

How to get clients and build your customer base

Whether you have started your own business or joined an existing one, career success depends largely on one thing: clients.



Source: www.pexels.com

The search for new clients and customers drives most businesses. However, finding new customers is one of the most difficult challenges – one that is intensified by the fact that many business owners and professionals are not savvy marketers, and the idea of "selling" scares them.

The reality is that everyone needs to sell – whether it is a product, a service, an experience, a destination, or themselves, but it can be particularly difficult for professionals who are taking a personal risk when marketing themselves as the brand.

According to Jason Bernic, an executive life coach working with entrepreneurs and business owners, and the founder of Insane! Prospecting, many of his professional clients often ask him how to go about getting new clients.

“In my coaching practice I have had clients who are lawyers, accountants, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, bio-kineticists, physiotherapists, architects, interior designers and digital marketers and I have often been asked by them how they can go about securing new business.”

“Professionals study for many years to become experts in their respective fields but what is not taught during say a medical or law degree, is how to prospect for, and bring in new clients,” says Bernic.

“These highly educated professionals are not trained in how to market themselves and their businesses, how to ensure referrals and how to ultimately ‘make sales’. Their passion and focus lie in the expert services that they provide.”

“I hear things like: ‘I am a doctor (for example), not a salesperson. I don’t know how to go about growing my practice and spreading the word amongst potential future patients’.”

Other aspects of starting a business can be easily managed from a practical perspective – securing premises and signing a lease, hiring support staff, putting daily operational systems in place etc. These things can be successfully achieved with the use of a check list approach - but marketing one’s services in a bid to bring in new business is an entirely different skill set that requires a professional to step out of their comfort zone.



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“Professionals are their own personal brand and prospecting for business therefore requires personal vulnerability - this is where the fear kicks in.”

Bernic advises that in his experience, professionals can be afraid to sell, and afraid to be seen to be selling, they experience anxiety at what others think about their business and themselves (how they look, and sound), how they are received, whether they are liked or not and often they are afraid of connecting with potential clients and collaborating with associates.

The what, the how and the who

“Anyone who Googles the topic ‘how to get new clients’ will find a plethora of content and advice on many different strategies – this is the ‘what to do and how to do it’ and is easy to find, but many people still get stuck and are unable to take the leap from knowing what should be done to actually doing it!”

“It’s the who that professionals struggle with. Who they are and how they show up and represent themselves as the brand when approaching potential clients/patients,” says Bernic, who offers the following advice for professionals to build their business:

1. First, establish what your professional goals are in terms of business growth and success.
2. Work on building your own capacity, making time for prospecting and also for new business that comes in. Stop making excuses for why you are not out there looking for new business.
3. Build confidence to go out there and represent yourself and your business effectively. Work on your mindset and allay your fears that stop you from effectively taking your brand out there.
4. Identify limiting beliefs that hold you back and create new positive beliefs that help you grow as a person, a professional, and as a salesperson.
5. Understand how you want to show up as a representative of your business going forward. Create the best version of yourself and step into it.

6. Identify your bad habits and start to form good ones that support your goals.
7. Come up with a feasible plan to market your business successfully that you can implement and continue indefinitely.
8. Implement this plan – and stick with it!

“Prospecting is about getting in front of potential clients. Successful prospecting is not just about what you need to do, but who you need to be,” concludes Bernic.

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