



**PROTRADE**

United

*Insight that builds*

## Five Unexpected Ways To Differentiate from the 'Rest'

Sometimes, I believe, we may feel that we have to do the big things in business to stand out from the crowd, to make a difference, but in my experience I have found that it is the little things that we do on a consistent basis that are usually the most powerful.

Here are five ways that I have found that may help you stand out from the crowd. However, I suggest you create your own list and compare, as the main point of this exercise is to ensure you integrate these points in to your daily life.

### **1. Make it a habit to follow-up with people promptly.**

It sounds simple, right? In my experience, and surveys regularly back this up, 67% (amazingly!) of people do not follow up in business. Whatever trade or role you are in, if it involves making a sale, signing that contract, or building relationships, the best way to stand out from the crowd is to follow-up promptly, follow-through, and be persistent and determined. Don't give up if you are initially rejected, keep following up! Somebody once said, "a no is only a request for more information!"

### **2. Respond to people who leave you messages.**

This is only common courtesy. How often do we not find the time to follow-up with someone who has emailed us or left a voice-mail. Not only is this bad manners, it is also bad business. How many important relationships have you missed out on by not responding to a message? Even if you don't need the business now, plant the seed for future opportunities by being prompt, polite and professional.

### **3. Do the unexpected.**

Do you acknowledge people who, for whatever reason, do not give you that job, when you didn't get the contract or make the sale? Remember, they did let you make the presentation. Do you acknowledge the person who didn't hire you for that job, but at least gave you the experience of the interview? Most people don't take the time or have the discipline to do this. Yet, a sale or a job lost or a contract given to one of your competitors today, does not mean it is lost forever. Do not give up, think long term, think about the relationship you may be developing, the connection you are building for the future, rather than the lost sale, or your bruised ego!

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**Headquarters** Level 7, 757 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley Q 4006

**P** GPO Box 950 Brisbane Q 4001

**T** 1300 767 774

**www.protradeunited.com.au**

**E** [hq@protradeunited.com.au](mailto:hq@protradeunited.com.au)



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#### **4. Invest 1 hour a day, into your own individual personal and professional development.**

You can take the one hour all at once, or break it in to segments, whatever fits in to your lifestyle and schedule. During that time read or listen to a book, maybe an autobiography of someone you admire, or a business book, listen to podcasts, or watch a TED Talk. Listen to the words of wisdom from the experts in the fields and areas of your life that you want to improve. We can all say we can't find the time, but this is incredibly important to your personal growth. For many years, whilst growing up, the 'only' thing I ever read was the sports pages of the newspaper. What a waste. I am not saying you should not read the sports page or a good fiction book, or whatever interests you, we all need that down time for ourselves. However, don't do that at the expense of opening up your mind to new ideas and areas for improvement. Look at your education as an investment of your time, rather than an expense.

#### **5. Stretch your comfort zone; do one new thing every day.**

Take a chance on something you have always wanted to try. Don't be afraid of being rejected, of people saying NO to you, or of failing. The people who stand out from the crowd are the ones prepared to take that chance. This could be increasing your prices, having that courageous conversation with an employee or customer, or even saying NO to a job/customer that you might usually say YES to. We all know the things we want to do and the things we need to do. Take some risk, defy conventional wisdom and make your own wisdom come true. An early mentor said once: "Do you want to stay safe and be good? Or do you want to take a chance and be great?"

The choice is yours, every single day.

Written by Jon Mailer  
CEO Of PROTRADE United

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