

CHAPTER 1

PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING!

“Many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our point of view.”
~ Obi-Wan Kenobi, *Star Wars Jedi Knight*



Nice + Unique = Success

Your professional perception really is everything. By better understanding what triggers people, our strategic marketing concepts will help you define the image you need to have on all of your direct and indirect communications with current and future customers. Here's lesson #1 on why your public image is so important.

I'll never forget what one of my mentors in television marketing and creative services taught me. He said, "Perception is reality 99 percent of the time and it's up to us to create the right perception." He was right. We didn't have a tangible product to sell consumers. We had an intangible one which depended on how well we promoted our local, on-screen news people to the general public in our community.

Our mission was to get viewers (TV's word for consumers) interested in who our news people were and differentiate them from the competition. Our sole focus was in attracting more and more viewers to like our news people, to trust them, and to choose to watch them instead of any other station's newscast that produced a similar program airing at exactly the same time. "Perception," it turns out, IS your public image. Creating a level of trust and likability are the most important components in attracting viewers to watch a particular TV news station...sometimes a person's actual experience takes a back seat to these characteristics.

Why are TV ratings so important? Because that's how the sales department sets its rates for commercial advertising on the station based on numbers of viewers and desirable demographics to sell products and services. (THINK SUPER BOWL. In 2008, the highest watched Super Bowl ever in excess of 97 million viewers, commanded \$2.5 million for each thirty-second commercial!) Therefore, make no mistake about it: there is definitely a BUSINESS to show business and the news, sports,

programming, and entertainment business is a huge part of a media station's revenue.

Now the truth of the matter is ANY TV news station worth its salt has good reporters, experienced news anchors, talented videographers, editors, writers, producers, and so on, because if they're not, they are quickly replaced. The fact is all stations cover basically the same breaking news of the day. So what's the MAGIC ingredient, the SECRET, to one station's success over another in drawing the highest number of viewers? Quite frankly, the same secret to ANY business owner's success—creating the right perception! Loyalty and viewership are built on a personal connection first and professional acumen second. People will choose to watch a particular news anchor because his or her personality (likeability-factor) is a defining reason as much as their professional or perceived ability.

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