

ADMINISTRATIVE VIEWS

Accurate Business Services (Contact: Jeannine@Accbizsvcs.com)

Fall 2003

Choosing the Right

Client

Choosing the right client can be difficult in a time when the economy is tight, but what I've learned is that not making sure that a client is a good fit for your goals and values will not be a good profitable client for your business.

Do you find yourself scrambling around trying to make all the various meetings to non-profit groups, networking events, and organizations that you had hoped would provide you with a steady stream of new and referral business, only to find that for some reason the business wasn't coming your way?

Somehow, these potential clients just didn't get it. I blamed myself for not being able to educate them in the value of the services I could provide. I listened patiently to information about their

businesses, and the problems they faced, and for the most part, I felt as if I was forcing them to try and figure out what it is that I do. Thankfully, the terminology, "Virtual Assistant" is becoming much more well known, but there's more to it than just coming up with a catchy "elevator speech", or finding someone that can use my

"...and know that if they're doing tasks they're not skilled in, they're losing money."

services. That's not a problem for me to identify at all. I think that most everyone I talk to can utilize my services in some way, shape or form.

My mission, should I choose to accept it, is to figure out which of these potential clients is a good fit for my business. I'm looking for professionals who value their time, and know that if they're doing tasks that they're not skilled in, they're losing money. What I need to find are potential clients that know what their time is worth. What do they charge per hour? It doesn't matter what I charge per hour, it matters how much time I can save them (it should take me less time to do these tasks because I'm more skilled at them) which will translate into saving them money.. The money they save is regaining their time to go out and do the things that drive their income, and believe me, doing the paperwork does not drive their income. Those are the clients that will be a good fit for me. The ones who "get it". The ones who realize that they can be more productive by focusing on the things that make them profitable, and outsource the administrative tasks to a skilled VA.

So, find your perfect fit when looking to grow your business. Look for quality, not quantity, and you'll be building a long-term partnership with someone who shares your goals and will value your products and/or services.



Catch More Clients Using Strategic Networking

Is networking helping you bring in the new clients you want?

If you are like most independent professionals and small business owners, you put hard work into getting your name out there and distribute your business card wherever you go.

You may even attend a weekly or monthly networking group or occasional business conference where people share leads.

And like most people, your time and effort isn't generating a steady stream of new business.

The problem is that most people think that networking consists of telling as many people as possible what they do, and handing out as many business cards as they can. They waste the few precious moments they have with new and existing contacts by focusing on themselves.

It's possible to meet someone in the airport, hand them your card after a brief conversation, and have them call you to request your services, but this random approach is like playing the lottery. You can't count on it to produce results. It is a Push and Pray technique: you push your information out to others and pray that they respond.

It rarely works. Your contact loses your card or simply forgets about you, or the timing wasn't right, or, in spite of the connection you thought you'd made, a single conversation usually isn't enough to launch a client relationship.

That initial conversation should be about understanding your prospects' problems, needs and concerns, and collecting their contact information. The objective of networking is not to expound on your credentials.

Spend the time you have with prospects (or people who might know a prospect) asking questions and collecting information. Then you can determine whether they would have any genuine interest in/

need for the solutions you provide. Use this client problem centered networking strategy to initiate and build profitable relationships.

Pull Information

1. See how many cards you can collect from prospects, and don't worry about how many of your own business cards you distribute. Some successful marketers don't even have a business card.

2. When you meet people, use the time to gather information from them, including:

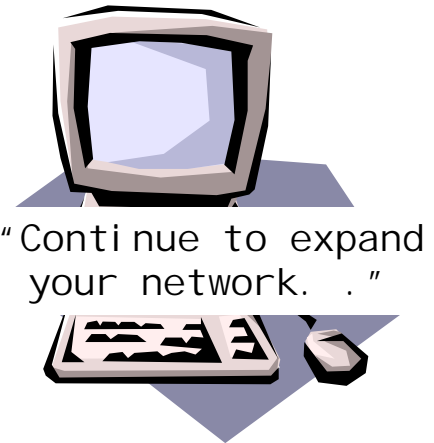
- Primary concerns about their business
- Problems they want solved
- Unmet business needs.
- Areas where the solutions you provide overlap with their needs
- Their contact information

3. Continue to expand your network. Whenever you make a contact, ask for referrals to other prospects.

4. Once you have this information, enter it into your database or contact manager.

Build Relationships

1. People have short memories. Follow-up after your initial contact and then stay in touch with your network on a regular basis. If you let more than a month go by without making contact they'll forget that you exist and



(Continued Page 3)

Business Ethics Solutions

Have a specific business or personal ethics dilemma? Let us help you make the most ethical decision possible.

E-mail your ethical situation and we'll help you find the most ethical solution.

If you're willing, we'll print your story here, and provide our readers with some "food for thought" when dealing with ethics in the workplace.

Questions to help you make ethical decisions:

1. Is it legal? (Does it follow company policy?)
2. Is it fair to everyone (even if not represented in this issue)?
3. Will it do harm? (Will your decision physically, mentally, or ethically harm anyone?)

E-mail your ethical questions to:
Jeannine@accbizsvcs.com

expertise or products by sending prospects and clients an idea or suggestion they can use right away. You could present this in an article you've written, or one you've read. Your contact will then associate you with the problems you solve.

Pull information from prospects and clients to grow your network, stay in touch and regularly demonstrate the value of your products and services. Networking should be one of the core marketing tactics of most independent professionals and small business owners.

Use client-centered networking to lessen your reliance on costly and time consuming cold calling/telemarketing and advertising. Over time, this business building strategy will reward you with a steady stream of new clients.



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The author, Marketing Coach, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners who are struggling to attract more clients. He can be contacted at ccook@charliecook.net or visit www.charliecook.net to get a copy of the free marketing guide, '7 Steps to Get More Clients and Grow Your Business'.

Strategic

Networking (Cont.)

that you are the best person to solve their financial, legal, human resource, design, or other problems. You'll want to make personal contact with some people on your prospect list, but in most cases, a letter, newsletter or ezine will do the job.

Use the merge function in your software to personalize your mailings.

2. Demonstrate the value of your

"It's not what happens to you that determines how far you go in life, it's what you do with what happens to you!"



For your convenience we accept all major credit cards through PayPal.com



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Focus on the things that you get paid well for doing...
Hire a VA
Let them do the paperwork!

What's inside:

- Choosing the Right Client
- Catch More Clients Using Strategic Networking
- Business Ethics Solutions

Internet Finds

Here are some great Websites:

- Looking for sites that provide health information you can grasp?
- www.heathatoz.com
- www.laurashealth.com
- www.mayoclinic.com

- Great sources for paper, postcards and communication media:
- www.paperdirect.com
- www.ideaart.com
- Business greeting cards and postcard marketing
- www.koglecards.com

- Online notices, postcards and e-contact:
- www.constantcontact.com
- Promotional products for every budget:
- www.adimpactpromos.com
- Have a site to suggest? E-mail us at Jeannine@Accbizsvcs.com

