

## **Hanging with the Right People**

*The benefits of high-level collaboration.*

Can you really fill your sales funnel with better clients and faster closings by making the most of your relationships? My experience in business, especially these last 12 years, screams at me, a resounding, YES!!!

Have you ever asked a fellow businessperson how things are going? Typical answers are "we are swamped" or "we are so busy". My response is normally, "Wow. That sounds amazing. Are you profitable?"

**If you forget the rest of this article and only remember the words; PROFIT and PLEASURE, I will have done my job.**

Who among us does not want to be profitable? As you know there is a huge difference between being busy in business and being profitable. Let's challenge you to take a closer look at your business.

Let's begin by looking at your top 5%ers. We will define these clients as those who bring you the most profit and pleasure. Now ask yourself, "Why are they only my top 5%? Why are they not my top 35%?"

An honest assessment of time and resources will help you discover a large percentage of clients and customers who are depriving your business of the success it could potentially achieve. These are the people who wrestle with you about price, they pay late, they are seldom satisfied with your service and they waste your productive time with way too many questions. Their activity in your business creates that business experience that leads you to be busy but not profitable.

What if you could increase that number from 5% to 35% and serve clients who brought you pleasure and profit? The solution is simple. You must engage your best referral relationships.

Stop and ask yourself, "If I spent as much time getting to know possible referral sources and other business owners, as I do in chasing payments and answering questions, what would happen to my bottom line? If you could attract the attention of other business owners who work with your desired clients and they would connect you, what would happen to your business?"

**ANSWER – PROFITABILITY!!!**

Start by making a list. Who are the people in your life and around your business that you know could bring you more of your desired clients? Who do you feel could be getting better sales results for you through their relationships?

**Keep this in mind - Word of mouth marketing works only when it is worked.**

By lending their established credibility to you, your referral source enables you to approach a referred, potential client with a high level of trust. When done correctly, this relationship marketing strategy gets businesspeople, like you, the best sales opportunities possible with the least hassle.

Attracting and cultivating the kind of relationships that bring you better clients and faster closings is what being a successful networker is all about. Thankfully, the Rohnert Park Chamber provides numerous opportunities for you and me to practice creating and cultivating these needed relationships. Let me encourage you to make your way to a monthly mixer, a luncheon or a new members/not so new members orientation over the next few weeks.

Who are the people in your life and around your business that you know could bring you more of your desired clients? Who do you feel could be getting better sales results for you through their relationships? Invite them to tag along with you to these meetings. Get them involved wherever you are involved.

Let me give you some other pointers that will help you as you cultivate these referral relationships. Start by arranging a time where you and the potential referral source to talk uninterrupted – book an appointment. While in this appointment -

#1 Share why you love your business and where you want to go with it. When your best relationships decide to support you in why you do what you do and where you want to take your business, you are on the right track. This conversation will allow both of you to discover who you are, what motivates each of you and the goals and vision you both have for your companies and lives. It is my belief that if people cannot “buy” your why and your where, there is no reason to have a second meeting. They simply are not your best referral source. They are not bad people, and they may bring you a referral at some point, but they are not the people you want to invest in for the purpose of gaining referrals.

#2 If they get your “why” and “where”, close your meeting by scheduling a second meeting to talk about your “who” and “what”. In this conversation you will talk about the people you want to serve and what you do for them. This is a conversation about your ideal clients (think profit and pleasure), where to find them, what to listen for and how to introduce you. Be prepared to help them develop introductions using your foundational story and your reason for doing what you do.

Next week, I will provide a few more steps to follow as you develop your marketing strategy around word of mouth. For now know this, when customers are referred to you, they will often refer you. Also, these clients typically stay longer and spend more.

As always, I am here to help. Andy Springer, Business Consultant and Coach.

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