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Ideal Customers – What Do They Look Like?

By Kerri Salls

It's such an easy question to ask: "Who's your ideal customer?" And it can be so challenging to

answer! After a presentation I gave last night, one of the attendees approached me to say she had two ideal niches she loves to work in and yet because she wants both, she's struggling to reach either one. I'm not surprised.

My point is that not all customers are created equal. You must research and identify who is the right customer for you. If you are lucky, they'll find you. Being a little more realistic and responsible, you have to actively seek them out. When you find them or reach them you must:

* identify the problem they have that you can solve, and * sell them on your solution.

Before you determine your ideal client you must assess all possible clients in the broader niche you are in. Some prospective clients will be too expensive to serve. Some will be too expensive to sell. Some will never be satisfied. Then again, some others will be ideal clients.

So what will an ideal client look like? One or more of the following must be true:

– They find your product/service offering to be valuable. – You offer a solution to at least one of their important problems. – You create opportunity for them. – Purchasing from you is a good investment for them.

Do you know who these customers are? Without them your business plan has no validity. Without them your marketing strategy will fall flat. Without them your vision of success is like a hot-air balloon that runs out of gas before it catches a thermal current to help it soar.

To sell well you must know your target market. Know what they want and what they need. If you don't know, or you aren't sure, find out.

Concurrently check in with your own business vision and mission. Why? Because, if you pick an ideal customer niche and you sign up to deliver a solution to their problem it had better be:

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* something you are passionate about * something you can be the best in the world at * something extremely profitable for you

Kerri Salls, MBA runs a virtual business school to train, consult and coach small business CEO's and entrepreneurs in 10 key strategies to make more profit in less time. Learn more at

<http://www.breakthrough-business-school.com/products.html>

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Ten Ways to Manage a Rapidly Growing Business

By Alvah Parker

While some new business owners face the issue of not enough customers, others face the issue of too many customers/clients. Both are serious issues and must be dealt with carefully. There are many lists on how to find new customers/clients. Here is a list of 10 ways to deal with a rapid influx of new customers. The goal is a steady flow of just the right customers/clients.

1. Know the customer/client that is right for your business.

Get really clear about your ideal client or customer so you can be selective when there are too many business opportunities and you do not have time to accept them all.

2. Have a specialty that you are known for.

Specialize so that you get really good at what you are doing. You can then service more customers/clients quickly.

3. Eliminate clients who drain you.

If a client/customer takes too much of your time, that client/customer is costing you money. Look for ways to predict who will be a time-consuming customer/client and avoid them. Find ways to eliminate those customers/clients.

4. Create systems to support you.

Examples are: a good business development system* that provides you with the customers or clients you need, a good bookkeeping system to keep track of expenses and revenue, a customer/client tracking system with a database of customers/clients names, addresses, and other useful information.

*Even though it may seem like you have too many customers at the moment, that flow will stop unless you keep marketing.

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5. Off load routine tasks to others.

What are the repetitive tasks you hate to do but which you know are necessary to run your business? Many administrative tasks are easily taught to a support person and by doing so you make more time in your day to see customers/clients.

6. Leave time in your day for reflection and self-care.

Doing the tasks of the business is of course necessary. Many get so focused on their task lists that they never have time to take a strategic look at the business. Putting aside time every week helps you to find more ways to work with the customers/clients you want to. Leave some time too for taking care

of you. This means making time for doctor's appointments, hair care, massage therapy, exercise, meditation and anything else that provides for your health and well being.

7. Set firm boundaries.

Don't allow a client/customer to play on your sympathies and convince you to do something you know you should refuse (i.e. too time consuming, not your specialty and/or for free). Doing favors for others is not a favor to you!

8. Raise fees.

If all the clients/customers coming to you are your ideal clients/customers then it is time to raise fees/prices. This will sort the clients/customer that are willing to pay more for your services and those who are not. Revisit your fee/price structure at least once a year.

9. Refer to others.

When clients/customers are not your ideal clients/customers or when your ideal clients/customers cannot afford your fee, have a list of other business owners to whom you can refer.

10. Hire someone to help you do the work.

Once you have off loaded all the repetitive tasks it may become necessary to hire another worker who does the work that you do to work with you.

Alvah Parker is a Business and Career Coach as well as publisher of Parker's Points, an email tip list and Road to Success, an ezine. Parker's Value Program© enables her clients to find their own way to work that is more fulfilling and profitable. Her clients are managers, business owners, sole practitioners, attorneys and people in transition. Alvah is found on the web at

www.asparker.com

. She may also be

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reached at 781-598-0388.

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