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## Resourceful Designer Episode 326 Tell Your Clients What You Do.

I wanna talk to you about something that I've thought about for many years. In fact, the topic I wanna mention today was actually the I was gonna say the very 1st episode of resourceful designer. It was actually episode 2, but episode 1 was just an introduction to what this podcast will be about. So it was the very first topic I ever discussed on this podcast.

And it's the fact that your clients may not necessarily know all the things you can do, all the services you offer, all the things you can design for them. And the reason I wanted to talk about this is something just happened to me this week again. And this has happened to me many times over the years or many. It's happened to me various times over the years. But just this week, I had a client, a longtime website client. I had done some podcast artwork for him, and I built his website. And I've been maintaining his website for years, and he's asked me to do various updates not like you will with a website client. Well, earlier this week, he asked me if I can add a connection.

He's starting his own newsletter connecting to Mailchimp, and he asked me if I can add an intake form to his website. Easy to do. I told him no problem. Well, in his email, he also asked me if I knew anybody who designed mastheads for emails or for newsletters, he wanted to have something unique designed to put at the top of his newsletter. And he wasn't asking if I can do it. He was asking me if I knew any designers that did that sort of thing. Now, of course, I replied back to him that I can do that for him. And we ended up talking it through, and I did the job for him, and that was that.

But it's the fact that, like I said, all those years ago on episode 2 of Resourceful Designer, your clients hire you for a specific project, and they don't necessarily know everything else you can do. In this case, he knew that I can do websites no problem. He had no idea that I can design a masthead for an email. Now to you and I, it's kind of a no brainer. If you can design 1, you can design the other. But the clients, that's not always obvious. It's kind of like knowing a chef that works at a Mexican restaurant and then asking that chef if he knows anybody that has a good Bolognese sauce. Now Bolognese being an Italian dish, you are assuming that because this chef works in restaurant, he only knows how to cook Mexican food.

Now that might not be the best of analogy, but I hope it's getting my point across. It's kind of like assuming that an auto mechanic who specializes in Volkswagen automobiles doesn't know how to fix a Ford or a Toyota or some other and just because he specializes in Volkswagens. Well, your clients don't always know what you can do based on what they came to you for. If they came to you for a website or a logo or a poster or a trade show booth or a car wrap, in their mind, that's what you do. And the only way to get them or to deliver the knowledge to them that you are capable of doing other things is by informing them. Now I can go over everything that I talked about in episode 2, but I thought, you know what? I just relistened to that episode, and I had some really good points. So instead of just rehashing them, I think I'm actually just gonna play episode 2. It's a short episode.

I'm just gonna play it for you to hear. Now if you've already listened to it, it's a great opportunity to hear this message again. And if you've never heard that episode, you're in for a treat. So without further ado, here's a replay of episode 2 of Resourceful Designer. Now as designers, be it a graphic designer or a web designer, we're always looking to find new clients. Clients are our bread and butter. Without clients, we're out of a job. But, of course, finding new clients can be a challenge.

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It can be intimidating. It can be hard. And face it, it's just not fun. Now I did write a blog post on resourceful designer about 10 proven ways to attract design clients. And I've used all those methods over the years, and they have worked. So I encourage you to check that out. But There's something that we often forget about, and that's the wealth of potential you have already in your existing clients. Chances are they have some sort of job that you could do for them.

Now you're probably thinking, well, that's great, but if they need something from me, they'll just contact me. But the problem is that your clients may not know what you do. It sounds crazy. Right? But believe me, it's true. When your clients first sought you out, They hired you to do a specific job. Maybe they hired you to design a website. Maybe it was a flyer. Maybe it was a logo or a product package.

Who knows? But that's what they sought for. They sought somebody to do that specific thing, and they may not know that you do other things. Believe it or not, there's a lot of people out there that don't know what a graphic designer or web designer does. And I know this firsthand. When I finished school, I worked at a printer for 15 years. During that time, I did work for thousands of clients, and it never cease to amaze me when they'd asked me if I was able to do something else. I don't know if it was because I was working at a printer, but the same thing happened on my own when I started my own business. I mean, when I worked at this printing company, Some people just came in because they needed business forms, and there was no really designing involved.

It was just horizontal and vertical lines with some wording and places for signatures and Very, very boring work. But then out of the blue, when you're showing them a proof of their newest contract or whatever form you did for them, They would ask you, says, do you guys do flyers? And yes. Of course, we do flyers. We're graphic designers. We do all that stuff. Or somebody out of the blue would ask, do you guys design logos? And, yes, we do all that, but they didn't know that. And as I said, when I started my own business, I thought, well, maybe that was just happening because I was working at a printer, and people were not necessarily going there for design work. They were going there for printing.

It was just convenient that there was a design studio in the print shop. But, no, when I started my own business, the same stng started happening. I had a client right from the start, and I still have them. 10 years later, they're still they're my oldest client. Every week, I design 1 newspaper ad for them. They want something new and fresh, so for the past 10 years, I've designed a new newspaper ad for them without fail. And yet, not too long ago, one of them was asking about something and asked me if I knew anybody that would design a logo for them. I was shocked.

They didn't even think of asking me if I would design a logo. As far as they were concerned, I did ads. And when I told them that, yes, I can do logos, and I can do all sorts of other stuff, they said, oh, we didn't know that. We had somebody else do a flyer for us, or we had somebody else do a poster us because we didn't know that you did that as well. Clients sometimes don't realize what you do, the scope of what you're capable of. Now unless your agency specializes in a certain niche, like you only do package design or you're a branding agency, in which case they come and they know exactly what you do, and that's all you do. If you're just a general graphic designer like I am, chances are your client doesn't know the Scope of your ability. I mean, sometimes it's so simple that I was flabbergasted.

I had a client that I designed a website for. In a few months after I designed their website, they contacted me saying that they wanted to do some online advertising and asking if I knew anybody that designed web banners. To that client, web banners and websites were 2 completely different things, and they didn't realize it that it's the same skill sets to do,

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though. I ended up I did get the job and I did do the web banners, but it just reinforced that sometimes your clients don't know what it is you do. And it's not just that. Even my brother-in-law who knew me before I became a designer. I've designed his logo. I designed his business cards.

I designed a couple of websites for him over the years. And yet, not too long ago, he contacted me to ask me who I knew that would design a rack card for him. Now I thought he was just saying that in jest. You know, the type of thing like you would ask your photographer friend. Gee, I wish I knew somebody that had a good camera who could take my picture. But, no, my brother-in-law wasn't joking. He was sincerely asking me if I knew anybody that could design a rack card for him because he didn't know I did rack cards. And in his mind, designing was not a broad term.

I designed business cards. I designed websites. I designed logos, but because I never told him I designed rack cards, he didn't know it was something I can do. Now that happened a few years ago, and that was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back. And after that, I really started to realize that a lot of my clients that I do certain jobs for, that's the only job I do for them. And I'm sure that these clients had needs, other requirements that could have used my skills. So a few years ago, I decided to put my theory to a test, and I did something very easy, something that you can do today. Because I have the email addresses to all my clients, I sent them an email, and this was before using email lists like Mailchimp or Aweber or Constant Contact or anything like that.

I just composed an email and send it individually to each of my clients, and it went something like this. Hi. Thanks for the last job that we did together, and I would name the job. I had a great time working on that project. Since we've worked together, I've done some other great things for other stuff. I've designed a t shirt or such and such a team. I designed a poster for a local theater company's next production. I created the logo for this startup.

I did a flyer for this nonprofit group, and keep an eye out around town for the suction truck because I designed the artwork that's on the side of it, and it's sure to catch some eyes. And then I would finish up the letter just saying, I just want to let you know that I'm available if there's anything else you need me to do. Well, an amazing thing happened after I sent that letter. My phone immediately started ringing with clients asking me to design things they didn't know I did. I had a client call me up and says, I didn't know you designed t shirts, and I explained to them that designing a t shirt is no different than designing anything else. It's just the medium the things printed on. But to them, they said that they get T shirts done all the time, and they are always looking for somebody or going to different companies to have them done. They didn't know that they could keep their branding consistent by having me design t shirts.

By mentioning the truck wrap that I had done, I ended up getting a few jobs from local clients. They wanted me to design something for their vehicles as well. Even the fact that I mentioned I did a flyer for a nonprofit group. Now I'm not talking pro bono work here. This was paid work. It just happened to be for a nonprofit group. Some of my existing clients who were on the board of directors for other nonprofit groups reached out and said, oh, I didn't know you did work for nonprofits. So there's a case that they knew what sort of work I did.

They just didn't know what sort of clients I dealt with, which is another whole different thing to worry about. So since I sent out that 1st mail, I do it on a regular basis. Now I'm not talking weekly or even monthly. But every couple of months or so, 2 to 3 months, I'll send out an email to all my clients just telling him what I've been up to, what sort of work I've done. And the clients I did the designs for love the publicity. And it never fails that I'll get 1 or 2 phone calls afterwards

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from somebody saying, oh, I didn't realize you did that. Or sometimes it's not that they didn't realize I did that, is they didn't realize they needed that. You'd be amazed at how many t shirts I've designed for companies that didn't even know before they got my email that they wanted t shirts designed.

It was only after they received my email that they thought up, a t shirt for this such and such event coming up would be a great idea. I better call Mark. So there you have it. It's a very simple, effective way of getting more business. We spend so much time trying to get more clients, trying to drum up business that way, Sometimes we forget about our existing clients and that they can have work for us. They just don't know that the work is suitable for us. We have to let them know, and we have to keep letting them know. Because even though a client soon realizes that you design T shirts or you design websites.

That's another big one. I have print clients that for years didn't know I did websites or vice versa. I've designed websites for clients, and they didn't know I also designed for print. But just because they learn that stuff doesn't mean they know everything. You gotta keep informing them. Another great thing to do is if you design something very innovative for somebody or come up with something different, let people know because it's something that might help their business as well. Years ago, I designed a small fold over card that when closed is roughly 4 and a half inches by 3 inches. And when you open it up, there were slits to put my business card in.

On the cover of the card, I would have my logo, and then when you opened it up, I had a little message printed saying thank you for your business. Here are a few business cards. I would love if you would pass them around and refer people to me. And then in the slits, I would put 3 or 4 or 5 business cards and anything I would do. Back then, I was physically mailing out invoices. Now everything's done through email. But every time I'd send an invoice, I'd put one of those cards with 3 or 4 business cards in it, and you'd be amazed at how much that worked. Not just the fact that the cards were being given out and I was getting referrals, but I ended up designing similar card holders for a bunch of my clients because they thought it was a very innovative ideas with different messages, asking people to refer them, thanking people, or whatever.

But just because I sent that one out myself, I ended up getting a bunch of clients asking me to design them for them. And even though I don't use those Cards myself anymore because I very rarely mail anything out. I do have some clients that still order those cards from me on a regular basis. So that's just an example of letting your clients know you do something that they might not know they need or they might not know exists. Rack cards are a great example. Many clients get flyers done, but they don't realize the rack cards. Now I don't know in your neck of the woods if they're called rack cards. Where I am, a rack card is roughly a 4 inch by 9 inch card printed both sides with information.

They're made to fit in the same racks that a flyer would, but they don't fold out. It's just a 2 sided card. And they've become really popular around my area. And they're so much less expensive to produce than a traditional folded flyer, and yet so many clients don't know about them. So whenever I mentioned that I did a rack card for somebody, sometimes a client will ask me, what's this rack card? And when I explain it to them, they'll say, oh, we could use that. And next thing you know, I've got a new job to do. I just want to let you know that it is possible that your clients don't know what it is you do, or don't know everything that you do, and it's your job to let them know. Because the more they know about you, the more they're gonna wanna use you because it's so much easier for them to deal with 1 person Then to have to deal with 1 person for their website, 1 person for their stationery, somebody else for their t shirts.

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If you are a designer that does it all, Let your clients know, and keep reminding them because they will forget. Well, there you have it. That was episode 2 of Resourceful Designer. Do I sound any different than I did way back then? That was recorded in 2015, 8 years ago. Wow. I've been out of this for a while. But still, the message holds true today. So what are you gonna do? How are you gonna inform your clients of all the services that you can offer them? Because I can almost guarantee it.

Whatever clients you have, they don't know the full scope of your capabilities, and they won't know unless you tell them. So send them an email. Reach out to them. Let them know what sort of projects you've been doing, what sort of things you've enjoyed working on recently. You never know. You may pick up some new projects and open up a world of opportunity with your existing clients. And that's what I wanted to share with you today.