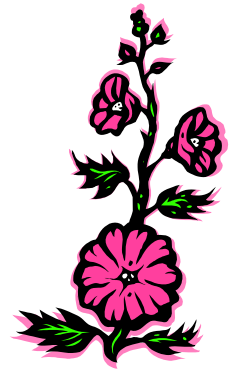


## What Can a Hollyhock Teach You About Marketing?

**In the competitive world of nature, flowers must both attract and reward their insect visitors** in order to ensure that the flower's pollen is distributed. If a plant is not attractive in some compelling way, a bee is unlikely to notice the flower and make a landing even if there's a reward waiting for her! By the same token, if the reward is of modest appeal, a bee isn't liable to make many repeat visits.

As a consequence, flowers have developed a variety of methods, both extravagant and ingenious, to make themselves appealing, each in its own unique way.



**I have little doubt that you're already making the connection here.** If you (and your business) are the hollyhock, and your potential client is the bee, what are you doing to both attract and reward your "insect visitors?"

Here are 5 tips for doing just that:

### **Tip 1 - Be Authentic**

In a service business, you are the "product." The most attractive thing you have to offer is your genuine self. So learn to respect and reveal the whole you, warts and all (figuratively speaking). If you're inclined to be soft-spoken, then be soft-spoken. If you tend to make goofy jokes, then make your goofy jokes. Most people can spot insincerity or artificiality right away, so it doesn't do you any good to pretend to be something you're not. And those people who see and appreciate your natural style will make the best clients for you anyhow. Let the rest find another flower to pollinate.

### **Tip 2 - Make It About Them**

Sometimes in our determination to convince a prospect that what we've got to offer is a great thing, we chatter on non-stop about ourselves and our services. Now, I don't know about you, but any conversation I'm in where the other person is pretty much doing a monologue about themselves is totally boring to me. So rather than telling them what you have to offer, ask them what their challenges are, what they're needing. Go into the conversation with the agenda of being curious and learning more about them. Then you'll be able to determine if you and your services are the flower they're looking for.

### **Tip 3 - Give Them What They Want**

I've said it before, and I'll say it again. The one thing your clients want more than anything else is to know that you understand them and their problem on a individual level. And that you have an effective solution for them. So take the information you discovered about them (using Tip 2) and let them know how you can help them with their specific issues and challenges.

### **Tip 4 - Develop Expertise**

Professional development is what enriches your "nectar" and makes it so rewarding for your clients. Continue to expand your expertise so you can offer new and worthwhile services, programs and knowledge to them. It's going to help you stand out from the crowd as well as keep you fresh and interested in your business.

### **Tip 5 - Stay in Touch**

Effective marketing is about letting people know what you do –and how it benefits them– over and over and over again. It's about staying visible so when a potential client experiences the particular problem you solve, they remember you. It's true, you don't want to pester people; that will turn them off. But finding creative ways to stay in touch gives you the opportunity to be visible to prospective clients in a genuine way. You can send articles of interest to them, you can invite them to free events that deal with their challenges, you can send birthday cards and thank-you notes.

### **Tip 6 - Add Value**

Always give them a bit more than they expect. Make the time they spend with you (in session, at your website, reading your articles, wherever) worthwhile. This can be as simple as placing a mint on the pillow (I just love that!), answering an email request with a personal phone call, or adding a 6<sup>th</sup> tip when you've promised them five. When potential clients receive something of value from you, like the bees, they're sure to make repeat visits.

Let me finish by saying that the relationship between bees and flowers isn't a one-way street. Even though it's the flowers that do the "attracting," they're offering the bees a pretty precious commodity in the form of nectar, something essential for the



reproduction of the bees' offspring. By the same token, even though it's you who's looking to draw in new clients, keep in mind that you are giving them a precious commodity in the form of your expertise. **Deliver your service with confidence and integrity and you'll be all the buzz with your clients!**

Helen Graves, "the Upbeat Action Coach," shows solo entrepreneurs how to grow their business the easy way. In addition to writing captivating website copy that prompts your visitors into action, she also teaches how to create genuine connection that turns potential clients into paying clients. To find out more or to sign up for her complimentary mini audio seminar, "Simplify Your Business in 6 Easy Steps," visit Helen at [www.helengraves.com](http://www.helengraves.com).