

FORGET YOUR ABILITY IF YOU CAN'T GET VISIBILITY

BY PHIL COOKE

In today's hyper-competitive, distracted culture, it's time we realized that it's not the customer's job to find you, donate to your cause, or buy your product; it's your job to find them. I was in a meeting with a business group the other day and one of the board members vented in frustration: "We've been producing an incredible product for decades! Why aren't people buying it?" I told him that's analogue thinking from yesterday. In the old days 90% of the battle was building a great product, because there wasn't as much competition. But in today's digital age, there are simply unlimited choices for everything, which means customers, donors, and audiences are overwhelmed. That's why it's our job to help connect our product to them.

"In today's media driven culture, visibility is just as important as ability." - Phil Cooke. I don't care how great your church service, non-profit work, or business, it simply doesn't matter if you can't get on the culture's radar. It's one of the reasons I spend nearly as much time coming up with a book title, as I do writing the book itself. There's just so much competition in a Barnes & Noble or Amazon.com, I need something that will reach off the shelf and capture their attention.

For many from the last generation of celebrities, movie stars, writers, and musicians, publicity was actually beneath them. You rarely saw novelists like John Cheever pitching his books, or Marlon Brando doing a press tour (remember when he had a Native American woman in full Indian dress pick up his Academy Award? It was beneath him even to show up at the Oscar ceremony.) But today it's very different. The biggest stars are doing press junkets, top writers are working the media, and even CEO's are getting into the act.

It's not the world I'd like, but it's the world that exists. So know this (and this is good for job hunters to think about as well): It's not anyone's job to find you, your product, or your organization. It's your job to find them. Visibility is now just as important as ability.

Never forget it.

