**Strategic Bragging**

**Steve Dorfman**

While it’s important to be skilled in tooting one’s own horn, it must be done in such a way that it doesn’t seem conceited and therefore repel prospective clients.

But wait! There’s more …

Selling products via infomercials is a multibillion-dollar industry. While I don’t necessarily agree with all of their (often cheesy) tactics, we can learn at least a few things from their success. The leaders in this industry seem to have mastered the art of strategic bragging. In the quick sections that follow, we’ll take a look at 3 leading sales strategies and discuss how to make them work for you.

**1. Show, Don’t Tell**

Infomercial presenters do an incredible job of showing us the features and benefits of their products. In the book, Made to Stick, “The curse of knowledge” is addressed. The concept is this: Because we know our products and services inside and out, it’s actually difficult to put ourselves in the shoes (mindset) of people who know little or nothing about them, i.e. our clients and prospective clients. As a result, we talk more about the concept of what we’re selling, and fail to demonstrate what it’s going to do for the end user. That causes a disconnect, because people don’t buy concepts, they buy benefits – and it’s your job to show them what the benefits are..

**2. Features vs. Benefits**

In my early days of selling, one trainer made the clear and all-important distinction between a feature and a benefit. While salespeople– from all industries – seem to love talking about features, they often forget to cover the related benefit(s). Clients enter your space with one thing on their mind: What’s in it for me?

Case in point: Most of you have probably heard of 4G (cellular) technology. We’re bombarded with the advertisements on TV and radio, but do we really know what it means? Simply put, 4G is the fourth generation of cellular phone wireless access platforms. It’s a feature and means absolutely nothing to you … until you understand its benefits. A 4G-enabled cell phone will speed up your Internet access and web browsing experience, which also means quicker downloading of your documents and less wait time to view online or emailed photos. Don’t get caught up in a cool-sounding name or function: Brag about your features, then move (quickly) toward the related benefits; what’s in it for them.

**3. Social Proof**

Social Proof: A psychological phenomenon where people assume the actions of others reflect correct behavior for a given situation. This effect is … driven by the assumption that surrounding people possess more knowledge about the situation.¹

When we’re unsure about something, we tend to look to others and their experiences. That’s why a key component to any successful infomercial is its testimonials. In fact, I believe this to be the most powerful ingredient of all. Are you sharing stories from other satisfied clients? Better yet, are you sharing video testimonials from previous clients?

Be strategic in your sharing. The next time you’re consulting with a prospective client, think back to a similar client and their related dominant buying motive. If you don’t already have a video testimonial from that person, perhaps they’d be open to sharing their excellent experience with your prospect. It certainly doesn’t hurt to ask.

These tips were intended to illustrate ideas on how to brag … strategically. This certainly isn’t an exhaustive list, just 3 leading strategies. What practices have worked for you? What are some ways that you regularly demonstrate your expertise/skill/experience?

I’d love to hear from you in the comments below.