

# MAKE YOUR COMPANY THE FIRST CALL

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## Crash. Boom. Thud.

**H**ear that sound? It's a problem happening—a process breaking, a missed deadline, an unexpected absence in your client's office. They need help, now! But, who will they call?

You...or the last vendor to knock on their door?



A very wise marketer, James Cecil, taught me a great lesson about making your company the first to be called.

Or, as Jim put it “when your client suddenly gets hit in the chest with a spear, you want them to think of you as the **ONLY** spear-removal surgeon in town.”

But how? How do you make yourself the only surgeon?

Jim's process was really quite simple. Nurture relationships, persistently. Find an excuse to keep in touch with every client,

every prospect, and every decision influencer at least once every 4 to 6 weeks. Stop selling all the time, and instead focus on teaching your clients when, why and how to use your expertise!

## Make yourself the **EXPERT**

If you want people to see you as an expert at what you do, here's a process you can follow:

### 1. **Define exactly what you want to be known for.**

In clear, concise language write out the specific expertise you offer and/or the specific problems you solve. Don't try to be all things to all people. The more narrowly you can define your expertise, the easier it will be to own. For example, “we are experts at locating the highest quality clerical talent.” Or, “we are experts at reducing labor costs.”

### 2. **Clearly identify your target audience.**

Who needs to see you as an expert? The world? Your local community? Specific types of companies? Specific types of decision makers in those companies? Again, the more narrowly you can define your target, the easier it will be to own your area of expertise with that audience.

### 3. **Identify your target audience's problems and interests.**

For each audience you need to reach, develop a clear understanding of their problems and interests—and not just as it pertains to what you sell. Study your customers. Find out how they spend their day. Make a list of the types of fires they regularly fight—and the bigger picture issues they need to manage. Understand what motivates them and how they are compensated. This list will ultimately form the core of your marketing messages.

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### 4. **Offer solutions to problems and ideas for capturing opportunities.**

Take your area of expertise and translate it into solutions for your clients and prospects. For example, if your expertise is in solving people problems, provide ideas on using staffing strategically to help companies control costs, increase productivity and manage risk.

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The solutions you provide don't always have to be ideas you create. It can be just as valuable to share ideas you've researched (all experts spend a lot of time learning from others in their field). Third party ideas can include: opinions from other experts, case studies that demonstrate that your ideas work, and best practices you collect from your clients.

## 5. Give away your expertise to as many people as possible.

No one becomes an expert by keeping their knowledge to themselves. You want as many people as possible in your target audience to know of your expertise. To do this, you have to have a way to communicate with them, and ideally, you will "touch" them through multiple channels. For example, you might write a column for a local newspaper, speak at chamber of commerce meetings, and send direct mail and email newsletters.

## 6. Be persistent—without being a pest!

To position yourself as an expert, you have to consistently keep yourself in front of your clients and prospects in a manner that demonstrates your expertise and that your clients find useful (kind of like this article!). Tactics you can use include:

- Regular emails to share useful ideas
  - Occasional direct mail to reinforce your positioning message and/or share longer, "higher value" content
  - Occasional calls to personalize your communication, share relevant stories and news, and market appropriate candidates
  - Drop offs – holiday gifts, invitations, promotional items, educational booklets
  - Speaking
  - Publishing
  - Contact through social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and LinkedIn groups
  - Blogging
3. Quarterly promotions to encourage response (although some forms of promotion, such as marketing top candidates, may be done more frequently).
  4. Telephone or in-person contact at least once per quarter.

**Note:** This process assumes you are communicating in an effort to keep yourself top-of-mind with someone you have already met or, at a minimum, someone who has given you permission to stay in touch. This process is not intended to open doors with cold leads.

## The process we recommend

1. Monthly email and/or print communication with short, relevant content.
2. Personal notes to follow-up and reinforce educational messages.



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## Making it work

With more than a decade of experience in implementing these kinds of relationship nurturing campaigns, we've learned a thing or two about how to make them work.

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*We tried Jim's process in our company, and guess what? It worked!*

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Here are a few of our best practices:

1. Start with a good list. There's little or no value being seen as an expert by people who won't or can't use your services.
2. Keep your content relevant to the current problems your clients and prospects are facing. Provide specific ideas to solve problems and capitalize on opportunities.
3. Keep educational materials short. While there are exceptions, like publishing a book or a whitepaper, educational information is best when it's broken down into short, "bite-sized" portions.
4. Include a personal message, either with the educational content (e.g., a cover letter then explains what you've sent) or as a follow-up. Also, don't be afraid to let your personality shine through in your writing.
5. Plan your communications well in advance. Make sure your content reinforces your expertise while adding value. Keep it current to changes in market conditions and trends within your industry.
6. Assign ONE person responsibility for managing the process. All too often, companies start educational campaigns and then give up because no one "had time" to manage the project. The reality is that no one was given responsibility for making sure the campaign was implemented.
7. Don't let relationship nurturing replace sales. It sounds obvious, but we've seen too many sales reps who stop making follow-up calls because they started sending email or direct mail. To generate sales, you still need to pick up the phone.
8. Don't give up – it takes a great deal of persistence to position yourself as an expert, and then just as much to keep yourself top-of-mind.

## And now for a little self-promotion...

Way back in 1993, Jim Cecil taught me the principles of relationship, or as he called it, nurture marketing. At that time, I was Director of Marketing for a family-owned staffing firm in Western New York. We tried Jim's process in our company, and guess what? It worked! In fact, it worked so well that in 1996 we decided to start Haley Marketing Group to share our success with others (as long as they didn't compete with us!).



While our tools and capabilities have changed greatly over the years (I'd be embarrassed to show you what we used to send in our first year), we're still using the same process that's worked for over a decade (and if you're reading this, you know it works).

To learn more about how Haley Marketing can help keep you top-of-mind—and how affordable our services are—call us today at **1-888-696-2900**.

# ABOUT HALEY MARKETING GROUP

## What we do:

At Haley Marketing, we are staffing industry specialists. We offer a range of services to satisfy the marketing needs and fit the budgets of all kinds of staffing firms.

We founded our company with a simple mission: to make great marketing more affordable.

Whether you're looking for an effective way to stand out from the competition or you just need a new website or brochure, we can provide it.

## Our services include:

- E-newsletters & email marketing
- Website design
- Blogging and social media marketing
- Integrated staffing campaigns
- Marketing strategy
- Content writing and creative services



Solutions to the staffing industry's challenges.

**Prices YOU can afford.**