

# Why you need a marketing plan – for YOU

Rita's Career Corner ...With Rita B. Allen

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Marketing ourselves is an essential ingredient to successfully manage our careers. But how do you develop the ease, confidence and comfort with a task that is considered difficult by many people?

Don't view marketing yourself as a task, but as a [required skill](#) in taking charge of your career and executing a successful career management strategy. It requires us to know how we set ourselves apart, what we have to offer, and what exactly it is that we want to market. The key is to define our brand, then work at building and articulating it.

Most people think marketing applies only to products, services and commodities. The truth is, in order to compete in a highly specialized marketplace, we need to look for ways to advocate for ourselves and present our value with confidence.

## Create your marketing plan for you starting with these steps:

- 1) Make a list of your accomplishments of the last 12 months** - Highlight the key results you have achieved within your company as well as any relevant external accomplishments so you are ready to discuss and showcase them as opportunities arise and/or need to be created.
- 2) Establish your goals for the next 12 to 24 months** - Determine specific objectives you aspire to fulfill over the year or two, with actionable tasks and timelines for completion.
- 3) Target specific professional associations and community involvement** - Raise your visibility within your organization by enhancing and offering content expertise through association and community activities while extending your reach and network in your field and industry.
- 4) Continue education, training and development** - Personal and professional growth will always provide additional knowledge, making you more marketable internally and externally. On-going learning

allows you to leverage strengths while pushing in new ways, trying new things, and adding to your portfolio.

**5) Build relationships and networking strategies** - Establish, build and nurture long lasting mutually rewarding relationships with key stakeholders, inside and outside your organization, that will allow you to increase your influence, give back, and positively enhance your brand, your credibility, and your reputation.

**6) Stay current and well-read within your industry, the economy and marketplace** - Read relevant periodicals, papers, trade journals, on-line publications and other important resources that will keep you abreast of market changes, trends, and best practices.

**7) Enhance on-going activity of your real and virtual presence** – Create a social media presence that is meaningful, substantive and informing about your knowledge and your accomplishments. Be out there physically as well by putting yourself in positions to meet people while always leave positive and lasting impressions.

**8) Seek out strategic alliances and partnerships** - Identify mentors, sponsors, trusted advisors, champions, and coaches who come from different aspects of your professional and personal life, and offer to be the same for others. These people will be key players in your life and provide depth in so many ways to your success, as you too will do for them.

Once you create an effective marketing outlook, you will find it to be a natural process that you do not even realize you have engaged. Change your mindset and embrace the art of marketing yourself as a powerful way of fulfilling your purpose, providing value and achieving a high level of accomplishment!

*Ask Rita...*

**Question:** I have a hard time talking about myself and what I've done. I end up feeling like I am boasting or coming across as arrogant. While I recognize that I need to do it more, I'm not comfortable marketing myself. As a result, I am beginning to see it hurt my chances for advancement. What can I do differently?

**Answer:** You are not alone. It is important for all of us to own our career, stand up and ask for what we want and why we deserve it. We can and should, however, always do so in a manner that suits our style and personality.

First, I suggest highlighting your strengths, achievements and goals. You want to be able to be very comfortable discussing what you have to offer and what you want.

Then it is about changing your mindset to appreciate the importance of showcasing your talents and achievements as needed. Give yourself permission to do so, and remove the notion that by doing so you are boasting or being arrogant; it is really quite the opposite.

Lastly, deliver your message with stories, so it's more about results achieved rather than focusing on you. Practice your delivery so that you get more comfortable telling your stories. This allows you to treat it as a conversation rather than a 'talk' about you. If you give it time and articulate your value in a way that really fits your personality, you'll notice it gets much easier!

**Send your questions to: [Rita B. Allen](#)**

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, [www.ritaballenassociates.com](http://www.ritaballenassociates.com), a provider of career management/talent management consulting and executive coaching services located in Waltham, Mass., with specialty areas in leadership development, management training and career development. She is also a Lecturer at Northeastern University and Bentley University.