

There are an infinite number of things you could be doing.

(Are you doing the personal and professional high payoff activities first?)

Are you creating the quality of life that you seek, could it be better?

What stirs your heart?

What is it that you wish to accomplish with your life and your business?

When are you an 11 on a scale of 1-10, truly loving your work? Perhaps you should revisit your priorities.

In order to feel proud and stay excited about your work you must clarify your unique offer and value. Before you do anything else, answer these questions. (It's better if you write out the answers)

What business are we in, should we be in, and will we be in? (***You must decide and define yourself and your practice or others will do it for you***)

Whom do we serve? Exactly who can most benefit from what we do best, do we convincingly articulate who and how? (***Ideal client profile***)

What is our process to market our services and predictably generate a consistent flow of quality prospects? Where is our business coming from and what should we do more of? (***Track activity and evaluate results***)

How do we conduct ourselves and how do we deliver the services or products? (***What are our standards of excellence and what are our procedures to insure consistency?***)

Most business builders can answer some of these questions, but typically they have not thought seriously enough about meaningful answers that will inspire and insure their success and happiness.

If you aren't crystal clear about your top priorities you probably are not saying **NO** often enough to perceived opportunities, (i.e. distractions from your important and most profitable work), and wondering why you don't have enough time for the really important activities. ***Prioritize and do what's most important personally and professionally first.***

A clear vision and defined objectives are the necessary mold into which you can pour your time, energy, and creativity with confidence that it will take shape. Without them there is no benchmark from which to judge your progress and adjust your activity. How will you even know when you have arrived? Or enjoy the meaningful progress that you may be making on the path toward your vision?

Example: How much sense would it make to run in a race without a finish line? Without a finish line you would just be running – with no tangible end in sight. Building a successful business is a series of small steps toward a clearly defined end. And, like running a race, though the ultimate gratification comes when you cross the finish line, your momentum is maintained by knowing the distance you've covered, and how much further you have to go. It is paramount that you have benchmarks along your path so that you constantly remain aware of your progress. Otherwise you will probably quit and try something new before you realize the rewards of your effort.

It is important that you schedule time in your organizer to think, plan, and work on your high payoff activities. If you wait until you have time to fit it in, the stuff of the day will consume you and important activities will be neglected or completed only when they become urgent and under a time crunch, not the best conditions for conducting important high payoff work.

Referral Marketing

One of the most common and important high payoff areas neglected by advisors is referral marketing. Yet, the majority of you tell us that your best and most profitable clients have come from referral introductions, and that a ***better referral system*** is one of the top improvements necessary to grow and enjoy your practice more.

Obviously, you do receive referrals, but usually on a passive basis. Very few have developed a predictable and comfortable process for both the advisor and client to make quality introductions. Advisors are asking clients and centers of influence to help them, but most advisors have invested almost no time to make the process easy and comfortable.

It's not rocket science, in fact it's quite easy if you properly position your message and congruently communicate your sincere desire to help people. Don't make it more complicated than it is. Trust and sincerity are why clients do business with you, put those same important character traits to work to improve and strengthen your referral marketing effectiveness.

Stop rowing upstream (Some thoughts to help you build your referral system)

How many referral introductions did you obtain last year, and how many of them resulted in new business?

Do you feel you deserve more quality introductions? Why? (You had better convince yourself first if you expect others to introduce you.)

To raise your appreciation of your value and increase your confidence, conduct an inventory of your services and how it impacts peoples lives in a meaningful way.

If you take the exercise seriously you should come away feeling that people in your target market must meet me and learn how I can help. If you don't feel that way as a result, you'd better get to work on your education and/or practice management skills to build a more valuable practice.

Do you:

Consistently ask to be introduced to people you feel you can help? How often do you simply forget to bring it up? Make it a part of your review and meeting procedure and position referrals as an opportunity to help people, not how you market or one of the ways you get paid.

Have a process to uncover client's network of relationships so that you can consistently ask about people that you know they know and feel you can help? Be a better listener and learn more about them and the people they know.

Provide good reasons to be introduced? If they are convinced about your ability to help someone that they know, they are much more likely to feel good about introducing you.

Teach clients a professional introduction procedure that both gets you a quality introduction and makes them feel confident when doing it?

Get clients excited about sharing your services? Do they feel like a hero for helping others learn about and possibly enjoy the benefits that you provide? If not, why not?

How important are referral introductions to your better future?

(Ask yourself this: Based on your closing ratios and average case size what is it costing you in personal income by not obtaining a consistent flow of quality introductions every month? What is the lifetime value of those new clients?)

Get your head in the right place, focus on helping others

Believe in your value?

Believe your clients better off for having met and conducted business with you? If you do you have no reason to apologize for asking for the opportunity to help others. In fact, if it is your sincere desire to help clients enjoy the benefits of your work, you have an obligation to identify and serve those that meet your ideal client profile.

If you have been in financial services for more than a few years, based on your experience, who wouldn't learn something of value from spending time with you? Whether they become a client or not, you leave everyone you sit down with better off for taking time to meet with you. As soon as you believe this, have a pure motive in your heart, and can communicate it, obtaining referrals will become much easier.

Most advisors do believe in their value, unfortunately it's buried in the back of their head and not helping anyone. When you **focus** on helping people, and the importance of your work toward improving their quality of life, that intent moves to the front of your mind. And when this happens, the words that come out of your mouth are instinctively the ones that will touch and inspire people to help you help others.

Get clear about your objectives

Are you serious about getting paid for helping more people? Get clear about your objectives and your value, and then put your sincerity and capabilities to work. Focus on applying what you stand for and what you know toward finding and serving people that want and need the benefits you provide, make it your personal mission. Your real work is in defining and consistently delivering the benefits you promise while expanding your reach by continuously identifying others who also need – and can most benefit from your help.

Have fun helping more people enjoy a richer, more satisfying life. What better way could there be to make a living?

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.”

--- Aristotle

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