

## When It Comes to Business Growth, You've Got to Eat Your Vegetables



If you're like many service professionals, you've probably experienced the ups-and-downs of growing your business.

**Business growth happens for one major reason** – more clients want your services. Attracting clients requires the dreaded “M” word – marketing. Ah yes, there's the rub. If you want more clients, you have to let them know of your existence in a concerted, consistent way.

It's a paradox, really. Most of the solo professionals I talk to and work with went into business because they wanted to help people (I'm right there with you), and they knew their service, be it coaching, consulting, massage, or something else, would do just that. **None of us went into it because we like selling. And yet, that's what has to happen in order for us to provide our service.**

So, I'm going to reveal a possibly unappealing, yet definitely significant, truth to you. **You actually have two businesses:**

- 1) Marketing your services
- 2) Providing your services

And if you neglect the first business, you won't have much opportunity for the second.

Again, if you're like most service professionals, you do recognize the necessity of marketing. You work on your business card, you edit your brochure, you plan out your website. Gotta have a website these days, don't you? And you can't very well go talk to a prospect without a business card, can you?

Some of us spend hours, days, even weeks moving commas, re-writing text and formatting bullet points in order to perfect these “marketing tools.” **The tendency is to think that it all has to be done and done flawlessly before you can actually get out there and start talking to potential clients.** Right? Au contraire, mon amie.

It will never be absolutely perfect. And you will never be entirely ready. So just get started now. It's true, business cards are important and having a brochure or website can spell out your services and help you filter potential clients. **The danger is spending most of your time on things that support your marketing efforts instead of on those things that really bring people through the door** (or on the phone, depending on your service).



**These support elements are what I call the “dessert” of advertising and promoting.** In the continuum of marketing, they are soft and fluffy tasks that don't require a face-to-face possibility of rejection – yet you can fool yourself into thinking they're critical to your success. But it's the “vegetables” that are going to cause your marketing efforts to pay off and your business to grow.

**Vegetable elements of marketing are the tasks that many of us find hard to swallow as a steady diet;** we know we should, but they just don't have the flavor of the desserts. Attending a networking meeting (and actually talking to new people), following up on those business cards you've collected, presenting to groups, approaching a possible referral partner – these are what get you noticed.

**And getting noticed is what marketing is all about.**



So, here's my proposition for you. Decide on 3 "vegetable" tasks that are the most palatable to you, and do them consistently for 30 days. Actually block time in your calendar each day -you may take weekends off- to get them accomplished. (Yes, you can hold your nose if you have to.) **I guarantee if you do those 3 things, whatever they are, consistently for a month, you'll see results.**

You may still work on your "dessert" items; dessert is what makes the meal worthwhile, in my opinion. But just remember, dessert isn't growing food. **Eat your vegetables first.**

Helen Graves shows coaches, practitioners, bodyworkers and other service professionals how to grow their business the easy way. She teaches an easy-to-follow recipe for building your client-base from scratch. To find out more, visit Helen at [www.helengraves.com](http://www.helengraves.com).