It isn't always about The Money
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Anytime you hear an objection to your proposal based on price, you haven't clearly defined the value of your solution. When true value is perceived by your client or prospect, price becomes a non-issue. However, when true value is not perceived by either your client or prospect, price becomes a major issue. Therefore, it is necessary to understand their hot buttons and decision-making criteria before developing a solution and presenting your proposal.

Selling Solutions
The following are tips that will help you in designing the absolute best solutions that will appeal to the majority of your clients' and prospects' hot buttons, including return-on-investment, profitability, and time and money savings, all things every provider should be looking for:

Value vs. Price

- Sell profits; not just products and services or features and benefits.
- Show the return-on-investment your solution will provide to your prospect, including estimated dollars and time table based on proven results you've provided for other clients.
- Determine the benefits of your solution and then tie dollars to it in terms of money or time saved by implementing your solution over time, (i.e. show a monthly savings, quarterly savings and annual savings your solution will provide to your prospect).
- Design your proposal around profit improvement and include information that shows your proposal turns your solution into dollars for your customer.
- Show the sacrifice your prospect will make by not implementing your solution – paint a picture of the worst case scenario.
- Compare the one-time investment (and use the term investment, not price or cost) of your solution to the long-term savings your prospect will enjoy either in increased productivity, time savings, money savings or all of the above.
- Come up with a payment plan to make your solution more affordable to your prospects. Break down payments into monthly or quarterly options and offer a discount for pre-payment.
- Become a problem-solver / solution provider for your prospects and clients.

Case in Point: when I sold telephone systems for Lucent Technologies years ago, I was not allowed to let a proposal out the door without a section that specifically addressed the return-on-investment my solution would provide the prospect. I was able to show a time savings based on various features of the phone systems, which then equated to a dollar savings. We also had leasing programs available that made our phone systems more affordable.

Oftentimes I was able to show that the monthly savings the new system would provide for the prospect exceeded the monthly lease payment. When you're able to show that the benefit or results of your solution outweigh the investment, you have then accomplished selling value, not price alone, and you will win every time.

I have listed the common hot buttons of most prospects, including mine, and I addressed each one with the value and results of a solution that I call The Blitz Experience™ (see chart).

Being proactive here is always profitable. Results can vary but they are definitely hugely improved. Now it's time to target the ideal client and prospect.

Targeting Ideal Clients

What if you had a sales tool that would help you assess a prospect's likelihood of becoming a client? If you could create such a tool, would you? Of course you would, so here's how to do it. Take a look at your best client. What is it about the company that qualifies it as your best client? How does it use your products and services? How many employees does it have? What is its estimated annual revenue? How many locations does it have? What is the title of your contact there? These questions should be considered when assessing your best client and creating your powerful new sales tool – the ideal client profile or ICP.

The ICP is defined as a set of criteria or characteristics that make up your perfect client. To create your ICP, in addition to the above mentioned questions, you should ask yourself, and answer, the following:

- What is my value proposition at my ideal client?
- What is the end result my products or services create for my ideal client?
- What industries does my ideal client represent?
- How does it go to market?
- What is the trigger event that occurs to indicate a need for my products or services (client who is moving, remodeling, downsizing, growing and so on)?
- Who are my ideal client's customers?

Your answers to these questions, plus additional questions you can think of that are relevant, combine to create your ICP. Once created, your ICP becomes an invaluable tool in cleaning up your current pipeline as well as assessing future prospects.

To clean up your pipeline, compare the prospects in your current pipeline with your new ICP. Any prospects that have not been playing ball with you and share less than 80 percent of the characteristics outlined in your ICP should be removed from your pipeline immediately. Your focus should be on the prospects that match your ICP at 80 percent or better and are responding to you.

Next, use your ICP as an assessment tool to determine how to get your best prospects moving forward. Each time you receive a lead or referral, compare it to your ICP to determine whether or not you will pursue it. You also can use your ICP as a tool to create a prospect list. Use this new tool to help you decide with whom and where you will spend your time. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is say no and stop working with a prospect that really isn't a prospect at all. You will be amazed at the new level of responsiveness you'll gain by identifying and working with only those prospects who match your Ideal Client Profile.

When you finally do grasp, and translate to your ideal client or prospect the true meaning of value, it's apparent that it isn't always about the money.

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