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Why You?

The Power of Personal Branding

by Verl Workman

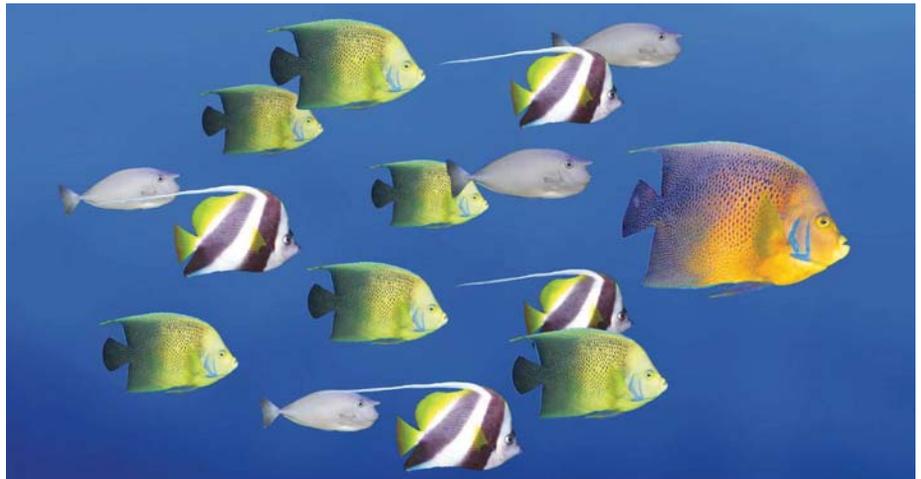
As a fellow agent, speaker and coach, I've dedicated this column to spotlighting the people, principles and programs that can have a positive impact on our business. This month, we're focusing on personal branding, so I reached out to one of the best in the business: Robert Allan Paul at Company of One.

Verl Workman: *What's the biggest mistake agents make with branding?*

Robert Allan Paul: They only take it halfway. Most agents invest plenty of time, money and energy in designing their logos, websites and collateral. But those are really just containers for your brand. The secret to great branding is content. That's where messaging comes in.

VW: *Why does messaging matter?*

RAP: Regardless of the tactics you use to attract clients, there comes a moment when every prospect asks the same question: "Why you?" What do you say? You can't just point to your website. No one is going to hire you just because of your logo. In that moment, you have to be able to summarize who you are, what you really do, how you do it differently from everyone else and the benefits to your client. In sales, it's called your elevator speech. In marketing, it's your brand statement. It's what ties everything together



and it's the foundation for all your marketing messages—from website copy to advertising slogans.

VW: *How can agents develop a powerful brand?*

RAP: The same way successful companies do. You go through eight or nine steps to discover your real strengths, values and other attributes, then build an identity and message based on those aspects. It's not complicated, but it can be hard, because you're forced to think about yourself in new ways. The good news is it's also fun.

VW: *Is the branding process the same for everyone?*

RAP: For the most part, yes. But the result is always different because personal branding is all about you. I've taken thousands of agents through the program and have never heard two come up with the same brand statement. You're already unique. This process just helps you—and others—recognize it. Great marketing isn't about finding the right customers; it's about helping the right customers find you. It's not about better, it's about

different.

VW: *Can a personal brand work with a corporate brand?*

RAP: Absolutely—and I encourage it. The influence a parent brand can have on prospects is immediate and invaluable. The iPad is certainly different from other tablets, but would you even look at it if it wasn't from Apple? Corporate brands provide credibility. Personal brands build connections.

VW: *What's the biggest benefit of developing a brand strategy?*

RAP: Building a brand influences the way others see you, but it also changes the way you see and think about yourself. The greatest moment in any career is when you suddenly understand what you really do. It's liberating and life changing. Once you know who you really are, you no longer want everyone. You just want everyone who wants someone like you. **RE**

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