



InGenius

Review

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A review of
great thinking
from

INGENUITY MARKETING GROUP

a marketing and training firm that works primarily with professional service organizations and small businesses.

We offer strategic marketing planning and coaching, marketing program development, and curriculum and training mainly in the areas of consultative selling, professional service marketing, and customer service.

Wendy Nemitz



I Hate to Close

By Wendy Nemitz
President, Ingenuity Marketing Group

Closing a sale is simple.

You wouldn't know it from how much energy most professional service providers put into avoiding it. You would think it was a root canal (my apologies to RiverValley Endodontics in Stillwater, Minnesota, who truly make root canals no big deal); the way most professionals protest, they would rather do anything than close a sale.

Closing a sale is not magic. It is simply making sure that the questions have been answered, necessary issues have been raised, and potential clients know you would like to work with them.

Closing a professional service sale sounds like this:

- ~ "Your business sounds very interesting and a great fit for our firm. We would enjoy working with you and giving you great service. When will you be making a decision?"
- ~ "We have certainly enjoyed talking through your challenges to profitability. We have gone through the process for cost segregation and how we can analyze the data and help you pinpoint both cost savings and profit improvement strategies. We would enjoy moving forward with this project. When would you like to start?"
- ~ "I enjoy working with family businesses and have been able to watch many of the succession plans we've worked on go smoothly into place and keep both the business and the family happy. Shall we set up a meeting to start working through the major issues?"
- ~ "If we have answered all your questions, may I ask when you will be ready to move forward on this?"

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- ~ “I have time to begin this project next week. Is that soon enough for you?”
- ~ “I enjoyed meeting you and appreciate your trust in our firm. How would you like me to follow up with you?”

I am making a change in my business and as a result am interviewing people to help me. *No one closes!* Most of the professionals I have spoken with take an hour to meet with me, answer my questions, tell me about their firms and then smile and shake my hand. Almost no one asks when this change will take place or even tells me they would enjoy working with me. Only a few follow up. This leaves me unsure of what to do next and if my company is a good fit for their firm.

Pushy sales people.

Many professionals are afraid of appearing pushy or “salesy” if they close any kind of sales interview. They think they might be pushing people to make decisions they are not ready to make.

Why would they be at your firm if they did not need you? They need you! If you can help them with their problems or concerns, you need to tell them so and tell them you would like to work with them. Closing a sale is not about pushing me or any potential client. It is about assuring the potential client of your sincere interest in working with them and your ability to perform the job. If you do not assure them that you are interested in the work, why should they choose you?

It is a real kindness to potential clients to assure them of your interest in their organizations and your firm’s ability to serve them well. It shows consideration to ask them what the timeline for their decisions are and to suggest a next step. Very few potential clients hire new firms regularly. It is your job to tell them the process and help them get started.

The market has changed and most people now have practice development and new client acquisition in their job descriptions. One of the most valuable things you can think about is how to close a sale. Don’t look for a magic word or phrase because there is not one. Think about something you

can say that is sincere, that sounds like you, and that directs the potential client to the next step. You can use any of the phrases listed.

Rehearse saying this phrase a few times and write it down. Ask your potential client good questions about their challenges and opportunities. Be genuinely interested. Tell the potential client about how your firm can help. Find out what questions or concerns they had with their former provider. Address those questions. And when the conversation is done and it seems natural, tell them you want the business! Ask when you can start! Tell them what the next step is and make that prospect into your new best client!

That’s an Order!

By Wendy Nemitz

One of my favorite classes while working toward my Master of Arts in Leadership at Augsburg College in Minneapolis was about language and power. Although the professors in the program are outstanding, I learned at least as much from my fellow students as from the assignments and lectures.

One student, Jody Dittrich, presented her study of directives. A directive is a statement that tells someone to do something. The conclusions of her research indicate that a person’s response to directives is strongly tied to how the request or order is presented. While many still use a brusque order as a way to communicate, or because they think orders are more likely to be obeyed, people are much more likely to follow through on a well-issued directive and feel better about the professional relationship if you:

- ~ Greet the person, especially if you have not greeted the person yet on that day.
- ~ Deal with the interpersonal first. “How are you?” or “How is it going?” may seem superfluous if you do not like to “waste time in chit chat,” yet a small amount of interpersonal conversation goes a long way toward building a relationship.

- ~ Ask if the person has time to speak to you. If not, ask if you can set up a time to discuss your project.
- ~ Tell the person about your timeline for the project and any check-in points or resources they might need. Ask if they have any questions and if it is possible to finish your project.
- ~ Verify any information or answer any questions.
- ~ Thank the person doing the project.

This simple formula for directives (called “good manners” by some) will help create the kind of rapport that makes people want to work for you, want to get your projects done, and want to help you succeed.

Ingenuity Marketing Group

is a firm that helps professional service providers set marketing strategies, implement tactics, and most importantly, helps people and firms shift into a positive growth model.

For more information,

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Wendy Nemitz and her daughter Elle Kokkinos at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Ingenuity in South Africa

Food for thought for those of us who would like to expand our businesses: Establish the relationships and the sales will follow.

This summer I went with my family on a photo safari to South Africa. We also visited the cities of Durban and Cape Town. Everywhere we went there were vendors selling jewelry and carvings. I noticed my family tended to buy things when they established relationships with the street vendors in some way. For example, when we were welcomed into a small Zulu village, we were shown how to make beer and throw spears. Nearly every one of us bought something from the stand in the village. When my daughter and I went to the largest open air craft market in Africa, located in Cape Town, vendors who asked where we were from and spoke with us were much more likely to make a sale. Price alone did not open our purses.