



Guest Speaker: The many faces of a marketing/ BD professional Reading between the lines of a job description.

By Anne Scarlett, first printed in the *AE Marketing Letter*

So you think it's not your job to repeatedly remind (pester?) the project manager to finish his writing contribution to the fee proposal? Is it your place to have a heart-to-heart with the shy principal that needs to brush up on his presentation skills? Are you wondering who should step up and coach your technical staff on better ways to communicate with prospective clients?

Think again. The roles of a business development/marketing professional are varied. View this as an exciting challenge, not a burden! Some roles, such as coach, are obvious and expected. But there are many other roles that were not likely presented as a part of your job description. Prior to becoming a consultant, I walked in your shoes as a director of business development for 13 years. Here were some of the additional faces that I wore, along with others that I have since witnessed from my clients:

Cheerleader. Your colleagues often need a boost! They are looking to you not just for guidance, but also for your high-energy, 'go-get-'em' attitude! Because marketing is not their core competency (and, in fact, something they often dread), it's really up to you to motivate and build their confidence. Make sure to acknowledge and praise even the most modest of marketing accomplishments.

Therapist. If they trust you, they will come to you with their problems— both professional and personal. It's up to you on where you draw your boundaries in terms of what is too much information. Know, though, that because of your role and your clear communication skills, they will believe that you have some answers, or at least will be a good listener. Provided they are not distracting you too much from your own work, hearing them out can actually prove to be a productive thing in the long run. Your help might actually create opportunities for them to improve their marketing performance.

Professor. Because you're the marketing expert, it's up to you to elevate your firm's understanding of marketing best practices. They pay you to be in touch with trends, cool ideas, competitor profiles, and so on. Further, you cannot keep this important information in a vacuum! Your intelligence must be shared; any new knowledge must be transferred!

Foreign relations ambassador. Marketing and technical professionals must align their efforts from inception through the duration of all client relationships. The role of marketing should never be eliminated, even after a new client is secured. To work well together requires mutual empathy about goals, pressures, and responsibilities. Encourage your bigger marketing team— aka the entire firm!— to respect one another. Help facilitate activities so they can learn to speak each other's language: job shadowing; sharing job descriptions (published and 'real') over lunch; team-building outings; and 360-degree reviews. In this process, don't allow bad energy— which is usually fueled by misunderstandings or misplaced fear— to hinder your push for marketing success.

Matchmaker. If you do external business development, then matching internal colleagues with prospects is crucial to relationship-building. At some point in your selling process, you will likely involve a technical professional when 'touching' a prospect. At that juncture, it's up to you to decide who would have the best chemistry with the prospect. This can only happen successfully if you make a savvy assessment of the prospect and you have a true understanding of the personalities

and skill sets of your internal colleagues. On both counts, personal connection and intuition are your best bets.

Peacekeeper. Before the big interview, you assembled the perfect team from a qualifications standpoint, but did you also consider their vibe? Depending upon the acting abilities of your interview team, their energy will likely be transparent to the client. Are they having fun? Do they even like one another? Do they agree, or counter, or even interrupt? Do they exhibit respect? There are times when folks may not be getting along well, but you need them to cooperate for the better good of the firm. To elevate above the personal issues, your role may involve getting people to align their own goals with company goals, so that they can do a better job of creating— and portraying— a united, competent, and unparalleled force!

Marathon runner. In this business, marketing professionals have to kiss a lot of toads to find our prince. Rejection is inevitable, especially during the selling process. This means we must consistently and frequently persevere; we must go the distance! It's about being strategic and resourceful in our planning and preparation, and then training and pacing to ensure a successful finish.

Detective. Whether analyzing an entire market sector or targeting a specific prospect, we must dig for information through primary and secondary research, and then mine our network to provide additional intelligence. Perhaps most important, our role involves not just collecting that information, but integrating all of the clues to formulate our answers and 'crack the case'.

With more room, I would share the faces of the mediator, mama-bird, scapegoat, bum-kisser, truth-teller, parent, host, waiter, scientist, and documentary writer. Just remember, above all, you are you— marketing professional extraordinaire— and you must be true to yourself during every step, while wearing every face!