

by Jay Conrad Levinson

I won't wait. I'll tell you right off that marketing's greatest ally is your patience. More extraordinary marketing has bit the dust due to impatience on the part of the business owner than for any other reason.

You watch as the powerful stonecutter raises his hammer to hit the huge stone. He hits it hard, again and again. On the third blow, the stone splits in two and the magnificent statue inside is revealed. Think that means it took three blows of the hammer to do the big job?

You know it didn't. It took 500 and maybe 5,000 blows. That final blow wasn't crucial all by itself, but only as one of many blows that combined to achieve the stonecutter's goal. To a clueless neophyte observing, it took only three blows. But you, the stonecutter and me know the real truth.

The real truth is that marketing is a whole lot like stonecutting. Your dynamite website might not do the job. Your aggressive mailings might fall short as well. But your website and mailings, combined with your telemarketing, trade show booth, advertising, publicity and patience get the job done very nicely.

Which blow of the stonecutter gets the credit for the masterpiece? Which marketing weapon gets the credit for moving the prospect from off the fence and onto your customer list? It's the stonecutter's patience that gets credit for what he has hewn from the rock. It's your patience that wins the laurels for the profits generated by your marketing.

It takes a unique person to stay the course while blow after blow fails to hit home. It takes remarkable talent to remain with the marketing program when instant results are not produced. Yet, for many members of a time-conscious public, instant gratification is not quite swift enough. This is a characteristic of many people, the guerrilla marketer not included.

Great stonecutters know that there is no rock they cannot split. They have more patience than any rock. Great marketing people know there is no challenge they cannot surmount. They have more patience than their competition.

Their behavior is demonstrated in both their restraint from making changes in their marketing programs and their willingness to continue executing a marketing strategy despite the absence of quick financial strokes.

The stonecutter picks a spot on the rock and hammers at it over and over. You pick a niche and aim for it, marketing over and over. Eventually, the rock splits. Eventually, the niche is occupied and dominated, the marketing goals attained. It didn't take genius as much as it took steadfastness.

Your life will be filled with frustration and anxiety if you expect your marketing, brilliant or

otherwise, to produce superb results instantly. But if you give your program the time to penetrate minds and motivate behavior, to persuade and create desire, you will discover that marketing does indeed work and that patience is the age-old secret of success.

Marketing and stonecutting are different from most human activities. No stonecutter expects results in a hurry. But all stonecutters are positive that they can do the job they set out to do if they concentrate upon the results down the road rather than the hard rock surface facing them. Many small businesses are run by people who gaze intently at the rock surface. So short a gaze results in prematurely abandoned marketing campaigns.

Guerrillas do not even acknowledge the surface. It's insignificant compared with what they will hew with their patience. This farsighted approach illuminates the way to their goal. They see that the way is not so much a route as an attitude. This is the attitude of the stonecutter. This is the mindset of the guerrilla. Both have what appears to the innocent as an impossible task. Both know that there is no way they will fail.

Success comes to those who market if they begin with a plan, if they continue breathing life into it, and if they have the patience to move beyond the need for instant results.