

Fear of Selling

By Joann Javons

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When I discuss selling with professionals who want to put their business online, they start to squirm at mention of the very word.

When I ask professionals why they want to put their business online, these are the answers I get:

"I want to build credibility"

"You need to have a web site to be seen as a legitimate business today."

"To get feedback on my product."

"I want to increase my visibility."

"To establish a professional image online."

"To provide information."

True enough. All of these are good reasons but they are really the stepping stones to your end goal. Notice that the words "sell" or "market" aren't even mentioned on this list!

If you want to put your business online 'to build credibility', for example, why exactly do you want to build credibility? Yes, you want to establish credibility and trust in your relationships. But why?

Why Are You In Business?

The reason is that you have a product or service to sell. Aren't you in business to make an honest living doing something you love to do?

But "selling" sounds crass, aggressive, pushy and decidedly unprofessional to many of us. If that's true for you, I suggest you substitute two other words in your thinking: relationship marketing. In the end, the results are the same if you do it right.

If you do any type of professional consulting, you're doing relationship marketing (or selling) because you want your client to say "yes" to the services or products you offer. When a potential client says "yes" to your product or service, you've just made a sale!

No one said you have to be pushy, arrogant, aggressive or obnoxious. Unless you want to go out of business. But you can also go out of business another way: by getting stuck on any of the stepping stones to your end goal. Credibility, trust, information are all part of relationship marketing but if you make these stepping stones your end goal, you have stopped short of having a successful business, online or offline.

Getting Stuck On Relationship Building

Many professionals get stuck on the 'relationship' part of relationship marketing at the expense of the marketing. It seems easier to build relationships than to market something to those with whom we've built relationships.

But what is really getting in your way is fear, fear of somehow violating the credibility and trust you've built with your relationships.

Elena Fawkner, lawyer, writer, and online business owner, makes an excellent point in her article "Am I Afraid To Sell?" She says, "In other words, the focus on 'relationship marketing' has been so much on the relationship that the marketing begins to feel crass and a violation of trust. Many new online business owners report that they feel like they're taking advantage of the trust of those with whom they have forged a bond." If you feel like this, I recommend you read Elena's excellent article at: <http://www.ahbbo.com/afraidtosell.html> .

You will need to work through this fear if you want to be successful, online or offline. In many ways, it's even more critical online because the web is an impersonal, anonymous medium unless you focus on your goal: for others to say "yes" to your high value product or service. Building relationships is important but don't stay stuck at the relationship step of the process. You can build relationships and never make one single sale.

Make a decision to stay focused on your end goal. Yes, do the stepping stones right because credibility and trust are vital to your success. But they are not sufficient. Your end goal is to offer your visitors something that they want to say "yes" to. That's the reason to put your business online.

Set up your online business so that it achieves your end goal, not merely a stepping stone. For more on how to achieve your goal, see our article "Success Myths" at <http://www.private-practice-marketing.com.myths.htm>.

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