

Crossing the Line

Part One

Imagine this, you manage sales for a large hotel. Your property is hosting this month's meeting for the local hotel sales association to which you belong. Your boss will be attending. Your clients from the association are looking forward to meeting your boss. Get the picture?

At the event one of your largest competitors, also a member of the same association, has chosen to show up with brochures in hand. Your competitor is working the room. Wow! She is smooth with your hot prospects! You feel anger bubbling up in you.

Where are the rules for influencing & networking? What does "crossing the line" look like?

Here is another scenario; you are so excited about taking a class that would appeal to your target market. You are taking the class because you really want to learn.

At work, you have identified a large corporation who you want to target; you know they need your services. The first night of class, as folks are introducing themselves, you realize that several of your competitors are also taking the class ... AND so is your key contact in the potential client organization. During the break one of your competitors practically corners the potential contact foisting brochures and business cards in her direction.

What are the lines for influencing and networking? What action would you take?

In our third scenario, you are invited to represent your organization on an expert panel with two other professionals. You have been asked to talk about how to do some part of your work. The first panelist speaks as if she had been asked to sell her stuff – and she makes an offer to members of the audience to come tour her facility! You had planned to speak on your area of expertise as requested; no sales pitch planned. It's your turn to speak...

What are the lines for influencing and networking? What do you do?

Email me and share your thoughts: ShawnHayashi@TheProfessionalDevelopmentGroup.com we will continue this article in the next issue with some of your replies.

Here are 10 networking principals to consider as you think through these scenarios:

1. When done well, networking is 95% giving. It's focusing on helping others get what they want. In many ways customer service and networking are the same. Problem solving with others to help them is networking.

2. Relationships are vital to sales. When we want long term partnerships with clients we must keep in mind, people buy from people they like. People do not like obnoxious, pushy, overbearing people.
3. The world is a big place; there are more prospects out there than you could possibly serve! It's helpful to be motivated by this reality when you do not get a client you had targeted. Pick yourself up and keep going to find the next one.
4. Polite people make others feel comfortable. Manners matter because they help us to know the boundaries in creating a comfortable environment. All sports games have rules so we know how to play; business manners are merely the rules of the game.
5. In communication there is a huge difference between push energy and pull energy. If you have high interest in something but a low relationship with the decision-maker, you need to use pull energy to draw the decision-maker to you: INSPIRE, do not persuade.
6. Attitude is important. If you think you can, you will. Be bold in your belief that you deserve to have what you want.
7. Not everyone you meet needs to be your client! Mark LeBlanc, a guru & coach, taught me that "27% of the prospects you meet will be a good fit for your offerings." That means 73% of the prospects you meet will not be a good fit for your offerings.
8. Build partnerships. People who serve the same clients you do, but who are not in competition with you, can become your partners to offer more. This will broaden your network and help you increase your influence.
9. You can network indirectly by having others speak well of your services, or by asking great questions that cause others to see your competence. Use testimonials and opportunities to speak to your advantage.
10. Business cards help people connect. Always carry your business card! We include our business card in every letter that leaves our office. Recently I met a prospect while our children were playing on toys at the playground. Because I had my card, we were able to get together later to discuss business.

Do you agree with these principles? How do they influence your thoughts on the three scenarios? I look forward to hearing from you!

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