

## **E4: Born to Be Wild: Unleashing Your People's Latent Marketing Power**

Internal marketing is important as it aligns, motivates, and empowers all employees at all levels to consistently deliver results.

The benefits of internal marketing include increasing revenue and profitability and improving employee performance. By engaging employees, the firm can increase its sales force and marketing efforts exponentially. Marketing training can provide consistency to messages and behavior, improve client service, increase client retention, improve cross selling, and reduce recruiting time and expense since your employees – your ambassadors – are telling everyone what a great place your firm is to work.

There are several barriers to internal marketing which can make it difficult to implement:

- Internal marketing is an informal process so there is not a definitive procedure to follow.
- It's just one more thing we ask our employees to do.
- CPAs are resistant to change.
- CPAs are rewarded for billable work which marketing is not.

Knowing some of the challenges facing an internal marketing program, how can it be implemented successfully? Start with branding. Internal marketing is an extension of your brand. Your firm's brand is how others perceive it, its personality, and the promises you make. It is visual – how your office is decorated, where your office is located (downtown vs. suburbs), how employees dress. It is verbal – how you answer the phone, what your voice mail says. It is behavioral – are employees on time for jobs, do they return phone calls. The impact of a strong brand on the market is competitive differentiation and increase visibility. The impact of a strong brand on employees is that it focuses their marketing efforts, they know what the firm stands for, and they know what to say.

Before you consider implementing an internal marketing program, there are several critical success factors:

- Management and organizational support – the program should start with the managing partner and have management buy-in. The program depends on a team approach so having other departments, such as human resources, recruiting, and office management on board are keys.
- Marketing and HR partnership – internal marketing is no different than external marketing. There is a target audience; there are events, communications, etc.
- Communication – reinforce the brand constantly with posters, coffee mugs, pens, another other giveaways. Also, send advertisements and invitations to events to employees so they know what's going on. Keep employees updated with how the firm is achieving its goals. Employees will want to participate more if they are on a winning team.
- Employee engagement – ask for their feedback and then be sure and do something with it. Empower employees to make decisions and solve problems; form

integrated marketing teams; and align individual goals with firm goals. Most importantly, recognize and reward participation and have fun!

Achieving a successful internal marketing program will take time but the results are that everyone in the firm wins. The firm has increased revenues, employees feel empowered and that they have opportunities for growth, clients experience exemplary service and have solutions to their problems by using your services.