



Illustration by Dave Swang for The Partner Channel

<i>Marketing activities I'm avoiding</i>	<i>Pretend Costs</i>	<i>True Costs</i>	<i>Potential Payoff</i>
<i>Cold calls</i>	<i>People might laugh at me</i>	<i>People won't hear about my services</i>	<i>People might respond and make inquiries about my services</i>
<i>Social media posts</i>	<i>Someone might hang on me</i>	<i>I won't make any impression</i>	<i>They might talk to others about my company</i>
<i>Door-to-door</i>	<i>My services won't be good</i>	<i>People won't be talking about my services</i>	<i>They might set up an appointment with me</i>
		<i>People won't give the chance to respond to my offer</i>	<i>They might buy my services and become a client</i>
		<i>My competitors might get to them first</i>	

BREAK THROUGH YOUR

Marketing Comfort

 Jennifer Culbertson

The weather is warm, the days are long: it's summer. But don't let those lazy, hazy days just drift by and get too comfortable. Now is a great time to dust off those business plans and brainstorm possible new marketing ideas and different ways to grow your business.

We all know that settling into a routine feels comfortable but is not necessarily good for your business, especially when it comes to marketing. At times we all become complacent and don't really want to move out of our comfort zones. We are content to do the same types of programs and activities and aren't too interested in taking risks.

When you get stuck in your comfort zone, you tend to avoid doing things that make you feel uneasy or that seem risky. Human nature has shown us that there are many people who will do anything to stay within their comfort zones. In fact, statistics reveal that many people never venture farther than 50 miles from the place where they were born, and approximately 25 percent of Americans with U.S. passports will never leave the U.S. So why is it important to step out of your comfort zone? Well, trying something new makes us discover things about ourselves and our businesses. And, the more you do it, the more comfortable and competent you will become.

When you look at the real cost of action versus inaction, things look very different. Being safe and staying with what makes you feel comfortable is not necessarily the most cost-effective approach. People that move out of their comfort zones realize that the cost of staying comfortable is much higher than the cost of taking action.

If you're looking to make big changes in your business, then you must move out of your comfort zone. Let's put this into perspective by taking a look at this short exercise:

1 List all the marketing activities that you are now avoiding. Think about all those things that make you feel uncomfortable, uneasy, unsure, or worried.

2 Now create three columns, one titled "Pretend Costs," the second titled, "True Costs," and the third titled "Potential Payoff." Do this exercise with just one marketing activity at a time, such as giving a presentation, writing an article for a local business publication, or making follow-up calls.

3 In column one, "Pretend Costs," write all the things that you fear might happen if you take a risk. For example, "People might laugh at me," "Someone might hang up the phone on me," "The response won't be good."

4 In column two, "True Costs," write down what you feel will definitely happen if you don't take action. For example, "People won't hear about my services," "I won't make any impression at all," "People won't be talking about my services," "People won't have the chance to respond to my offer," "My competitors might get to them first."

5 In column three, "Potential Payoff," write down all the positive outcomes that could possibly happen if you took action. For example, "People might respond and make inquiries about my services," "They might talk to others about my company," "They might set up an appointment with me," "They might buy my services and become a client!"

It's easy to see that the potential payoffs in taking action are much more substantial than not taking any action. If you do this exercise honestly, you'll have a shift in perspective; you'll start to see that avoidance is actually more uncomfortable and costly in the long run than taking action.

With so much that you could do, try

starting off small so that you don't get overwhelmed. Here are some activities you can do to help step out of your comfort zone and into your renewed marketing efforts. Be sure to stick with it; persistence pays off.

- » Seek out speaking opportunities at your local chamber or industry group and/or association
- » Write an article or column for the local business journal or industry publication
- » Volunteer to sit on the board of a local organization where you can connect with possible prospects or referral sources
- » Start blogging; seek out other blogs you can post comments on and/or start your own blog or company blog
- » Seek out referral sources or start your own referral marketing program for your company
- » Take a client to lunch at least once a month
- » Attend networking meetings and set a goal of how many people you want to meet
- » Beef up your social networking interactions and make new connections

Before you know it, summer will be a fond and distant memory. Start taking action now on some of those things you've been avoiding, and just think how much farther along you'll be in making those marketing breakthroughs and finishing up the year strong. 🌀

Jennifer Culbertson is owner of Looking Glass Marketing and specializes in working with Microsoft VARs and ISVs to build and execute marketing strategies that drive results. With her 18 years of marketing experience within the channel, coupled with her understanding of Microsoft Partner needs, she can help take your marketing to the next level. For more information, contact Jennifer at Jennifer@lookingglassmarketing.com or 614-453-5927.