

## Connect The Dots To Attract More Clients

by Michael Katz, Founder and Chief Penguin, Blue Penguin Development

"**Anybody wanna' see my snake?!**," shouted my five year old son Jonathan as he stepped into the house through the back door yesterday morning.

He had been playing over by a pile of sticks in the backyard, and since he's at the age where he does a lot of pretending, I naturally assumed that he was using a stick from the pile as a pretend snake.

That was a bad assumption. **Instead of a stick that looked like a snake as I had expected, Jonathan held in his hands 10 inches of frightened, squirming, very much alive, snake.** Nothing that would kill you certainly, but nonetheless, not the kind of thing you want lunging out at you from behind Mr. Coffee the next morning.

Sensing the need for immediate action, I asked the kind of pointless rhetorical question we fathers are famous for: "Jonathan, do you think having a snake in the house is a good idea?!"

He just stood there grinning from ear to ear and simply said, "You never said I couldn't."

**I had to admit he had a point.** Because while it was obvious to me that in the context of our rules regarding household behavior this was clearly out of bounds, Jonathan was correct in his assertion that we do not have a regulation explicitly banning slithering reptiles in the kitchen.

**And it was at that very moment that I had this important insight about E-Newsletters (I never stop working for you):** Just as Jonathan didn't reach what to me should have been an obvious conclusion about snakes in the house, **your readers may also be missing an important connection between your newsletter's content and the work you do.**

Here's what I mean. . .

As you can imagine, I read lots of company newsletters, many of which I'm happy to say, are focused on providing useful, interesting, relevant information to a targeted group of readers. Perfect, but that's only part of the equation. **Because while you certainly want to attract readers, that's not enough - the success of your business is based on *turning those readers into clients.***

**It's up to you therefore, to include subtle (I said subtle) references to the work you do, so that in the context of learning more about whatever topic**

**you cover, your readers come to view you as the expert (i.e. the person they should hire).**

With that in mind, I offer four specific recommendations for delicately (I said delicately) shining the light on yourself:

1. **Use client experiences as examples.** Rather than say, "Many companies find it useful to apply the XYZ technique," say, "In working with a client last month, we applied the XYZ technique and saw terrific results." This helps your readers associate your company with a solution to a problem that they may also have, increasing the likelihood that you'll get the call.
2. **Stop referencing "the experts."** It's fine to throw in a terrific quote here and there if you stumble upon one that really drives home the point you're trying to make. Summarizing or reporting on the work of somebody else in your field however, positions you as an observer rather than as an industry leader, and no matter how eloquently you explain someone else's ideas, you're still diminishing your position as expert.
3. **Congratulate your clients.** Everybody wins when you mention work you've done for a client. Your client gets some free publicity and you get to remind your readers of the work you do. If you have a way to show the reader some aspect of the project (e.g. a link to a web site you designed; a free download of a white paper you wrote), all the better, since in the process of checking out something that could help their own business, your readers will get a first hand look at the work you do.
4. **Include an "About Us" section.** If I read your newsletter and like what you have to say, I may want to learn more about your company. An "About Us" section - a two or three sentence summary of what you do, who you do it for, and what makes you different - at the end of the newsletter will help your readers connect the dots, and again, lead them to visualize working with you.

**Bottom Line.** I'm not suggesting for a minute that you take your eye off the ball and stop producing useful, interesting, targeted newsletters that help your readers live their lives or do their jobs better. What I am saying however, is that within that framework, you have an opportunity to gently (I said gently) position yourself and your company as the clear and obvious choice for whatever kind of work you do.

Although it's perfectly clear to you what you do, your readers may simply think of you as "law firm" or "financial planner," when in fact your area of specialty is much more focused.

Now if you'll excuse me, I just heard the back door slam and Jonathan's screaming something about a bear cub. You don't suppose. . . .?

