

At a networking event Jane attended a few months ago, she met a man who boasted of having 25 years' experience in marketing for various corporations. The first time he ever met her he told her that her business needed a complete overhaul — new name, direction, logo, colors, website, the works! It all sounded pretty exciting to Jane who is an adventurous soul. So they agreed that he would create a new look for her, while she would provide him with a number of coaching sessions in exchange.

This person proceeded to create an introductory portfolio for Jane, without asking her any questions, and before she had done any coaching with him. He didn't ask to see her business plan and therefore had no idea of her long-term goals. He never even had a lengthy conversation with her. In other words, he knew nothing about her and obviously was not interested in getting to know her as a person or a coach. He used his many years of experience to create something for Jane that had nothing to do with her at all!

Needless to say, Jane liked nothing about the materials he produced — from the colors he used to the new logo. In addition, he made the mistake of relentlessly criticizing everything her other team members had created for her, and intimated that everything he had not created was garbage. Jane was understandably angry, recognizing that this person was motivated only by personal gain, and didn't have her best interests at heart.

**D**o your homework when selecting those people who will work with you to co-create your marketing strategy and materials that will ultimately reflect your vision and your brand. Think in terms of a long-term association, as opposed to a project-based one. The best way to find the right people is through referrals from others you trust, but even then you need to conduct your own research.

Here are **six** tips on selecting the most well suited individuals to work with:

- **Select professionals who are accustomed to working with home-based business owners**, as opposed to corporate clients. Some professionals prefer working with corporations because they require less “hand holding.” Also, less time is spent getting to know them and respecting individual preferences. Professionals who specialize in working with entrepreneurs do so because they enjoy the personal contact, the excitement and synergy that are generated when collaborating with another “sole-preneur.”
  - **Present designers with samples of work you like and don't like**, and tell them why you feel this way. Be ready to contribute to the effort by being available to answer any questions and by giving complete feedback on the project at different stages.
  - **Where appropriate, discuss colors, special design and language preferences** as well as other elements of uniqueness. This is exactly the input these creative people need from you. A designer's job is to understand you and your essence and to be able to reflect that outwardly in such a way that your audience will respond favorably.
  - **Know your target market and coaching niche**, so that your marketing efforts can reach your intended audience. If you are a brand-new coach and don't know your target market, with enough time and experience, you eventually will. However, when you are ready to advertise yourself as a life coach, your main goal is to look professional and inspire confidence. By that point you should have a good idea of who you really enjoy working with. Keep in mind that there are many other coaches out there, and you need to differentiate your business from everyone else's.
- Choose your team members as carefully as you would choose your business or mentor coach. Use your intuition, do your research, ask questions and gauge your level of excitement and comfort at the thought of working with each of your teammates. As your practice grows, you may want to change some things, such as expanding into coaching entrepreneurs or women returning to the workforce. Or, perhaps, you might need to change your name and logo because of a new partnership. If you have developed and nurtured strong connections with your team all along, they will be there to help you in your new endeavors and along the path of continued success. ●

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