This is the 'Call to Action'. Do you expect them to sign on after reading your brochure? How? Is your brochure designed to get them on the phone to talk with you? Craft your brochure accordingly.

- **Client perspective.** Let those who have made use of your services sell your services.

Client testimonials and 'good news' stories are powerful and they work. Look at your brochures as potential communicators of interesting case studies. No more 'me' perspective ... lots of 'you' (your potential clients) perspective.

You wouldn't invest in a piece of machinery that didn't create a return on investment. Why would you commission a brochure that doesn't work? It's all about the message. Does your brochure set you apart from your competitors? When it does, it will encourage your clients and prospects to look at you from a new perspective. [After that, it's up to the sales professionals.]