

The Science of Self-Promotion

By Jeffrie Story,
Unleash Your Sales DNA®

The first time I heard the words “self-promotion” side-by-side with the word “success.” I was appalled. How egocentric! How demeaning! Do you mean that, in order to be successful, I have to lower myself to groveling and begging and bragging? I thought, “I *know* people like that, and I *won't* be one of them!

Now I know differently: Self-promotion is merely making your talents, skills and products *visible* to your target market. My new understanding is based on research--not mine, but two behavioral scientists (for whom I am a licensee) named George Dudley and Shannon Goodson, who've made a career out of studying the science of self-promotion.

Dudley and Goodson have developed an assessment tool called SPQ*GOLD® and a Fear-Free Prospecting and Self Promotion Workshop®. This assessment identifies ways in which we non-consciously avoid self-promotion and limit our success. In nearly 1,000 formal scientific research studies, Dudley and Goodson have found that self-promotion is directly related to success.

What have I learned from them? I've learned that, yes, *all* successful people are self-promoters, from Madonna, to Jimmy Carter, to Tiger Woods, and even Dr. Martin Luther King. Some do it with more political acumen or integrity than others, but we *all* must self-promote to succeed. In fact, we were self-promoting in grade school, when we raised our hands in fervor to show the teacher we knew the answer.

Undeniably, there is unethical self-promotion. We've all witnessed it, and maybe even lost business to it. But that's not what we're discussing. You can self-promote with class, ethics, and truth. As Will Rogers said, “If you done it, it ain't braggin'.”

You'd think I would have known this from my 25 plus years in sales and marketing, but no, I'm still learning. What I want to share with you are the findings from Dudley and Goodson's research, as well as examples of how this might apply to you, and how it fits into your sales and marketing.

Since you're reading this, you must want to get more business and more clients. And that involves more than those dreadful words, “self-promotion.” It really involves *making the sale*, which in turn involves tasteful self-promotion. A vicious, but symbiotic and exciting, cycle.

Dudley and Goodson, through extensive research, found that there are three behaviors we can learn from natural self-promoters. Natural self-promoters are those people who don't hesitate to show the world what they can do and have done, and for which they receive recognition in the form of money, fame, or service to others--their rewards for many *sales*. We can emulate what works for them, regardless of our goals. In the case of Dr. King, for example, he was making his *cause* visible, to make the "sale" of *change*.

The first behavior to emulate is: **Position**. Natural self-promoters position themselves with people who can make a difference in their goals. They automatically wake up each morning asking themselves, "Who can I meet today who will make a difference in my success?" Then they get themselves in front of those people!

Ask yourself the same questions: Who can help me meet my goals? Is it a prospective customer? Is it a colleague who has contacts? Is it an association with key members who may be prospects?

Too frequently we settle for working with the people who are the *easiest* to reach, not the most *effective*. Work on meeting the *one* person who can have impact on your life, versus the 25 who cannot.

The second behavior of natural self-promoters is: **Style**. In marketing, we call this "differentiation." Ask yourself what is it about you that's different, and what makes you *memorable* to your customers or potential clients?

For me, it is frequently my name. How many women do you know named Jeffrie? That doesn't mean that my name will get me places I want to go, but it *does* mean that when I get there, they'll remember me more easily. We *must* be remembered!

How do people remember *you*? Are you distinctive in some way, and do you point it out? If you meet a lot of people and they seem to forget meeting you, you have a problem, but also an opportunity--an opportunity to present yourself in a more *memorable* way.

It might be your message, your picture, your business card, your words, your hairstyle. Maybe it's the uniqueness of what you offer, or how you relate your experience to their particular issue, or how you know what their issues are in the first place, or even your personality on the phone! Best of all, it might be your obvious *caring* about them and how you demonstrate that caring.

The third attribute of natural self-promoters is: **Repetition**. Natural self-promoters don't say it once; they say it many times. If you had seen a wonderful commercial once, would you remember it? Probably not. Advertisers know this principle, which is why they design multiple 'impressions' for their target market, and why we get to see those commercials over and over and over. We, too, have to make multiple impressions in order to achieve "brand awareness."

Repetition also applies to positioning. Once you've found people who can make a difference in your success, find hundreds more!

May you earn what you deserve,

Jeffrie Story

Jeffrie Story helps organizations and individuals achieve the earnings they deserve, and the money they want. A summa cum laude graduate of the University of Iowa, Jeffrie spent 25 years in sales leadership at a Fortune 1000 corporation, where she was known for getting results. Combining scientific tools with experience and a passion for transformation, Jeffrie helps create behaviors that are consistent, sufficient and effective.