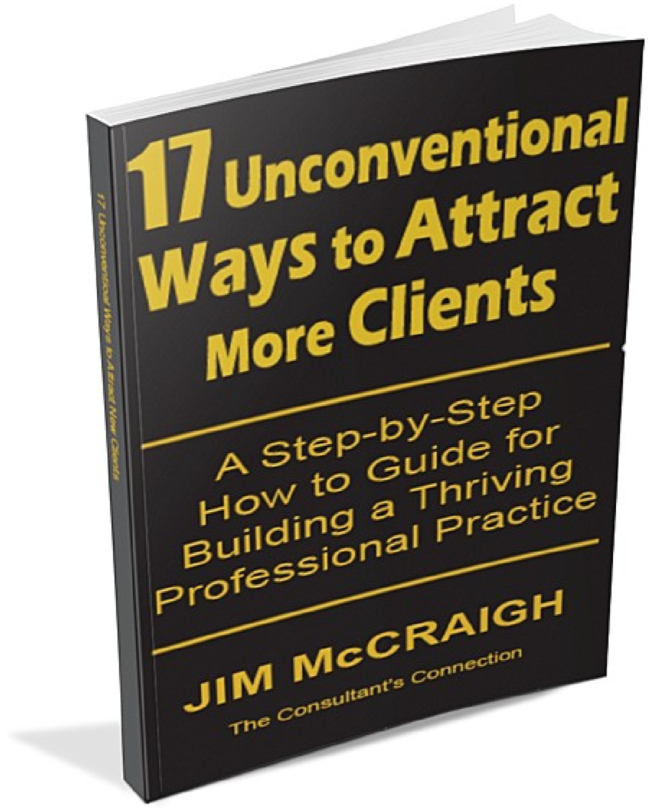

What You Will Get Out of This PDF…

17 Unconventional Ways to Attract More Clients is filled with eye-opening straight talk that takes a fresh approach to selling MORE of your professional services. It's just a little controversial and a bit unconventional as I share lessons learned from nearly three decades of successfully marketing my services and those of others!

In it, you'll discover that the secret to a longer client list is setting yourself apart… to do different and be different in a way that makes prospects sit up and take notice. Doing different can spell the difference between phenomenal success or barely getting by.

The best part? It will help open up a flood of new clients for you!

Jim

Contents

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Get Rid of Your Crappy Blog and Do This Instead

Did more than 100 visitors look at your blog last month… 50… 25… 5? It's not that your blog sucks… because it doesn't… and that's the frustration… after all, you put a lot of effort into every post you write. The problem is not your blog; it's with your readership rates.

If your readership is extremely low, it's not that you have the cart before the horse; it's because there is no horse. The fact is that the subscriber list is your horse and the blog is the cart. Build your list and the blog will follow.

How? By guest posting on bigger blogs. Not some quick 250 word thing, but a post that you have put blood sweat and tears into… some of your best stuff. That way hundreds or thousands will read what you post… and that's worth it!

Make sure the guest post site will provide a link back to your offer of an incentive (like an eBook) to join your list. The 5th or 6th time I posted on Yahoo Finance, a link to my post was featured on their home page. I got dozens of new subscribers that day! Sweet!

There are those who believe that guest posting is dead… don't believe them! They are right in the sense that posting hastily contrived junk for the sole purpose of getting backlinks is a thing of the past. Only very high quality content will get you new list members… hurriedly written rubbish thrown together to fill a page will only annoy readers and get passed over by search engines.

The flip side of guest posting is to ask non-competitive but complimentary colleagues to guest post on your blog and promote that post to their readers/subscribers. For this to work, you'll need to find someone whose list is about the same size as yours, or most people won't agree to do it. List building can be a slow process but well worth it… as some percentage of readers you nurture will become clients or referral sources. Offer a free report, eBook or other enticement for visitors to join your list.

List building is just that. We want to develop a list of as many potentially interested people to nurture in the hope that they'll eventually become clients. After all, marketing has always been a numbers game. Since we want as many as we can get, we'll want to limit the number of questions on your signup form. Here is a checklist for you:

- ☐ Email address
- ☐ First name

That's all… just the two items. Many visitors are frightened away by the idea of filling out a lengthy or complex form. Keep list building forms simple! You will have opportunities to get more information later.

When you do post, make sure it goes to your list first, then put it up on your blog site a day or two later. Your list gets to see it before the rest of the world. They are special. Treat them that way. Think of your blog as a repository for some of your best writing *after* your list sees it.

If all this seems overwhelming, it's not! Successful list builders use list management programs… *not their personal email accounts*. It may sound complicated, but it's really quite easy. I could not run my business without one! I have used a number different ones over the years, but I like AWeber and GetResponse, and MailChimp, three of the easiest to use ones that I have found. All have free trials so you can choose the one that works best for you. If you are on a tight budget go with MailChimp, as the first 2000 subscribers are free with their basic package. If you already have a good-sized list, you might consider one of the other two.

Immediately after someone signs up for your list, auto-send them a confirming thank you email. Then, with your list management providers auto responder features, send them regular messages made up of your best individual blog posts from the past… one at a time over a period of weeks or months.

Think of your list as a room full of people waiting to hear you speak; who like you and are interested in what you have to say. Offer good information they will find helpful, such as useful links, books, reports or case studies.

TIP: Never put someone on your list without first obtaining their permission!

TIP: Email is never a substitute for face-to-face contact when possible!

Forget About Going to Association Meetings

There are more than 17,000 national, regional and state trade associations in the US. Some are local chapters; others are large national organizations with thousands of members. Conventional wisdom holds that it pays to join an association comprised of your potential clients. But, here’s the thing… going to these meetings is generally a massive waste of your time.

If you go to the meetings at the swanky hotels, walk the trade show aisles, check out the workshops and attend the cocktail parties with a pocketful of business cards and an elevator speech… you will rarely find viable clients. It is only when we, as professional service providers, serve in volunteer or leadership positions in these associations that we will obtain maximum reward for time spent. Why? If we go as just another "associate member", we'll be seen as just another salesperson on the hunt.

As a volunteer, leader or board member you will meet other volunteers and board members who *personally* know your future clients and can refer you to them. You will have an opportunity to be more visible and to form relationships outside of your role as a marketer. In performing your volunteer duties well, you will come to be seen as a reliable, credible person who can bring positive change to a situation… just those things clients and referrers look for in a professional services provider!

Burn Your Brochures

At the risk of expanding your carbon footprint, let me make a wild and crazy suggestion. This unconventional technique has worked quite well for me and clients of mine. Earlier this year, a current client went to a financial services conference with this idea and the attendees loved it, grabbed his NEW n0n-brochure creation and stuck them into their briefcases. Some said they would enjoy reading them on the plane on the way back home. This should make each of us want to burn our remaining brochures and do this instead. Let me explain…

If you’ve been keeping up with the web and social media, you know that content marketing is all the rage right now. It will continue to be until the next big thing comes along. But, why limit your content to the internet?

Why not flip things and take your content off the web and put it right into your prospect’s hand? I’m talking about creating a compact, easy to read, actual printed booklet. You probably already know enough about your area of expertise to fill a book… so a few pages shouldn’t be a stretch. Your booklet doesn’t have to be expensive to produce… there’s a plethora of discount booklet printers on the web or use your local copy shop.

There are booklet templates included with Microsoft Word®. (If you use Word, select a new document and search the templates listed.) Or just search for “booklet templates” and you will be presented with a number of options. If you want to go full out, hire a graphic designer!

The important thing is that it contains your best thinking on a particular topic and no selling… just your basic contact information.

Why this Works…

First, you are not selling when you give away a booklet. It’s more like giving a gift to a friend than filling their hands with sales material. It’s about furthering the relationship. Second, it is a way to demonstrate your competence without having to talk about yourself. Lastly, once they’ve read your booklet, you have already helped them. This gives you “most favored” status in their mind! Prospects then become more willing to take your calls and meet with you.

Of course, you may still need a few brochures, so don’t actually burn them! This is especially true if you have a menu of specific products or services. Your remaining brochures are best used as a “leave behind” piece when a prospect asks for it.

Host a Power Breakfast this Month and Next

There’s nothing like face-to-face contact over coffee and bagels, sweet rolls, tortillas, toast, doughnuts or even English muffins! I don’t need to remind you that speaking is a powerful way to promote yourself, but if your next presentation is three months from now, that doesn’t you help get clients this week. But, this will… I’ve done this more than once with great results!

Book a hotel meeting room (or at your bank’s or CPA’s office conference room) for a breakfast meeting. Breakfast is an easier time to get people into a room.
Once they are at work, it’s harder for them to get away mid-day for lunch. And forget about anything related to or after the cocktail hour… in my experience, you’ll lose them after the first drink! Trust me, I’ve been there!

Invite local acquaintances, clients, former clients and referral sources. Send them two free “tickets” each and invite them to bring a guest. Have an assistant follow up for RSVP’s. I like to line up at least 15 attendees so it looks better if you have some no shows. Have “networking” for the first 20 minutes, then start your talk once they are nearly done eating. Keep the food simple… like a continental breakfast to avoid distracting service hassles. Plan no more than 90 minutes for the entire event. Leave time at the end for questions and some time to visit with attendees at the end. In my experience, Thursdays are pretty good days, but may vary in your business… so do a little research.

Believe it or not, I have also had great success with this type of event on Saturdays among the self-employed crowd. Boost attendance by give your talk a benefit-laden title that makes people want to attend.

Your objective in all this? To meet people and demonstrate that you are a credible authority in your area of expertise who can help them. Have someone else introduce you with a double spaced one page intro you have prepared in advance. (Let them see it in advance so they don't trip over the words when they are reading it.) That might be someone like your banker or accountant "sponsor" who can also benefit from meeting the same people. Heck, they may even help share the food costs with you!

Stop Cold Calling

This goes to the very root of who we are as professionals. The initial face-to-face or telephone meeting with a prospective client should be a meeting of peers. As professionals, we are expert in our fields, most often knowing far more about the prospects situation than they do! Cold calling instantly puts us in a subordinate position as someone who is asking for something. It causes prospects to put up their defenses right away. It does nothing to enhance our role as a trusted advisor, but in most cases, only damages it.

If that's not enough reason, consider the fact that cold calling produces lower quality leads that close at a lower rate. Resist making these types of calls they can become a drag on your business, because even when they do close, cold-called clients leave you with a sub-par client list. It's like knowingly recruiting only marginal players to be on your soccer team.

We should only make "expected" calls. That means calling only those people who have given us permission to call them. How do we get that permission? We either ask or they ask us to call them! Or we are referred by someone who is willing to call or email to let the prospect know we will be contacting them.

So, when you think about it, the first “sale” we must make is to get a permission-based call scheduled.

Level up on LinkedIn

Are you active on LinkedIn? You should be! And by now, you’ve probably joined a number of special interest groups that include members of your target market. And you are probably an active participant in discussions... or you should be!

But, if you really want to shake things up... start your own group! LinkedIn groups are by far the most powerful aspect of LinkedIn. Create an opportunity for people to come together. Why? I have been personally involved with a couple of these and they can be a great platform to getting your voice heard.

People like to connect with group leaders... so if you own a group you will be perceived as someone to connect with. Successful groups focus on quality members, not quantity. I find that niche groups work best, especially those that specialize in narrow topics. Check out existing groups to see what’s working in your area of expertise. Once set up, promote your group and moderate regularly. Once you reach critical mass, it can be a great platform for your own postings. Find instructions for creating your group here.

TIP: Never, ever, directly try to sell on LinkedIn. Doing so will diminish your credibility. Instead, concentrate on sharing only high quality content, comments, and discussions with readers and it will serve you well.

Know Who You Are in Service of

Foundational to marketing any professional services practice is targeting a very specific target market. To have any success at all your efforts need to be aimed at serving a very specific group of potential clients. *The paradox here is the more narrow your segment is, the more successful you'll be.* You can't be all things to all people or you will be nothing to anyone! The only caveat here is that your target group is large enough to produce an adequate return on your time and effort.

To best define your target, first describe them on paper. Take out a pad and pen and write some descriptive statements about your ideal client. What industry are they in? Are they consumers or businesses? What problems do they have? What barriers do they face in getting what they want? What are their fears and aspirations? Where do they live? You get the idea. The most important attributes are the third and forth ones… what problems do they have and what barriers they face. Under each problem and barrier, list the specific solutions you have to help them.

Eventually, you should be able to fill almost the entire page. Once you have a good idea of who you will target, and what solutions you can bring to bear on their problems and issues, keep fine tuning it as needed. Silly? Some of the world's best advertising copywriters use this technique. It helps you better know your prospects.

Dress Better

OK, I know, you are probably thinking, “*What the heck are you saying?*” But, stay with me for a minute here…

If you like, you can wear that tee shirt and sport coat combination or that comfortable blouse and slacks set with the everyday purse to go out to see or be seen with clients. You could also arrive in a cluttered automobile with mud splatters on the side. Unfortunately, many professionals I’ve met do just that. In the process, they inadvertently devalue themselves in the eyes of the prospect.

A few years ago there was a trend toward dressing like your prospects, something known as chameleon marketing. But that is no longer appropriate today. Clients want to do business with someone they see as successful or even better… more successful than they are.

I have clothes I wear only to client meetings. I use a leather binder and carry a high quality leather briefcase. Not because I’m trying to show off, but because I do not approach my business casually… in the same way I do not approach my client’s business casually. And it makes a difference.

As professionals we invest in office equipment, brochures and marketing. Why not invest in how you package yourself?

TIP: Start with shoes. Many people will look at your shoes first. Buy the best you can and keep a good shine on them.

TIP: Get a nice looking pen or two. They do not have to be expensive. That way you avoid the ad specialty stick pens you got from last week’s hotel room… they say cheap!

Ditch Your Pitch and Do This

A friend of mine had an acquaintance in a major oil company who regularly met with outside professional service providers as part of his job. He once related to us that three types of providers would visit his office…

The *talkers* who felt compelled to tell him all about themselves and their companies with little or no time left for anything else.

The *pitchers* who had a canned presentation that rarely varied.

The third types were the *listeners* who talked very little and had no pre-prepared presentation. They sought to ask questions and probe in an effort to understand the need and how they may be able to be of service. *In fact, the best ones asked questions he had not thought about before.* Those folks were always welcome in his office!

How do you ask questions they've not considered before? Sophisticated buyers of professional services have little tolerance for dog and pony shows. You have to know your business. You have to know their industry. You have to know something about their organization. Any time you spend on developing questions like this will pay handsome dividends. I often work with financial services executives. I understand that a consistent issue in their business is the fact that a large portion of their production comes in the fourth quarter of the year. It is a big stressor for them as they worry that they will miss their annual numbers if something goes wrong during that 12 week period.

I ask them a question… "*How do you know if your team is prepared for the next 90 days?*" It stops many of them in their tracks because they have never thought about it in that way before. It's never intended to be an embarrassment to the prospect, but only a way to help them understand how I can better help them.

Once you believe that you have determined what their situation actually is, feed the issue back to the prospect. Frame it by asking still another question... *“Is what I hear you saying... such and such?”* If they agree, you know you are on the way to getting commitment.

Only then should we thoughtfully propose or present anything to a prospect!

Get Out of Your Darned Office

There is nothing like live face-to-face exposure with potential clients and referral sources particularly in this day and age of smart phones and e-mail. Clients have very rarely ever found their way into my office, even when we were headquartered in a well-located business park. Over the time I've been in business 99% of my client interactions were outside either in public places or in their offices.

Even if you are billing a good portion of your time, you will still find yourself in your office more days than not. If you are a solo practitioner or even if you're not you'll find it pays to get out of the office and go to different sorts of local events regardless of their nature just to meet people and have new experiences.

Do you ever find yourself stuck in your office for long periods of time and suffer from cabin fever? Why not consider donating time to a nonprofit to serve on a board or to help in some other way even if it means hammering nails for Habitat for Humanity?

I can assure you that this practice works. A few years back my business partner was serving on the board of United Way. As a result of some of the people that she met at the board we were able to add the largest utility in Northern California to our client list.

Learn a Lesson from See’s Candies

Ever go into a See’s Candies store? When you enter, a staffer will offer you a free sample of their delicious chocolate candy as a low liability way to introduce you to their offerings. Once you have tasted their product, it is a far easier sale for them to offer you a 2 pound box after you’ve learned how great the product really is.

It is the same for us as we sell our professional services. Large upfront commitments and detailed contracts push the clients fear buttons if they have no prior experience with you. One solution is to offer “sample-size” engagements. I have often sold a pilot program into a company as an alternative to a companywide roll-out. It helps lower their defenses in the absence of intimate knowledge of who you are and how you work.

What do you have that can be offered in bite-sized pieces without going for the large engagement the first time out? I’m not talking about cutting your fees here, but reducing the scope of work on an initial project!

One thing you could do is offer pilot programs that involve a small commitment of time and fee. For example, you could start with a single office of a large firm. Once successful there, it’s much easier for them to buy the whole two pound box!

Market Three Deep

One of my clients is a Fortune 100 insurance company based in the Eastern United States. Things went well for the first year until I learned that my main contact in the company had unexpectedly resigned. Has this ever happened to you? I hope not. But I offer the following as an insurance policy if it ever does...

I lucked out and retained the client because of something that I learned years ago. That is to sell three deep in an organization. What do I mean by that? When I did work with his subordinates I made sure they understood who I was and that they heard from me regularly. I also made sure they knew how to contact me if they needed anything. I also learned the name of his boss and used that information to carbon copy him on those kinds of things that we were working on this put my client in a good light showing that he was getting stellar results as a consequence of our working together!

I never went around my client, but made sure that those around him knew who I was and how working with me benefitted the company.

Without this information, it can be extremely difficult to remain engaged with a client if your main contact person leaves. How do you get this information? Make sure that you note the names and emails of the subordinates you're working with. Ask for the name and contact information of their superior so you can keep them updated on what’s working. Then try to connect with all of them on LinkedIn!

You Do Have a Plan… Don't You?

A recent survey I have here on my desk indicates that among people who sell their professional services… only about 5% of them consider the process of business planning important. I am not talking about those thick, tedious business plans stuck in three ring binders that are hopelessly complex and generally useless.

What I am referring to is spending some time each and every morning planning out your day in terms of your overall objectives and business direction. In other words what are those things in your business that you're measuring? What are the strategies you are using to reach them? Are you focused on the right things?

Often times the first thing we do in the morning is jump on the computer to check e-mail, news or the weather. The problem is that before you know it, half the morning is gone! If we really desire to get to the next level of success, we must have some sort of operating plan… even if it is on just one page. (When I work with clients, I insist on nothing longer than a one page plan and that plan is for as little as 90 days!)

Use early morning time to plan your work, not only for the day, but reassess your week and month in terms of your quarterly objectives. When we can show progress against a clearly defined set of objectives, it is an uplifting and motivating feeling!

The important thing is if we're not working some sort of plan, as short and concise as it may be… how will we ever make any progress other than just getting by?

Nurture Prospects Relentlessly

Many of my colleagues tell me that they are finding that many of their clients and prospects are… in their words… becoming “too busy to even do their jobs”. When I first started my business, I could reach potential clients far easier that we can today. The old rule of thumb was that you had to attempt to reach someone 5 to 7 times before you could expect to connect. Today, it can be more like 12 or 13 times over a period of weeks or even months. This difference between success and failure in what you do often boils down to plain old persistence as opposed to giving up on a potential client too soon.

What should these dozen or so contacts look like? A good regimen would include letters, notes, calls, emails and the like. None of your notes and emails should be sales oriented, but contain material helpful to the prospect.

There is a fine line between appearing needy and acting in the best interest of the client. Carefully scripting calls and communications for that is important. And you do not need to leave a message every time you call. But, here is the thing… when my friend finally does breakthrough with a prospect and converts them to a client, the new client often thanks her for her persistence, as they would have likely forgotten themselves!

It’s all about nurturing future clients *until they are ready* to engage your services. Not all come along at the same rate. Not everyone perceives the need for your services this week or this month or even this year!

Sell this Person First… and the Others Will Follow

For years, I've taught that we should qualify prospects by determining whether or not they are the MAN… an acronym for Money, Authority and Need. This is still as true today as it ever was. Selling into an organization or to a person who does not meet that standard can actually be damaging to your cause. This is because when we waste time with a person who has no decision making power or motivation to engage our services, the news will travel in that organization or family that your services are not needed or appropriate. You will then be out before you were ever in.

Fast forward to today and some new thinking… Assuming that our prospect does have the cash, decision making power and a demonstrated need, we then need to ask ourselves a new, even more compelling question… Who in the organization will most *benefit* from my services? Is that the same as the MAN, or is it someone else? Perhaps it is not the economic buyer but the user buyer who will benefit most.

Let me explain… As we approach potential clients, the most important question is not always "How will my service benefit the company or organization?" But… *"How will this person that I am talking to benefit from me working with this company?"* We are engaged by people, not companies. I've never been hired by company hire me, only people who work for that company. (The scenario changes a bit when we are meeting with a business owner, as they are more likely to directly benefit.)

Teach a College Class

I have been a guest lecturer at the University of California, Ohlone College, Redwood College and John F. Kennedy University. It has helped me get business, but not in the way you may think… Academics often moonlight as coaches, consultants and other professional services providers. Why not turn the tables and teach a class or two?

Why? Because, in my experience, potential clients impute high credibility points to authors and teachers. It looks great on your bio and you usually don't need an advanced degree. Many schools bring in outside lecturers to help students hear from those with "real world" experience… like yours.

Contact the schools around your area to inquire as to the possibilities of your proposing a class or seminar. In fact, you may already know some people you might ask to refer you.

Finally, Fire of Some of Your Clients!

Crappy clients will slowly suck the life out of you. They will take advantage of you. They cause sleepless nights. They can even put you out of business. The time and energy you spend on dealing with them will be better spent marketing or paying more attention to your "A" list accounts. If a client is showing any of the following warning signs, it is time to think about letting them go.

They ignore your payment terms. Cash flow is the lifeblood of any businesses, so when a client starts abusing the financial aspect of the relationship, it's time to give them a gentle reminder. If it becomes a habit, they need to become a former client. And if they lie to you about it… it must instantly be game over. Late payments mean either they don't respect you or they are in trouble financially. Neither is a desirable client. Believe me… over the last 27 years I have had to deal with all of the above… and it's not worth it

They become only marginally profitable to you. When the amount of hand-holding, unnecessarily detailed reports or after-hours calls become excessive, it takes away time you need to maintain your marketing or spend with more desirable clients. This puts us, as consultants, into a bad position when the amount of time spent coddling them is unpaid. When our return per hour worked falls below what we need to make…. it is time to enforce our boundaries. If it persists… it's time to graciously back away.

They are abusive. Toxic clients can make the workplace a living hell and saying goodbye may be the only way to protect yourself. Sometimes clients express their anger and frustration in inappropriate ways. When we feel a client's pattern of behavior is unreasonable, it's best to let them know their behavior is unacceptable and ask them to change it. If they apologize, you may able to salvage the troubled relationship. If that doesn't work, it's time to part ways.

One reason many of us became independent contractors was to escape the world of corporate B.S. There's no need to let it creep back into our own business! Can't afford to just quit an account? I understand. But, resolve to make a plan to change the situation as soon as possible.

WHAT'S NEXT…

Have You Ever Struggled to Get Clients?

Feel like your business is on a razor's edge?

There are only two ways that can go...

Tell me if this sounds familiar:

One day, you feel like you're kicking ass and taking names. You're blasting off in a big way, and you feel invincible. Like you've got it all figured out. Business is great, and your bank account is full!

Then out of nowhere, things start slowing down. Not as many new clients are coming in. And the leads that you do have, well for some reason they're just not closing as quickly. And isn't always at times like these, that you'll end up losing a big client? When it rains, it pours.

Imagine...

• You have a steady flow of ideal clients and never guess about where to get new leads again

• You know exactly how to convert them into new clients

• You are earning the kind of fees you want

• Your proposals are routinely accepted by your clients

• You are providing what your clients really want and they see you as the source of their success

I'm on a mission to help you make the kind of impact that will literally change your life and that of your family. No matter what stage your business is at today...

And let me say, there's no sugarcoating it, NOT generating leads and converting them into new clients is a business killer.

But there is a way to eliminate it....

You must have a system! Register Now – It's Free

Here is what one course participant says...

"As a consultant, one of my biggest challenges has not been simply acquiring leads -- but turning these leads into profitable clients. Jim's Client Acquisition System is a fantastic course for consultants looking to stop relying on luck with their marketing efforts and start building a repeatable, predictable method for turning leads into clients."

--Tsavo Neal, Web Consultant, Surrey, British Columbia

That's why I want to invite you to take advantage of my free Client Acquisition System Course...

Close your eyes and imagine that you have 3 or 4 new prospective client meetings scheduled in the next month and then imagine that at least one and maybe even two of them become clients!

This doesn't have to be a fantasy, it can be done if you have a system for converting leads to clients.

Why listen to me? I've spent 29 years as a coach/consultant working with Fortune 500 companies as well as professionals like you. I knew this was a major problem that needed to be solved. Because I've seen too many coaches and consultants struggle with this... I created my free Client

Acquisition System Course.

If you run a coaching or consulting business or any type of client-service oriented organization where you are responsible for both selling and delivering the work, you know there is a constant tension between time spent selling and time spent with clients. This course will make it easier for you to achieve a profitable balance in your business!

Here's an outline of just some the content that will help take your practice to the next level of profitability...

How to Convert Leads into New Clients

Power Questions that Will Get You Clients

Getting Paid What You are Worth

Creating and Presenting Client Winning Proposals

What Clients Really Want!

And Much More!

Ready to get started? Click to Register Now – It's FREE