

# Ditch Your Elevator Statement

## Michael Katz

My office building isn't very big. Six or seven offices with maybe 20 people total who work here. And so we don't get many visitors (the mailman's daily arrival is widely looked upon as a highlight).

Yesterday, however, a friendly stranger popped his head into my office and introduced himself as a friend of a friend:

"Hi, I'm Julius Caesar [I may have heard that incorrectly] and we have a friend in common. I was visiting my accountant across the hall, saw the Blue Penguin sign on your door and thought I'd say hello."

He told me that he owned a health care software business, whereupon I mentioned the interesting fact that many of my clients are also in the health care field. I rattled off a couple of examples, including, "a woman who helps health care organizations communicate their data clearly."

He asked, "Is her name Kathy?" Indeed it is. Kathy Rowell, to be exact.

Which brings me to two very important points regarding your solo professional marketing:

1. It's good to be named Kathy. And, it's good to be known for something.

Think about how impressive yesterday's event was. I said a simple phrase – not a shiny elevator statement, not a hyped up "she's the leading provider of cross-platform healthcare, blah, blah, blah."

Just a "thought chunk" that more or less describes Kathy's work, and his

brain pulled up her name.

That's huge. And it's exactly how word of mouth happens. Somebody mentions something to someone. Next thing you know, you get a call (often from a prospect) out of the blue.

Note as well, that most of the word of mouthing doesn't come out of your particular mouth – it happens when two other people get to talking about you.

Which means that polishing your phraseology endlessly is way less important than simplifying it to the point that someone else can remember it and repeat it, a week or a month or a year later.

Kathy's the health care data woman. What would you like to be known for?

(P.S. If you said honesty, integrity, high quality work or any other clichéd marketing catchphrase, there's a seat waiting for you at the back of the class.)

2. Word of mouth doesn't just happen among business people and in business situations.

It happens all the time.

Julius knows Kathy because Kathy's husband painted his house last month ("Roman Column White," I can only assume). He and I are connected through someone we both know in common. Julius's accountant happens to have an office in my building.

It's all random and there's no way you could ever predict when and where it will happen. ("Hey honey, make sure to tell that guy whose house you're

painting about the work I do in case he runs into Michael Katz when he goes to see his accountant next month.”)

But it happens, nonetheless. Your job, therefore, is to spread the word – ongoing and often – to everyone you meet.

What’s not your job is to spend time trying to figure out who’s worthy of hearing your message. The answer is, everyone. You never know whose wife’s brother’s plumber is married to the CEO of a company that needs your help.

Here’s the bottom line. Everyone you know and every interaction you have is a marketing opportunity.

Figure out how to simply and clearly explain what it is you do and share it, over and over again, with anyone who’s willing to listen. All hail Caesar.

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<http://bluepenguindevelopment.com/subscribe/>)