

Successfully Selling Your Professional Services

By Rachna D. Jain

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The 6 C Approach To Getting Clients - FAST

As a professional service provider you face special challenges promoting yourself to potential clients. You may have certain restrictions on how you market or advertise. You may feel overwhelmed by the demands of being both owner and employee. You might not have a strong base of effective selling & marketing skills. In addition, you may believe that self promotion is somehow unprofessional and pushy or even unnecessary. Very often, professionals "open up shop" and expect, much like in the Field of Dreams, "if you build it, they will come."

I don't deny that there is some validity to this approach; for instance, if you rent space in a strategic location and let your colleagues know you're there then you are likely to get referrals - eventually. This is fine if you're willing to wait months or years to create a thriving business. The bottom line is that you must let people know who you are and what you can do if you want to be successful in selling your services now.

This does not mean that you adopt a persona that doesn't suit you or that you try all the marketing and sales techniques you can find while desperately seeking one that works. Instead, I'd like to offer you the 7 "C" approach to successfully selling your professional service.

Clarity. This refers to spending time to craft a clear, compelling and memorable message. It involves being very clear about the benefits of your service and finding a way to "speak the language" of your potential customers. Very often, professionals resort to phrases like, "I help my clients reach their goals." "I do tax returns." "I give massages". Is there anything particularly compelling or memorable about any of these statements? Not really. Instead, how about these: "I help my clients reach their goals of working 51% less and making 52% more." Or "My clients legally pay fewer taxes" Or "I provide a special type of massage which can permanently reduce the pain from old injuries." Do you see how each of these statements provides more clarity and gives the potential customer more information about benefits? The power of clarity is that you know, right away, if your potential client will buy from you. At the very least you've provided the potential client a memorable way to remember you-so s/he can refer friends.

Caring. This point might go without saying, but, just in case this is a new idea you want to be sure you care about your customers. Marketing is most effective (and easiest) when you have a passion for your service and absolutely know that it's effective. You really want people to experience your service because you care, for instance, that they work less and make more, that they save money on tax day or that they are pain-free. If you can't think of anything in your service that you care about

deeply, passionately and vocally keep looking until you do. Finding this aspect is like unlocking a treasure chest!

Congruency. Another aspect to consider in marketing yourself is that of congruency. Congruency is the match between what you say and what you do. This "match" between inner and outer helps potential clients understand you and remember you. For example, if you say that you're a financial services advisor, specializing in accounts over \$500k, make sure you "look" and "act" the part. This means that you will behave much like your ideal clients. You will dress the same, read the same magazines, spend time in the same restaurants or belong to the same professional groups. Your ideal clients will be attracted to you if you are congruent between what you say and what you do. Build your credibility by cultivating this 'match' within yourself.

Competency. The best marketing in the world will not save a professional who is not competent and skilled at his or her trade. Although you are probably extraordinarily competent already make sure to maintain this "edge" by continuous learning. To continue being extremely skilled upgrade your education and training whenever needed. The highly skilled professional commands higher fees and find it easier to attract and retain high quality clients.

Charisma. Charisma is the skill of leading and developing a devoted following. You can increase your charisma and should make every effort to do so. Be aware of your "silent" language. Do you look interested? Are you listening? Do you ask good questions? Do you provide the prospect an opportunity to ask questions or get more information? Do you have resources to recommend to this client if it turns out she or he is not a match for your business?

Consistency. The most effective marketing strategy ever is consistency. Day in and day out, you must commit to marketing yourself and your professional services. It is too easy to forgo marketing when business picks up which may leave you scrambling for business during a downturn. Instead, commit fully to daily marketing actions and then take them.

Let's say that you're ready to put these 6 C's in place but you'd like someone to help you move forward. Consider, then, a 7th "C"- Coaching. If you're a person who is open to new approaches, willing to take action and believe that support, guidance, and accountability would benefit you, consider working with a Certified Sales Coach. These specially trained professionals can help you develop the skills you need to build your ideal business in record time.

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Dr. Rachna D. Jain is Director of Operations for Sales Coach Training a division of Comprehensive Coaching U. If you'd like to learn more about working with a Certified Sales Coach, please visit <http://www.salescoachtraining.com/meet.html> .

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