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Self-Promotion, Branding, and Attracting Buyers

I am convinced that you have the power to persuade and influence those who choose your services, how you will provide those services and how much you will be compensated for those services.

One of my greatest wishes for our profession is that we each recognize and act on the power we have to market ourselves and be self-promoters.

Included in this article are insights from 2 experts in this field: Amy Cuddy and Daniel Pink.

- Cuddy, author of *Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges* (Little, Brown Spark, 2015), was the Opening Session keynote at the 2020 Food & Nutrition Conference Expo™ virtual event.
- Pink, author of *To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth about Moving Others* (Text Publishing, 2013), gave the keynote address at the FNCE® Closing Session.

I encourage you to read their books for more great ideas and suggestions for selling yourself and persuading others.

I have been doing this for years as a foodservice director, negotiating with my chief executive officer on salaries and the needs of my department; as an interviewee promoting my strengths and skills for job and volunteer positions; as an entrepreneur networking with physicians and businesses to develop relationships that will lead to referrals to my private practice; and as a media manager for my business, spotlighting my brand on my website and in various forms of media. I have learned valuable lessons that I would like to share with you.

You are capable of self-promotion because you have already demonstrated these skills to get where you are today. You have the power to persuade and influence those who choose your services, how you will provide those services and how much you will be compensated for those services. To do this, begin by seeking the power and self-confidence within you, to bring out your boldest self.

BUILD YOUR BRAND

Effective communications about your brand establishes you as a confident, professional expert, a trusted resource and a relatable person. Translate your brand into a clever pitch or tagline. As Daniel Pink wrote in *To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth about Moving Others*: “The purpose of a pitch isn’t

necessarily to move others immediately to adopt your idea. The purpose is to offer something so compelling that it begins a conversation, brings the other person in as a participant, and eventually arrives at an outcome that appeals to both of you.”

PRESENCE EMERGES

When you tap into your own unique niche—one that fuels your passions and enthusiasm—you will feel present, in the words of Amy Cuddy in *Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges*: “Presence emerges when we feel personally powerful, which allows us to be acutely attuned to our most sincere selves.” It is important to also keep in mind that what you stand for and what you say and do as a practitioner reflects on all of us in our profession.

SELL YOUR SERVICES

As Daniel Pink writes: “[A]ll of you are likely spending more time than you realize selling in a broader sense—pitching colleagues, persuading funders, cajoling kids. Like it or not, we’re all in sales now.” Selling and self-promotion are the same in business as they are in life. Think of times you have held positions on teams or in clubs, or when you competed for admission to your educational institution. Remember when you interviewed for a position you really wanted? In each of those settings you presented yourself as a package of all of your life experiences. You demonstrated your skills, competence and personality. You began to build trust by developing a relationship with your audience and then conveyed yourself as an authority with valuable services. You were selling and promoting yourself then and you are doing the same now as a health care provider. What is our overall goal, after all? To constantly sell our clients, patients, and consumers on the benefits of moving to healthful eating and lifestyle choices.

ATTRACT YOUR BUYERS

What are buyers of services looking for? They want someone to solve their problems. They are looking for relationships, quality, personalization, speed, and value. With the high percentage of chronic health conditions in the world and the need to expand access to health care services, our opportunities as credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners are endless. Yet, why aren’t more consumers demanding our services? Buyers of today have many options to choose from,

and they have leverage. They may seek our services after extensive internet searches, listening to friends and family, or after comparing and experiencing other services first. Or they may decide to do nothing at all.

How do we attract buyers? We listen and try to understand our audience, tailor our services to their needs and then offer hope, help, and more than what they are looking for. We rise above buyers' expectations and focus on what we do best, within our professional expertise and framework. We build a relationship, assess individual needs and expectations, develop a personalized plan with the client as an active partner, and track and demonstrate outcomes.

Our Academy offers you many resources for building your brand, attracting customers and telling your story.

The Academy's online Marketing Center includes communication tips, ready-to-use presentations, Eat Right tip videos for your website, radio scripts, free stock photography, downloadable promotion flyers, information on enhancing your online presence and much more.

www.eatrightpro.org/practice/career-development/marketing-center

SHARE IT

Share your pitch in a variety of formats, depending on how your audience prefers to consume information; such as video, social media, print, or live demonstrations. Here are some suggestions that have worked for me:

1. Describe your brand in a single sentence. This is your pitch. My pitch is: "Nutritional roadmaps that change lives."
2. Pick 1 or 2 forms of media (YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, blogs, website, print, radio, TV) where you will share your brand and pitch. Learn about the unique audience and value each form provides.
3. Contact a potential buyer or investor of your services and set up a virtual appointment. Begin to build a relationship and assess their needs. Then return with your personalized offer of a solution to their problem.

It is up to us to step up and speak out about what we do and why people should care. Brands form people's perceptions, and you are your own brand!

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