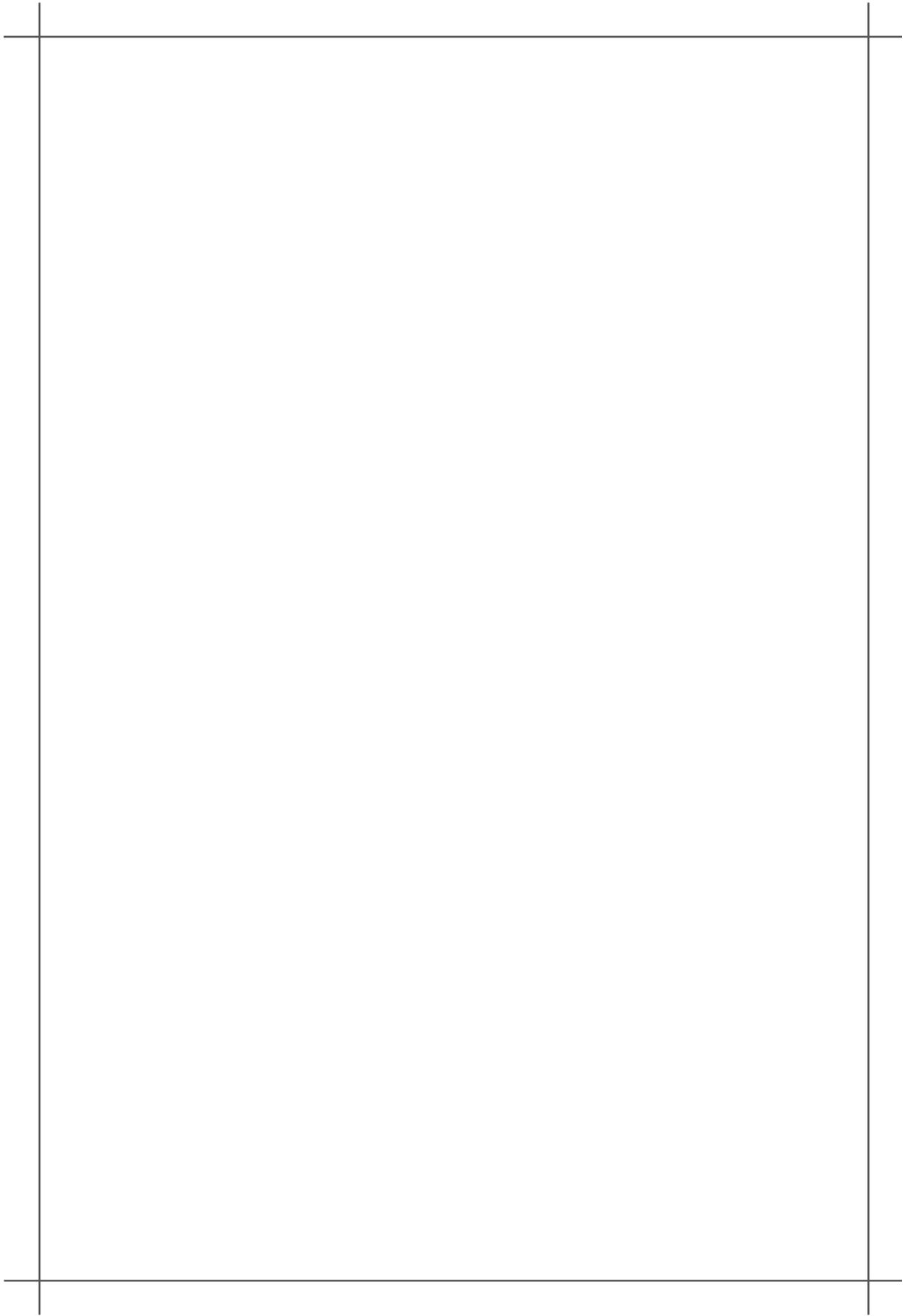


# GENERATING WEALTH IN THE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSION



SALES PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES  
TO LAUNCH AND GROW YOUR CAREER

David P. Diana, M.A., LPC, NCC



# **Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession**

Sales Principles and Strategies to Launch  
and Grow Your Career

*David P. Diana, M.A., LPC, NCC*

**iUniverse, Inc.**  
New York Bloomington

**Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession**  
**Sales Principles and Strategies to Launch and Grow Your Career**

Copyright © 2008 by David P. Diana, M.A., LPC, NCC

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

iUniverse books may be ordered through booksellers or by contacting:

iUniverse  
1663 Liberty Drive  
Bloomington, IN 47403  
www.iuniverse.com  
1-800-Authors (1-800-288-4677)

Because of the dynamic nature of the Internet, any Web addresses or links contained in this book may have changed since publication and may no longer be valid. The views expressed in this work are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, and the publisher hereby disclaims any responsibility for them.

ISBN: 978-0-595-53147-9 (pbk)  
ISBN: 978-0-595-63209-1 (ebk)

Printed in the United States of America

# Contents

Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession .....	i
Introduction.....	1
<i>Beginning The Exploration</i> .....	2
<i>Clearing to Create Opportunity</i> .....	3
<i>Secrets of Success and the Sales Stigma</i> .....	4
<i>Service Trends Within Our Changing Industry</i> .....	5
Summary.....	16
Creating A Foundation Of Success .....	17
<i>The New Sales Philosophy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> .....	17
<i>Creating a Buying Environment Through Customer Based Selling</i> .....	19
<i>Part 1: Sell the Way Customers Want to Buy</i> .....	19
<i>Part 2: The Power of Presence</i> .....	22
<i>Part 3: Value Propositions in Your Practice</i> .....	25
<i>Part 4: Arouse “Want” &amp; “Need” in Others</i> .....	28
<i>Part 5: Go Above and Beyond and Be Remembered!</i> .....	33
Summary.....	40
The Social Dynamics Of Power, Influence And Persuasion.....	41
<i>Part 1: What do we mean by power?</i> .....	42
<i>Part 2: Finding Your Power</i> .....	44
<i>Part 3: Translating Power into Influence</i> .....	48
<i>Part 4: Using Personal Power Effectively</i> .....	56
Summary.....	61
Finding Your Place in the Field: Effective Strategies for Building Credibility	62
<i>Find Your Market Niche</i> .....	63
<i>Turn Your Knowledge &amp; Expertise into Value for Consumers</i> .....	66

<i>A Guide to Becoming Published</i> .....	67
<i>The Art of Public Speaking</i> .....	73
<i>Section 1: The Do's &amp; Don'ts When Presenting</i> .....	73
<i>Section 2: The Power Point Dilemma</i> .....	77
Summary.....	82
Understanding Buying Motives in the Mental Health Profession.....	83
<i>Trigger Points</i> .....	84
<i>Lessons in Behavioral Psychology: Using Trigger Points in Your Marketing Messages</i> .....	88
<i>Prospecting: Selling to the "Right" Consumer</i> .....	90
Summary.....	93
Customer Based Selling in Mental Health Organizations.....	94
<i>Section 1: Building Successful Partnerships</i> .....	94
<i>Section 2: Call Center Sales Strategies &amp; Tactics</i> .....	98
Summary.....	104
Winning Job Search Strategies – Selling Yourself!.....	105
<i>Exploring Your Interests &amp; Developing a Career Plan</i> .....	107
<i>Goal Writing</i> .....	109
<i>Be a Salesperson &amp; Sell Yourself</i> .....	112
<i>A Sure Fire Way to "Turn Off" the Hiring Manager</i> .....	114
<i>Networking Skills</i> .....	115
<i>Informational Interviewing</i> .....	116
<i>Behavioral Event Interviewing</i> .....	118
Summary.....	121
Conclusion.....	122
Bibliography.....	125

# 1

## Introduction

It was late afternoon, the conference was winding down, and I found myself in the middle of yet another discouraging conversation. A CEO for a medium sized mental health organization was talking about the state of the field and his belief that it had become virtually impossible to operate a successful business in the profession. He offered facts about insurance companies and managed care, stories about businesses that tried and failed, the lack of government support, and a general indifference on the part of communities as a whole regarding the value of mental health services.

As our discussion came to a close, he took one last breath, broadened his shoulders and ended with a final statement, “There is simply no way to succeed. You have to be a martyr to be in this field for too long.”

This was not the first person at the conference to approach me with an apocalyptic view of the profession. Throughout the entire week I heard complaint after complaint. People were frustrated, discouraged, and concerned about their future in the industry.

Over the course of my 14 years in the mental health profession I have heard my fair share of venting and have issued my own in abundance. There can be no doubt that the mental health industry has its share of obstacles and issues. In spite of all these challenges, however, there are opportunities for growth, for rewarding work, and ultimately, financial success in the industry.

This book is designed to take a closer look at specific success factors beyond helping others - the hallmark and foundation of the profession. Instead, it chooses to explore directly, and without apologies, other important elements:

- Career Growth and Advancement
- Organizational Growth and Success

## 2 ► Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession

- Competitive Advantage and Differentiation in the Marketplace
- Financial Success for the Practitioner

This book is a practical guide for any and all mental health professionals looking to achieve long-term success in the field. Much of the information discussed will be new and noteworthy. However, it is important to note that many of these concepts and models are not new to other industries. In many respects we are behind the curve, and as a result, the information presented should serve as a wake up call of sorts for all those in the field. I say “wake up call” simply because this book proposes a different way of thinking about the profession, one which involves leveraging and incorporating key business and sales principles that best in class organizations and top performing sales professionals use to generate an increase in market share, financial wealth, and overall success.

## **BEGINNING THE EXPLORATION**

The CEO who spoke with me about his impressions of the field is not incorrect in his attempt to describe the state of the profession. A mental health career is a noble and courageous endeavor, which can come at a significant price. We see state governments use mental health services as a scapegoat for poor financial management and planning, choosing to balance their Medicaid books at the expense of community based mental health programs. As a result, government mental health employees are asked to serve effectively with few resources, little pay, and even fewer options to grow professionally. Mental health services in the private sector are equally challenging. Insurance companies devalue mental health treatment as evidenced by limited reimbursement rates, obscenely high deductibles, few behavioral healthcare plans for employees, and the implementation of complex and convoluted systems that test the most patient and saint-worthy of practitioners.

These are some of the realities of the industry. And yet, people do manage to achieve success in this business whether it is finding a rewarding job that engages them, achieving financial success in private practice, or through many other ways in which we may uniquely define success. How do they succeed? Is it merely luck of the draw? What I found with many of these people and practices, whether they were aware of it or not, was the presence and effective use of a core set of sales, marketing, and business principles that enabled them to overcome obstacles within the profession. It is the understanding and use

of these principles, many of which are severely neglected or simply unknown within our field, that have helped mental health professionals succeed in a variety of ways.

This is the core message I hope to communicate in the pages that follow. You will be presented with different philosophies, new strategies, real life stories, and very practical step-by-step guides and resources. Choose what resonates with you and make an effort to integrate it within your own professional paradigm.

## **CLEARING TO CREATE OPPORTUNITY**

Before moving forward, let's acknowledge that we all come to the profession with our own concerns and biases. Some of these may be helpful, and some may not. As an initial step I ask that you put aside some of the old and/or negative beliefs that might prevent you from being able to adopt and leverage some of the principles/ideas discussed in this book. This is not to say these beliefs are not true, they may in fact be very real. The goal here is to attempt to silence these beliefs for a moment in the hopes of uncovering new opportunities.

### **Not sure what these biases might be? How do these sound for starters?**

- We are in this field to help others, not to make money.
- There are so few good opportunities in the field.
- I need to take this job and pay my dues since this is how it has always been done.
- Government Agencies are a losing proposition for Mental Health.
- Mental Health does not have an effective voice at the table when it comes to federal and state legislation.
- Insurance companies regulate the industry in ways that are extremely hurtful for the overall growth and success of the profession.
- Communities, organizations and individuals do not understand or value mental health services.

4 ►      **Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession**

Feel free to add to the list. Write them down if you must and tuck them away for another day.

All set? Great! Now let's move forward and begin learning how to gain a competitive advantage in the mental health industry.

## **SECRETS OF SUCCESS AND THE SALES STIGMA**

*“Everybody lives by selling something.”*

—Robert Louis Stevenson

The business world is changing at an incredibly fast pace, and many of these changes have a profound impact on the way people do business. Most of us in the mental health field, however, remain blissfully ignorant and unaware of these subtle but powerful events. Those lucky few who become aware of some of these changes (*e.g., technological advances that decentralize and empower people at all levels; new concepts in sales & marketing that enable you to grow your business at hyper-speed using a sophisticated multimedia approach*) are presented with a window of opportunity that can lead to tremendous growth and independence. Opportunities abound for those who are open to some of these new ideas and willing to integrate new concepts into their service model. The key lies in how highly skilled mental health professionals approach the marketplace and what tools they choose to use in order to succeed in a competitive environment.

A key area most mental health practitioners are sorely lacking in is the understanding and use of sophisticated sales and marketing skills! Clinicians receive heavy doses of clinical training in graduate schools and through continuing education programs. However, very little is offered in terms of how to succeed in the profession from both a financial and career development perspective. There are business seminars focusing on billing practices, business systems, and various administrative tasks; but few if any discuss the power and importance of sales and marketing in our profession. This area is often so untapped that adopting even some of the more basic principles will immediately distinguish you in the profession and give you a decided advantage in the mental health marketplace!

## CONFRONTING THE STIGMA

At first glance, the idea of adopting sales principles conjures up images of self-serving, manipulative tactics and ploys. As a result, a sales approach is often the furthest from the mind of a mental health professional. This position, however, is misguided and comes from a limited understanding of sales theory and practice. First and foremost, selling and the sales process are critical elements in all areas of commerce. No business takes place without a sales transaction of some sort or another. Mental Health services are not utilized unless a sale is made and someone chooses to use a specific clinical service; you are not hired into a clinical position unless you effectively sell yourself to the hiring manager; a private practice does not last long without consistent sales for services; and funding for community programs is not awarded unless a government entity is sold on the need and importance of those services. As a result, our first step here is to acknowledge and accept that sales are a critical part of the process in the mental health business.

Once we come to recognize this fact we must also dispel the myth about sales being a sleazy and unethical profession that utilizes manipulative and self-serving tactics at the expense of others. Like any profession, there are theoretical frameworks and people within the business who no doubt support these negative stereotypes. However, when we take a closer look at the sales and marketing professions, we find that they can also be highly sophisticated, philosophical, and value driven professions that are perfectly suited to the helping professions.

Having challenged the role and importance of sales within the profession, we now turn our attention to exploring upcoming trends within the mental health industry and their implications for the future of clinical practice.

## SERVICE TRENDS WITHIN OUR CHANGING INDUSTRY

*“The only thing we know about the future is that it will be different.”*

—Peter Drucker

The process of understanding current trends and changes within one’s industry is a hallmark of smart business practice. With our eye towards effective use of sales practices, let’s take a closer look at some of the trends in the industry

## 6 ► Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession

worth noting. Keep in mind that we are looking at these trends to note business opportunities. This is not intended to increase your anxiety! On the contrary, these changes should build excitement and a desire to find out how you can become a part of these trends in the industry.

### THE INTERNET AND THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Today's technological advances have led to a dramatic shift in how business is done and offer all of us an opportunity to move beyond traditional boundaries to reach more diverse audiences.

The Internet alone has led to a mass decentralization of power that has brought about incredible, and, at times, seemingly limitless opportunity.

The Internet is an attractive medium for many reasons:

- **The Variety of Messaging Capabilities:** Video, Audio, Community Forums, Blogs, Web Seminars. The list continues to grow in terms of the type and complexity of messages one can use to reach others. Within this realm are vast opportunities to reach consumers and to build an effective self-marketing plan.
- **Building your own presence on the Web:** Unlike TV or radio, anyone can have a website and gain a presence on the web with minimal effort and investment.
- **Power to the User:** At present, there is limited control and regulation of the web. As a result, the power to accomplish many business activities and to reach others has shifted from the few to the many.
- **Access to Knowledge & Information:** The Internet offers people a vehicle for researching, communicating, and dispersing information at a level never before seen in our history.

What might this mean for you? Certainly tremendous opportunity for growing your practice, selling/marketing your services, communicating your expertise and even defining new service offerings that leverage the internet and reach a different client base.

Let's take a look at a few of the service trends currently arising within the field and see if an opportunity might present itself to you! Some of the Internet based trends arising within the area of psychology and mental health involve a breaking away from the traditional psychotherapeutic model. Online

psychotherapy, Internet-based treatment programs, and virtual communities are just a few that deserve our attention.

## ONLINE PSYCHOTHERAPY

Online counseling and psychotherapy is slowly becoming more and more of a realistic option for people in need of psychological help and guidance. This model has certainly received its fair share of criticism, especially from the mental health community at large. It has its limitations, no doubt, which we will not go into here. But suffice it to say that technology is catching up with this model as high-speed wireless Internet access, video/audio streaming, and web cam capabilities become commonplace. In many instances, a session between a therapist and a patient in two different locations can be bridged quite effectively with the right technological specifications.

In the world of academia, we are seeing an increase in interest along with research in the area of online psychotherapy. One interesting resource worth a look comes from a psychologist named John Suler, Ph.D. of Rider University. In his article on “The Future of Online Psychotherapy and Clinical Work” published in the *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* in 2001, he predicts there will eventually be online psychotherapy specialists for each of the different types of online clinical models and formats.

His discussion also offers a good model for understanding the progression of online counseling to date. Dr. Suler begins with a discussion of online psychotherapy that utilizes email as the primary mode of interaction. He eventually brings us to the next stage in the development of online psychotherapy which uses a more synchronous model (*A type of two-way communication with virtually no time delay, allowing participants to respond in real time*) such as chat therapy where there is real time text based interaction between client and therapist. Finally, he speaks of present day online therapy using a synchronous video based format whereby the client and therapist talk to and see one another real time via the Internet.

More and more practitioners are taking this mode of service delivery seriously in spite of some of the limitations that exist. If we are to look at this phenomenon from a business opportunity standpoint, we see that there will be demand beyond regional borders for those clinicians who position themselves effectively and build a certain level of credibility in the field. It is not hard to imagine a scenario involving an individual who suffers from a specific and/or unique psychological problem. This person chooses

8 ►            **Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession**

to research the perceived problem/symptoms on the Internet and finds an expert in that subject that he/she chooses to seek services from regardless of the professional's location. A practitioner who has marketed himself/herself effectively and has utilized today's technology to offer something of value to others beyond traditional face-to-face psychotherapy will have a competitive advantage in that marketplace.

Dr. Suler peaks the reader's interest even further with a discussion about the ability of the Internet to create imagery and multimedia environments that can be used in clinical interventions. Virtual realities are already being used in exposure therapy and relaxation procedures. He wonders if there might also be a place for Virtual Reality in trauma work, behavioral modeling and role-playing to name a few. If you would like more information about this topic I suggest you take a look at Dr. Suler's online book, *The Psychology of Cyberspace*, at <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~suler/psycyber/psycyber.html>

My overall point with regards to this discussion is to get you, the reader, to begin stretching your views, concepts, and ideas about the clinical process and begin seeing what may lie ahead in the future as both a challenge and opportunity. One of those opportunities will be online psychotherapy in its many variations and specialties.

Citation: Suler, J. (2004). *The Future of Online Psychotherapy and Clinical Work*. In *The Psychology of Cyberspace*, <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~suler/psycyber/futurether.html> (article orig. pub. 2001)

## **ONLINE TREATMENT PROGRAMS**

Another interesting area arising within the industry is that of the online treatment program. This model goes beyond individual psychotherapy and offers a comprehensive approach to treatment that may include group work, interactive exercises, use of clinical tools, use of assessment applications, and aftercare programming.

An example of this kind of approach is being pioneered by an organization known as EGetGoing, Inc. This organization offers a substance abuse treatment program for adult's ages 18 and older using live video and audio technology that simulate that of a traditional treatment model based on the 12-step principles. Participants become a part of an online treatment group that takes place over the course of several months. They use a highly

structured and empirically based treatment model and provide each of their participants with a headset and microphone so they can interact with a group of up to 10 participants. A counselor facilitates each group, and participants also receive individual consultations as needed. In addition, EGetGoing, Inc. offers an aftercare program for successful graduates in an effort to support former participants who are out in the community. This also gives them the ability to track outcomes and to identify risk factors following treatment.

This type of model is a big undertaking and, at present, it is still in its infancy stage. However, adventurous organizations like EgetGoing, Inc. are making a valiant effort to offer this solution as an alternative to traditional treatment. It is an exciting area to explore in the near future as technology offers clinicians an opportunity to push the envelope and explore use of this format in other areas of treatment. This model also has promise from a business perspective in that it offers potential clients a solid value proposition that may distinguish itself from its more traditional competitors. Some of the key values to potential consumers are ease of access and approachability, confidentiality and overall convenience in a fast paced world. Some, however, may argue that this also offers clients an opportunity to resist treatment in a subtle way by choosing a treatment alternative that might require less commitment. Regardless of this argument, people who are in need of treatment services may in the future find themselves more willing to seek treatment through the Internet. Perhaps this will serve as an entry point for longer-term treatment whereby it captures the attention of those who are unsure of or questioning the need for treatment. As a result, people may choose to try an online option as a way to “test the waters”. A bigger question will be whether or not this model will go beyond being a mere entry point and serve as a viable option to a more traditional treatment model.

If you would like more information about this model, I suggest taking a look at the EgetGoing website: [www.egetgoing.com](http://www.egetgoing.com)

## **VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES AND THE USE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORKING MODEL**

The Internet began simply as a way to display and find information. This information was presented in a static manner, meaning there was no functionality – only data. Today’s Internet has evolved into a dynamic social medium where people come together to share ideas, meet one another, build relationships, and offer support. The impact of social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, and LinkedIn has had a powerful effect on the World Wide Web, and this model has now made its way into the area of mental health.

One example of this trend at a local level involves a woman who started a Yahoo Group for caregivers of children with autism. Within 6 months her group grew exponentially. Mental Health practitioners offered it as a resource, and families spoke about it to others within their community. The group provided an online forum where people could ask questions, learn about valuable resources and build relationships with others who could empathize with their situation. It was particularly powerful with parents who were feeling isolated and were coming to terms with their child's disability. This online community provided a highly supportive and informative environment that had not existed prior to the formation of this social network. Without it, families simply had no options other than receiving guidance and suggestions from family physicians or mental health practitioners.

Another excellent social networking group operating on a global scale that is worth looking into is [www.realmentalhealth.com](http://www.realmentalhealth.com). This is one of the first social networking sites focusing on mental health and wellness. It is a community of people suffering from any number of psychiatric conditions, and it contains many powerful interactive features. Participants can create their own account, which gives them the ability to build their own web page on the site. They can participate in video and audio based chat rooms that are organized by specific topic such as depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia. There are message boards, newsletters, and an extensive list of support groups for site users.

One of the reasons why online support communities are so powerful is the fact that they are easy to approach anonymously. This anonymity factor is a powerful draw for many who are in crisis and for those who might not reach out otherwise were it not for the availability of these support groups. The presence of these networking sites provides some interesting opportunities and challenges for the mental health professional. For starters, online communities can be an excellent entry point for people to eventually seek treatment. It is an especially promising referral source for those clinicians who are able to gain a presence within these communities. We all know that the decision to seek treatment can be a long and convoluted process. With the social network model, many people feel safe to seek help. As a result, clinicians are able to reach a captive audience of people who already recognize they need help, and therefore, may be more receptive to take the next logical step in the treatment process. On the other hand, practitioners also must be aware that the effectiveness and growing popularity of these communities may reduce the need and/or use of more traditional and professional models of treatment. This trend is definitely worth exploring and ripe with opportunity!

## ONLINE TRAINING: A UNIQUE WAY TO PROMOTE YOUR SERVICES

Looking for ways to share your expertise and promote your services beyond traditional training opportunities? E-learning is fast becoming a powerful medium for building credibility and expanding one's reach at a national and international level. Online learning has also become an important vehicle for employee assistance programs and other practitioners who are seeking a presence within the corporate world. It allows you the ability to offer significant value to employees and managers using a platform they are familiar with and comfortable using.

Some good mental health e-learning providers to explore are:

[www.ceu4u.com](http://www.ceu4u.com)

[www.phoenix.edu](http://www.phoenix.edu) (This site will also offer paid opportunities to teach online classes!)

[www.psybc.com](http://www.psybc.com)

[www.speedyceus.com](http://www.speedyceus.com)

In many instances, you can post your coursework with one of these sites or any other existing training platform. Another option is to simply create your own personal online training platform. I have seen business savvy clinicians use this as an extension of clinical services they offer other practitioners and potential clients. How can you possibly do this without paying a pretty penny? Easy! In today's world there are several free open source learning management systems available to you. These systems allow you to quickly and easily create your own e-learning courses and programs.

Some good open source platforms to explore are:

[www.atutor.ca](http://www.atutor.ca)

[www.claroline.net](http://www.claroline.net)

[www.dokeos.com](http://www.dokeos.com)

[www.moodle.org](http://www.moodle.org)

Professional associations have also gotten into the e-learning game and offer numerous courses for members. Take a look at the American Counseling Associations efforts in this regard at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org). You'll find a link to online learning under their Resources tab. Another powerful way to expand your reach and build credibility within the profession is to develop an online

course that is approved and posted on a national association website. This is a great marketing strategy for you.

### **WEB SEMINARS (WEBINARS)**

Not too long ago, Oprah Winfrey offered a free 10-week web seminar with spiritual guru and author Eckhart Tolle. The webinar was held every Monday evening for 10 weeks. What is important to note about this hallmark event, whether you are an Oprah fan or not, is the fact that together they held an interactive educational program on a global scale. Participants entered a virtual learning environment where they could access workbooks and course material, post questions, and view real time discussions and presentations by Eckhart Tolle. Not impressed so far? How about the fact that they had over 700,000 participants each week from 139 different countries!

This single event demonstrated the power of web seminars and introduced a mass audience to this technology. No longer is it simply a tool for facilitating virtual business meetings. It has become an effective vehicle to communicate a message, to build awareness and buy in about a particular topic, and to offer an interactive educational experience.

Web Seminars, as part of the rising social nature of the web, will become more and more prominent in our near future. Larger behavioral healthcare organizations and practitioners alike will want to keep an eye on this model and think about how it might be useful in their profession.

### **THE RISE OF PROFESSIONAL COACHING & CONSULTANTS**

In early 2007, I was speaking with a friend of mine who told me he attended a relationship workshop he found to be very informative and helpful for both him and his wife. Naturally, I assumed it was either a psychologist, marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, or clinical social worker facilitating the program. Since I was in the field and felt I had a good handle on the marketplace, I assumed I would know the clinician. When I asked the person's name, I did not recognize it. I asked my friend if the person was a therapist, and he nodded his head in acknowledgement. Since I did not know this person I looked her up and realized she was not a clinician but a relationship coach.

There are several points from this conversation worth noting. One is the fact that there are people in your community providing a variety of individual and group services who are NOT mental health professionals in the traditional sense. The second point is that many of the people offering these services are

very good at what they do. The third is that they are business savvy, know how to market their services and how to speak to consumers. Finally, there is the reality that most people outside of mental health are not aware of the distinction between a mental health clinician and a relationship coach. They see them as interchangeable, as one in the same. Let's briefly take a look at these important points since they speak to a phenomenon that will have more and more of an effect on the mental health profession as a whole.

## **A. Coaches & Consultants**

Coaching is growing at an international level, and these professionals are involved in numerous areas that overlap with mental health services. Some of these areas include career counseling, relationship counseling, leadership counseling, life change consulting, business consulting, and grief counseling. They have done an excellent job penetrating highly lucrative markets such as Fortune 500 companies, CEO level executives, schools, and high end communities. In the past there was a stigma associated with this profession, however, the stigma has lessened considerably, and in many parts of the world it is virtually non-existent. In addition, many of these programs and service offerings are of very high quality. They are well researched, innovative, and highly structured. I recently attended a workshop delivered by a life coach who worked with people going through significant life changes whether it was death of a loved one, life threatening illness, divorce, career change, unemployment, or any number of other things. The program was well defined, unique, and utilized both clinical and coaching principles. It was a very effective program!

## **B. Marketing & Sales Savvy**

Adding to the dilemma for mental health practitioners is the fact that many coaches are experienced in all areas of business. They know how to uncover needs/opportunities and then design and market programs that will speak to potential consumers. In many ways they are ahead of the curve in terms of sales and marketing principles. They are also able to leverage technology to improve their reach and to expand their presence in the market. Another interesting aspect to life coaches is that they are very specific with regards to their target audience, and as a result, they craft their message accordingly. These are important lessons to be aware of as you move forward in your career. Being clear as to whom you are offering services to will help you to use your time wisely when it comes to marketing and selling. The good news is

that you can learn a lot researching some of these professionals and taking a look at what they do effectively and not so effectively.

Want some good examples of what I am talking about when I refer to Life Coaches?

Take a look at Marie Forleo and her website: [www.thegoodlife-inc.com](http://www.thegoodlife-inc.com). She is a well-known coach who has received much praise for her work. Take a moment to view the site and hear what she has to say on her audio clip. Once you read the upcoming chapters of this book, you will notice that she has adopted many of the principles I propose you begin using as soon as possible! Also take note of what she proposes to offer people and how she goes about doing this. You may not agree with her proposal to “skyrocket your productivity” and/or “revitalize your relationships”, however, what you cannot argue with is the fact that she has successfully hit upon the needs and wants of her specific target audience.

Martha Beck is another life coach who gives us a good example as to how professional coaches are taking a piece of the market away from mental health professionals. You can learn more about her at [www.marthabeck.com](http://www.marthabeck.com). She has written several books and offers individual coaching sessions, tele seminars and much more. All of her services are designed to help people change their lives, and her approach is engaging, well designed, and well received by people looking for help.

Another site that will give you an idea of the power and scope life coaches and consultants offer is [www.simpleology.com](http://www.simpleology.com). This is a concept offered by marketing expert, Mark Joyner. He would not necessarily consider himself a life coach, however, his Simpleology program is based on scientific and behavioral research and is designed to help people manage and make sense of their hectic lives. It proposes to offer solutions that will increase productivity and peace of mind. In addition, he leverages the power of the Internet to reach a broad audience by offering a sophisticated learning platform complete with free modules and software tools designed to help you prioritize and manage daily tasks and goals. His program should give mental health professionals a much better picture as to the kinds of programs and service offerings behavioral healthcare practitioners can develop and promote.

\* \* \*

The overall review presented here represents just a few of the trends occurring right now within the mental health profession. My hope is that this discussion has helped generate excitement and energy for you by creating an environment of creative introspection. Use this newfound energy and see if any of these trends present an opportunity for you.

The next chapter begins our detailed discussion of specific sales principles and models that, if adopted, will have a profound impact for you in terms of uncovering opportunities, building on current successes and reaching higher levels of performance and growth. We start with an exploration of a new sales philosophy along with some critical sales principles that will transform the way you do business.

# 1

## Summary

- There is real opportunity for growth, advancement and overall success within the mental health profession. Understanding and leveraging key sales, marketing, and business principles will help make these opportunities a reality for you.
- Understand that you are involved in sales regardless of your profession. Resistance to this fact will only hinder your progress.
- There are changes within the industry that offer tremendous opportunity for those who can identify those changes and respond quickly. Technology is one area that offers much reward within the profession.
- Online psychotherapy and web-based training are becoming more acceptable options for consumers. Take time to learn about each, as they can be both a challenge and opportunity depending on how you approach their existence.
- The evolving social aspects of the Internet have brought about virtual communities where people obtain information and support from one another. Ignore or discount their impact and you will lose clients to these communities. Embrace them and identify ways to leverage their existence, and you will be rewarded.
- Professional coaching is receiving more and more attention, interest, and credibility. Understand its role in your market and learn from some of the things coaches do very well in the areas of marketing and service delivery.

# 2

## Creating A Foundation Of Success

### **THE NEW SALES PHILOSOPHY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

Now that we have taken a closer look at some of the trends affecting the industry and have discussed the importance and scope of sales in the profession our next step is to explore sales theory and application in greater detail.

One of the golden nuggets within the sales profession is the understanding that the most powerful sales skills, principles, and models are those that contribute to a fundamental shift in how business is conducted. What is this shift? The shift I am referring to is a movement away from participating in the selling process to becoming an important and critical part of the buying process. Sales experts across the globe emphasize the importance of this paradigm shift in order to achieve high levels of success.

So what does it mean when you talk about moving from the selling process to the buying process? Simply put, the selling process, in and of itself, can be a difficult and unrewarding endeavor. At its core it is a process whereby you are not in a position of strength, where you tend to focus on your own interests, and where you must seek out and convince others to use your services.

Now what would life be like as a practitioner if others sought you versus you seeking them? What if people recognized you as an authority in the field who

could help with their needs? What would it be like if the people you came in contact with were already willing buyers? When a change occurs where you are highly visible within the marketplace and where you are viewed as a valuable resource and partner, people begin to seek you out without any soliciting on your part. Business comes to you, and you inevitably reach those who are ready to buy versus soliciting those who have little to no interest. Your business approach attracts people who want to buy versus spending time trying to convince people to buy!

### **A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SALES PHILOSOPHY EXAMPLE**

Let me offer an example to clarify my point. Let's say you are a mental health clinician who has been in the field many years, you have expertise in family/child issues, and you decide to offer a group on parenting skills. You attend networking events but find that everyone at those events is pitching their own service and not seeking services to buy. Attendees shower you with praise and tout your service as "much needed" and "long overdue", however, you generate little to no business from those events. You advertise your group to doctor's offices and through basic networking channels such as local counseling chapters and school systems. Still no one comes. The issue here is not necessarily missing the mark in terms of community needs nor is it an issue of skill and competence. A main reason why you are unable to fill the seats is because you have not tapped into the buying process. In the buying scenario, you would have built a level of credibility in the community, you would have communicated value, built awareness, and positioned yourself in such a way that people had to go through you in order to access these specific mental health services. Your sales approach and philosophy would prompt those in the community to recognize you, talk about you, and value you as an important resource. In addition, you would have created highly effective communication channels/systems and offered solutions that removed traditional barriers/obstacles to buying. This last component is perhaps the most critical of all to business success since these systems encourage and allow others to take the next step toward utilizing your services. If you can create this shift your ability to grow as a practitioner multiplies exponentially and with half of the effort!

I have grouped many best practice sales skills/approaches into Core Sales Principles in an effort to help clarify and organize these concepts in a way that makes sense. They are extremely powerful principles in that they all contribute to the fundamental shift that repositions the practitioner from

selling to buying. Taken as a whole they offer readers a comprehensive and effective foundation that top performing businesses and sales professionals use to reach the pinnacle of success within their industry.

Let's take a closer look at each of these principles.

## **CREATING A BUYING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH CUSTOMER BASED SELLING**

Many people in all areas of business mistakenly take an approach where they sell their services versus solutions. A distinguishing factor for most people who are successful within their industry is that they are customer focused, meaning they sell the way the customer wants to buy. These people focus solely on the needs, problems and wants of the customer and work to find solutions that will help that customer. This concept sounds basic and simple, however, it takes dedication and a high level of skill to be customer focused in the way I am referring to here. Let's take a look at some of the key factors associated with a customer-based approach so you may see how to effectively incorporate this principle within the scope of your practice.

### **PART 1: SELL THE WAY CUSTOMERS WANT TO BUY**

*"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people, than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."*

—Dale Carnegie

This quote, from Dale Carnegie, offers a glimpse into one of the most critical aspects of effective selling. It provides the reader with a key link between human behavior and the law of attraction that will bring about positive sales results for you. Focus on others, and you will generate far more powerful results!

### **Turning on the Lights**

In my work I meet with many mental health practitioners throughout the day to talk about and sell behavioral health services. In the beginning, my approach consisted of arriving at a scheduled sales appointment and quickly launching into a discussion about all of the services our psychiatric hospital had to offer. Since I was a clinician by training, I felt I knew what my prospects

were looking for; and so I spent a lot of time talking about the specifics of our clinical product. I thought this approach would help distinguish me in the marketplace, and therefore, benefit the bottom line of my employer.

My belief in the approach I was using, however, began to change several months into my new role. During that time, I met with a psychiatrist who worked for a local hospital in our area. As usual, I quickly launched into my talk about services because I felt he was quite busy and did not have much time to give. I discussed many different things and handed him various materials that he brushed aside. I continued discussing the details of our services until he interrupted me to ask a question. He asked, "Do you use a traditional substance abuse treatment model within your detox program? One that adheres strictly to the 12 step traditions?" The questions seemed to come from left field, as I had not even discussed our substance abuse programs at that point. I could have easily responded to his question. However, for some reason on this day I paused and said, "That's a good question. Why do you ask?". I assumed his answer would be either that he was a strong believer in the model or he was not. Instead he informed me he had a patient who needed detox services and most likely longer-term treatment for alcohol addiction. The patient was also on psychotropic meds and painkillers for severe chronic back pain. He went on to tell me he often works with complex cases like this, but he does not know where to send them since many treatment facilities are not sympathetic to these situations; and they will not provide substance abuse treatment services without them being off all medications.

Wow! This was valuable information, and I would not have obtained it if he had not interrupted my speech about child services and if I had simply answered his first question. Luckily, my response helped uncover the true meaning behind his question, and this gave me an opportunity to answer him more effectively and offer real solutions based on his specific needs. I was able to tell him that our organization did work with cases such as the one he mentioned and that our physicians and clinical team were comfortable working with an approach that allowed other medications that were helping with existing medical conditions. I also provided him with the names of the psychiatrists for him to contact should he have further questions about the overall clinical approach.

That meeting was a revelation for me. I made a positive impression during the sales call that to this day has led to many substance abuse treatment referrals from that particular psychiatrist. As a result, I decided to take this approach more often. Instead of talking incessantly about our services,

I structured my meetings so the focus was on the needs of the customer first and foremost. I began taking more time to prepare beforehand so I could ask targeted questions based on my audience's area of expertise and services. I spoke less and listened more to what they had to say. Ultimately, I discovered that this approach helped me understand the true "hot buttons" and needs of the customer versus simply giving them a generic overview of our services. As a result, I was able to gear my talk specifically to those needs. It inevitably led to the development of a much stronger emotional connection that was further amplified when I was also able to offer solutions to their needs and problems. This process alone served to create a positive impression for our organization that led to improved relationships and increased sales. In addition, this customer-focused approach inevitably encouraged an open dialogue with those organizations that were not using our services, and in many instances, I was able to clear up misunderstandings or remove barriers so that our organization became a useful resource for their practice.

### **And HOW Does This Pertain to Me?**

Now you may be wondering or asking yourself, what in the world does this example about selling mental health services have to do with me and the clinical work I am doing?! How does this approach/philosophy possibly fit into my world? My short answer is this...it does fit, and it can do a lot for you!!

For starters, use this model to better understand your customer's needs so that you can create a buying environment for your customer base. If you are an organization, a customer focused approach helps you understand the marketplace so you can position yourself more effectively. If you are a practitioner within a larger organization and you use this approach with colleagues and clients, you will better understand the needs and expectations of your organization, you will build stronger professional relationships, and you will position yourself for growth/promotional opportunities within the company. If you are an individual practitioner, you will offer services that speak to the needs of the consumer, you will stand out from the crowd as someone who listens, who "gets it" and who understands their needs. I encourage you to get out and meet people in your community. Create opportunities for dialogue and ask good questions; learn their problems, needs, and challenges. Use this information to identify and develop unique solutions. You will be remembered for your efforts, and people will begin seeking you out!

## PART 2: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

It is the rare individual who truly focuses on the customer in the here and now. In today's world people lose site of this fact and steer themselves towards meeting their own specific needs. It is certainly not hard to do! With work demands, family responsibilities, and personal and professional financial worries, it is no wonder that we lose sight of others and focus within. Sales departments are notorious in this regard as they often institute aggressive quotas and systems that encourage sales professionals to neglect their clients and instead focus on their own demands and requirements. As a result, a practical, long-term and customer oriented approach becomes a rarity in any industry.

Shifting one's focus to the customer starts with being fully present and listening to others. Does this sound familiar? If you are a mental health practitioner, it should sound all too familiar! Sophisticated and powerful sales skills adopt skill sets that are very similar to core clinical skills all mental health professionals are trained to use. Empathy, Active Listening, Being Present for the Client, Asking Open Ended Questions, Reflecting Feeling & Content, and Problem Solving are just a few of the clinical techniques you can use to become outstanding at meeting customer needs and selling your services.

### Feature Oriented vs. Solution Oriented Selling

In **feature oriented selling** the focus is on the person selling the service. He/She launches into a detailed discussion about what they do and what they offer right from the beginning. This is the approach I used previously. I would arrive at a meeting and monopolize the conversation by bombarding the prospect with facts and features about all our services. When I was not talking, the internal dialogue in my head made it virtually impossible to take in what my client was really saying. This model is the most common one you will find in spite of the fact that it is a self-serving and clumsy approach that rarely gets at the specific needs of the prospect.

I am not saying that features and details about your service or product are unimportant. Your ability to offer high-quality services is an essential part of the selling process. What I am saying here is that you must uncover the needs of the customer and then determine how your services can best meet those needs.

A **solution-focused approach** shifts the spotlight from you, the seller, to the potential customer. Rather than talking about features you take time to understand the unique needs of the customer and then identify solutions

based on their needs. How do you do this? You accomplish this by asking good questions, giving people an opportunity to share their story, and then probing to uncover needs. Once you have achieved this, you provide the customer with solutions that are specific to their unique needs. The results of making this shift are tremendous and a change in process will benefit you in ways beyond simply selling a service or product.

One clinician I met had tremendous success using this approach, and she would take this concept well beyond what I am describing in this section. She often spoke at community luncheons and school functions as a way to give back to the community, to keep in tune with the needs and challenges of the community, and to ultimately sell herself. After a lengthy dialogue about needs of specific families, she would determine if she could help them or not. If she determined it was outside her scope, she used her network in the community to offer solutions that did not involve her. She would refer people to other professionals she believed would be a better fit. She went even beyond this! Rather than offering contact information she would go through the effort of setting up an appointment for that person and would follow up to ensure everything worked out. I asked her why she went to all the trouble, and she informed me that the simple act of helping others, even if it did not directly help her, actually had the long term effect of benefiting her. She reported that this was perhaps her single most effective and rewarding sales approach, and it gave her an excellent reputation both in the community and with her colleagues who returned the favor by sending referrals her way. It had a tremendous snowball effect.

### **What is a Good Sales Question?**

Good questions are as important in sales as they are in clinical work. In the sales profession those who ask good, targeted questions at appropriate times are those who uncover the buying needs of potential clients. It is very enticing to quickly answer a question when you feel you have an easy answer. However, in most cases, patience is the key to unlocking a treasure chest of opportunity. I am listing a few samples of good questions often used by sales professionals during the sales process. These questions are very useful in ensuring the focus is on the customer and in uncovering important information about a potential customer's needs and wants. Use these as a framework and try to come up with your own questions to help you identify consumer need.

**1. “That’s an interesting question. Why do you ask?”**

- This is an excellent clarifying question that will limit quick judgments and assumptions.
- Use this question as an alternative to answering their initial question. This is very effective when someone asks about your specific services and/or programs.

**2. “When you ask about treatment programs for anxiety, what is it specifically that you are looking for?”**

- Once again, this is a good clarifying question, and will help you get more targeted answers.

**3. End with a question after responding to someone else’s question.**

- “Is this accurate?” “Does that make sense?”

**4. “What’s been your experience with...”**

- This will give you an idea as to what someone might like or dislike about a particular service.

**5. “When I say ‘parenting treatment program’ what one word comes to mind?”**

- Their answer to this question will give you top of mind awareness and access to an individual’s needs, biases, and feelings associated with that topic.
- Once they provide a word, it is also effective to ask a follow up question that leads to a more detailed discussion. “Okay, so ‘sympathy’ was the first thing that came to mind. Tell me more about the reason(s) why you chose that word.”

**6. Silence is golden.**

- Once you ask a question make an effort to remain silent and give the person an opportunity to think and respond.
- Interrupting too quickly may interfere with the flow of the conversation and serve to derail you in your efforts to uncover need.

### **PART 3: VALUE PROPOSITIONS IN YOUR PRACTICE**

The importance of value in business is painfully obvious to most. However, what may not be so obvious is the concept of “value” that I am referring to here. The term value as defined in this new approach to selling is different than the more traditional model where value and benefit is the direct result of professional services and/or products that are purchased. My definition of value within this new sales model is:

**Delivering something to potential clients/customers without any expectation of something in return.**

This approach proposes finding opportunities to give value to people that goes beyond a typical fee for service model. It is a completely altruistic and giving concept.

Take a look at these two questions about marketing approaches and ask yourself which one is more powerful.

- Do potential clients and/or referral sources want another brochure or announcement about a service you are delivering?
- Would they be more interested in a referral you provide to their practice, a resource that can help grow their business, or a free educational program offering helpful tips that will make their lives better?

Offering value as identified in the second bullet point is a powerful sales and marketing tool! Customers and referral sources ALWAYS have time for valuable information that will help them personally or professionally. Using this model will open doors that are otherwise closed and will give you the opportunity to reach others on a different level.

One exercise I find extremely useful for my own work is the practice of identifying a list of resources and services I can give potential customers that are high on value. I try to do this periodically to keep myself focused on long-term growth. Some examples you’ll find on my list are:

- Creating a website offering updated resource information.
- Creating a sorted resource directory for practitioners.
- Offering to promote other people’s services and programs.

- Providing free educational opportunities for professional development.
- Finding employment opportunities for others.
- Referring business to clinicians.

## **The Power of Value: Creating a Persuasive Buying Environment**

As I mentioned previously, my job is to sell services for a large behavioral healthcare organization. One day I held a lunch meeting at a local practice consisting of a team of psychiatrists and psychotherapists. I knew most of the professionals within the practice – all except one psychiatrist whom I was never able to meet. Sales representatives of all kinds constantly solicited her, and as a result, she made a decision to restrict sales calls. None of my efforts to meet her worked in the past, and this day was no exception. During our lunch meeting she dropped in unexpectedly, grabbed a sandwich and then said, “David, a friend of mine is moving to the Charleston area. She is a psychiatrist and is looking for employment opportunities. Do you know if your organization has any opportunities?”

I told her I would look into the matter and asked for her friend’s name and contact information. She provided me with the information, thanked me, and left the room.

I knew we probably did not have any job opportunities at this point in time, but I also knew this was a very good opportunity to make a positive impression. I decided I would put together a plan to help this psychiatrist in any way I could, whether with our organization or another provider. I called the psychiatrist, told her I wanted to help her get connected with my organization, and we set up an appointment to meet face to face when she was in town. Prior to the meeting, I researched practices that in the past had mentioned to me they were looking for a psychiatrist. I also developed a list of questions to learn more about her, her interests, and her area of expertise. After our meeting, I contacted my medical director and had him call the new psychiatrist to set up a face-to-face meeting. I also called two of the larger practices in the area who had casually mentioned to me that they were looking for additional psychiatrists. I had both practices call her to schedule interviews.

One week following our meeting she had three interviews scheduled. She interviewed at all three places but did not take a job with any of the

leads I provided. Instead, she chose to join a different organization in the community.

I recall hearing from our medical director after the entire process. He said that during their meeting she mentioned not knowing why I was going through all this trouble to help her. The answer is easy – The Power of Value!!!

When people hear this story, many say that I went through all that trouble and she didn't even join one of the practices I provided. As a result, they viewed it as wasted time. The reality and the irony is that the most effective sales interventions are often those that are not directly involved in selling! Another reality is recognizing that everyone is a potential customer, and every interaction is a selling moment. Let's take a look at the outcomes resulting from my efforts and see how "giving value" benefited my organization.

What were the outcomes of this event for my organization and me?

- Instant credibility with a psychiatrist who refused to see me in the past. She now sees my company as a valuable resource! **Next time I call on her, will I get an appointment? Might she consider our organization if she has a service need?**
- A new prospect in our market now views my organization as a valuable resource and partner. **Will she refer to my company? Will she talk with colleagues about her experience?**
- Strengthening existing relationships. Two of my top accounts were grateful I thought of them. They contact our organization whenever they have a question about behavioral healthcare needs, and this has led to increased referrals.
- Talk in the Community. The best kind of marketing comes when other people talk about you. The chances are good that this new psychiatrist talked about the help she received to others.
- Becoming a part of the buying process. Instead of me chasing business, business is now chasing me! I have tapped into the buying process!

My hope is that you can see how this kind of value-based approach can help you and your practice. The model can be used in numerous areas within mental health. Whether you are searching for a new job opportunity, in private practice, or working for an organization, this approach will build relationships, identify referral channels, and help grow your business!

## **PART 4: AROUSE “WANT” & “NEED” IN OTHERS**

The most profound teachers stand the test of time and Dale Carnegie is no exception. In 1912 he began teaching classes on human behavior and the power of persuasion and in 1936 wrote his now-renowned book, “How to Win Friends & Influence People”. Today it continues to hold significant weight in the world of business – particularly in professional sales.

One of the most profound insights in his book states:

*“...The only way on earth to influence other people is to talk about what they want and show them how to get it.” He goes on., “Of course you are interested in what you want. You are eternally interested in it. But no one else is. The rest of us are just like you: we are interested in what we want.”*

Mr. Carnegie speaks of a fundamental concept I will attempt to emphasize throughout this book: Your ability to influence people is directly proportional to your willingness to understand the needs and wants of others!

He continues to clarify his point by focusing on the challenges salespeople face everyday.

*“Thousands of salespeople are pounding the pavements today, tired, discouraged and underpaid. Why? Because they are always thinking only of what they want. They don’t realize that neither you nor I want to buy anything. If we did we would go out and buy it. Both of us are eternally interested in solving our problems.”*

Want to learn how to attract business and succeed in this field and beyond?

Arouse in the other person a desire and need by focusing on their wants and solving their problems, thereby, creating an environment where a person will want to buy.

### **Do you really know what your customers want?**

We have already discussed the importance of good questioning to identify customer needs. Another way to better understand your target audience is through the use of brainstorming exercises.

One such exercise is a free association activity that can be done alone or in a group setting. It is an excellent activity for those looking to identify key

messages that speak directly to customer need. It involves a simple four-step process.

## FREE ASSOCIATION EXERCISE

**Step 1:** Take some time and identify your unique target markets, write them down in sections/categories on separate sheets of paper so you have space to continue writing about each category. An example of some categories that might be excellent referral sources for you are: Primary Care Physicians, Pediatricians, Teachers, School Counselors, Families, HR Departments, Attorney's.

**Step 2:** Write any challenges and needs about a specific group without filtering. No matter how "off the wall" it may seem to you write it down!

**Step 3:** Once you've completed this task take a break so you'll be able to look at what you wrote from a fresh perspective. Return to the activity and look at each category. If you are working in a group this is a great time to have a detailed discussion about each item or point that was offered. Examine your list, expound on some of the ideas that speak to you, and revise your list as needed. The idea is to continue examining what you have written so you can drill down further in order to capture some of "the essence of need" for each population.

**Step 4:** Once this is completed use the information you have gathered to come up with solutions and steps you can take in order to effectively meet the needs, demands and challenges of each target population. Prioritize and build a project plan around each of these interventions.

Here are some examples of what Step 1 and Step 2 might look like:

### **Primary Care Physicians:**

- Very busy work environment. A lot of patients seen in a short time frame.
- Tend to not want to take time to meet with you to discuss their needs.
- They want easy access to services. Speed is key!

30 ► **Generating Wealth In The Mental Health Profession**

- They want to know the services are reliable and of high quality so they do not have to take time following up.
- You get one shot to make an impression. If it works, they will continue using you.
- Their end goal: To keep mental health issues away from their office so they can focus on areas they are most comfortable with!!

**Teachers:**

- They have high stress jobs and are asked to manage many things (students, school demands/requirements, parents).
- Key Stressors: behavioral problems in the classroom, unmanageable and/or threatening children, parents who are uneducated as to psychological & developmental problems.
- They want education and practical tools and processes showing them how to identify problem areas and how to address situations effectively.
- They want knowledge and awareness of psychological and developmental issues that will make them more effective in the classroom.
- They want a relationship and partnership with a professional they trust, someone to help them so they can refer families and children quickly and with peace of mind that they are getting the care and support they need.
- They need good mental health resources so they can focus on other demands of their job such as standardized testing.

**Families**

- They want someone who can help their child quickly.
- They want someone who understands their needs and anxieties.
- They want someone who is an expert in their field.
- They want someone who is referred to them by another.
- They want someone who is visible and known in the community.

- Their challenges might be denial and a general unwillingness to seek treatment for themselves or their child.

### **Hiring Manager**

- A hiring manager who is posting a position has a specific need. If they have an open position, this may be impacting their ability to be an effective manager, it may be impacting the quality of services, and it may be having a negative impact on his team.
- This manager may be doing two jobs until he fills the other position. An example - They may be managing a team and taking a caseload in order to meet the overall service needs. He may be putting other important projects on hold until they can find additional resources.
- They are looking to fill the position quickly.
- They are looking for someone who is reliable & committed so they do not have to worry about filling the position again.
- They want someone who will be easy to manage, meaning the person gets along well with others, can function in a changing-fast paced environment, can work independently and be counted on to complete tasks.
- They want someone who is skilled clinically and/or can learn quickly.
- They want someone who has initiative and the drive to learn new concepts and incorporate those into new service offerings.

These are merely examples of what the initial brainstorming step might look like. From this point you can review items and add detailed information to your list. The process in and of itself will help you better understand customer needs so that you can provide services that reach out to your target audience in ways that will lead to success.

### **The Power of Persuasion and Influence**

Think back and remember a time when you were persuaded to do something. A time when you felt good about your decision to take action, and the outcome was a positive one for you. Can you remember how this process went for you and how the persuasive person approached you? Can you compare that to a time when you may have been pressured into making a decision and regretted

it? Often times, the best way to learn how the power of persuasion works is to reflect on your own experiences. When you review some of these episodes try to remember the key elements present during those positive experiences. Think about how you can incorporate some of these elements into your own process of reaching out to potential consumers. That is where the gold is!

In short, persuasion is a partnership process where you work together to solve problems and come up with mutually beneficial solutions. It involves shaping an image in a customer's mind so they are free to buy. It is manipulation free, which also means it is long term in focus and is designed to create a win-win situation.

The reality is that people do not like to be sold to, and as a result, aggressive self-serving sales tactics turn people away. They are short-term focused due to the fact that the experience is often a negative one for the consumer. However, we all have needs and problems that need solutions. If someone approaches us with a product or service that will address our needs then a buying environment is created and we are compelled to buy.

### **What manipulation looks like?**

One of the reasons mental health practitioners cringe when they hear about the idea of selling is the impression they have of pushy sales professionals using manipulative tactics. In the past, and still somewhat today, sales experts teach specific techniques and interventions that are designed to manipulate another person into buying. This often involves use of slick sales lines and high pressure sales tactics, whereby the salesperson believes that somehow and some way they can trick a potential customer into buying.

Let's have a little fun and take a look at some closing techniques that are still alive and well within the old school sales mentality. You may have been the victim of these in the past!

### **The Bracket Close**

- This approach involves presenting three offers with the target choice that the seller wants to achieve being strategically placed in the middle.
- The rationale being that presenting unappealing options on each side of a slightly more attractive offer will make the middle offer appear even more appealing than it truly is.

## **The Save Face Close**

- This approach involves shaming potential consumers in the hopes that they feel pressured into buying.
- An example might be, “I certainly understand as not everyone is really ready for this kind of advanced training.”
- Another example, “Well I hear you. We are a top of the line producer so this product is not something everyone can afford.”

## **The Build Up Close**

- A salesperson uses this technique by asking a series of questions where the answer is undoubtedly yes.
- The theory behind this is to get the potential customer to agree with you so that they’ll say yes when the time comes to ask for the sale.

It will come as no surprise to you to know that these techniques rarely work, and they are virtual killers when looking at long-term business success and growth.

So while others may choose to aggressively pursue and pressure others into buying you can differentiate yourself and widen the gap between your competition by identifying ways to **“give people what they want”**.

## **PART 5: GO ABOVE AND BEYOND AND BE REMEMBERED!**

When I was living in Washington, DC, following graduate school, I had the good fortune of meeting an experienced and talented clinician who took me under her wing. I was amazed at how well her practice grew and prospered. While other clinicians struggled to survive, she was opening satellite offices in Maryland and Northern Virginia. While other practitioners complained about poor pay and limited opportunities, she was looking to hire new clinicians to support the constant flow of business coming her way.

She had many skills and did many things that led to her success, but for me the number one reason for her success was the fact that:

***She Always Made a Powerful Impression, and She Always Stood Out from the Crowd.***

No matter where you were in the DC Metro area, if you mentioned her name, people knew her in a positive light. Most knew her because they had benefited directly from something she had offered them.

One example I recall was a conversation about childhood trauma between several DSS and DMH workers. During the conversation her name was mentioned. The group spoke about an experience they had with her one year ago when DSS called her asking for some suggestions about books and papers on childhood trauma. Instead of simply offering references she proposed meeting to discuss other things that might help achieve their goal. She proposed offering an eight session parenting program which contained principles of childhood trauma as one component. She offered to deliver the workshop once a week on the weekends. She came up with a detailed program, found space through her connections, solicited involvement from other experts in the area and put together a top-notch training program. Before you knew it DSS was putting on a comprehensive workshop for community members that received a lot of positive attention in Washington, DC. Best of all - she did all of this for FREE!

I learned a great deal from her over the years but perhaps the greatest lesson was to approach my work and my profession in a way that would be memorable, helpful to others, and unique. Becoming memorable essentially means adopting characteristics and principles that will distinguish you in the marketplace. Since then I have continued to identify areas and factors I believe contribute to the goal of creating a positive impression and being remembered. The pages that follow identify a few of these important factors.

## **Be giving**

In my mind, the power of giving has no peer. Sharing your expertise and giving value to others will expand your network and presence in the field at an incredible rate. So my advice to you would be to think of ways you can help individuals, community organizations, and the like.

I am relentless in this regard. Some would say obsessed! If someone is struggling with an issue or has a specific need, I will do whatever I can to help them even if it is not directly within the scope of my work. This benefits me in two ways.

- First - I simply enjoy helping others!
- Second - It makes me memorable!

If a graduate student is struggling with breaking into the field, I will meet with him and find opportunities to get him started. Do you have a workshop idea that you don't think can get off the ground? I'd love to help you market it, sell it, and manage the delivery of the program! You get the idea.

***Final Thought: Giving Gives Back!***

**Give others the credit!!**

My friend and mentor in Washington, DC was a master at using this principle. Notice that in my previous story I said DSS received a lot of positive attention in the community for the childhood trauma program. At first I remember thinking that DSS did nothing but follow my mentors lead. She did all the work! My mentor quickly reminded me that they provided the spark, the funding, and generated enough publicity to make it a success. So in the end, she made sure that DSS received ultimate ownership and the lion share of praise. The rewards to her would come later on and would be far more powerful.

Behavioral Science researchers talk about an all-important law of human conduct, and years ago Dale Carnegie stated the law in these terms:

**Always Make the Other Person Feel Important, Acknowledge Their Efforts – And Do It Sincerely.**

The last piece of this statement is very important since I do not mean to propose giving praise when it is not warranted. But take time to recognize the contributions of others, put your ego aside, and ensure they receive their due. Acknowledging others and appreciating their efforts will help you whether you are a manager, employee, executive, or private practitioner. The process will create a memorable experience for all involved.

**Final Thought: Strengthen Relationships by Acknowledging the Efforts of Others.**

**Be Better Prepared**

Have you ever had a moment during a talk or a meeting when you were prepared to shut off all systems and drift away into daydream land only to find

yourself re-energized and completely involved because of what someone had to say? In my experience, these moments are few and far between. However, when they happen they leave a lasting impression. Usually, these moments occur because someone has identified a key area of interest for you, and the ability to achieve this is the direct result of their preparation and ultimately understanding of needs and wants.

Yes, this is common sense to a degree. Yet who among us can say we are truly prepared in a way that will impress and engage? I mentioned previously that during my sales calls I came to the realization I needed to shift my focus to the customer. Before my meetings I would research the business, recall my notes on past conversations, review current market shifts, and then I would prepare a series of questions I was prepared to ask during the meeting. In short - I was much better prepared than I had been in the past. It made me sharper and helped me to better engage the person I was speaking with, because I knew what they were doing, understood their demands, and was offering solutions specific to their needs.

In the sales world, I have seen people impress prospects with their knowledge of the person's business. Their efforts quickly engaged the prospect, and they were immediately viewed as someone who could truly help them.

As a clinician, you can adopt this approach and use it in similar fashion. One great way to accomplish this is to create opportunities where you meet directly with potential customers and ask them questions that get at need and buyer motivation. Many clinicians feel they have great services to offer in the form of workshops and groups, however, when they offer and market the service, they struggle to create demand. I suggest taking more of a market research approach. When you have a speaking engagement or when you are doing work out in the community, take time to hear what they have to say, and see if you notice important patterns. This will provide you with valuable information so you are much better prepared to speak the customers language and to craft service offerings that are in direct alignment with their underlying needs.

***Final Thought: Preparation is a Distinguishing Factor in any Industry!***  
**Use it to Uncover Motives and Attract Buyers.**

## **Over Deliver & Follow Through**

Not too long ago, a physician approached our CEO to let her know how thankful he was for all the help he received from the person who represented her organization. He said,

*“You know, people always say they will do something, but in reality they make empty promises. This woman actually followed through on what she said she would do and went well beyond my wildest expectations. In my experience, no one ever does that.”*

It's true – people rarely follow through and almost never exceed expectations. A great way to create an impression is to find ways to help others and to follow-through 100% of the time. Be fanatical about it! It will build a strong networking system for you, and it is a great way to create word of mouth advertising. Be known as a person who delivers in a big, big way.

Also know that this concept applies to all areas large and small. I once worked with someone who rarely, if ever, returned phone calls. Yes, she was extremely busy and overwhelmed at times, however, this left a negative impression with people. Try your best not to leave things unfinished. Lack of follow-through, however small, is a powerful psychological phenomenon, and it can be a sales killer.

The bottom line is to always think follow-through. Give it a try. It will benefit you no matter what your work setting, and it will create a positive impression with colleagues, supervisors, clients, and prospects alike.

***Final Thought:* Be the Exception to the Rule and Deliver the Goods.**

## **Everyone is a Customer, and Every Situation is a Selling Opportunity**

I was once asked why in the world I was always helping people find job opportunities and why I was providing workshops and trainings for graduate students? “You aren't in human resources, and you aren't a teacher. It's not your job.”

On the contrary! It is most definitely my job! In reality, everyone is a potential customer in one way, shape or form and the same principle applies to you!

I enjoy helping others find new employment opportunities in the field. And down the road, when they are in that job and they have a client who needs intensive treatment services, my hope is that they will think of me and give a call. When I deliver trainings to graduate students and help them find internships, I recall

those days when I needed help getting started in the field. I enjoy sharing my lessons learned in the hope that my efforts will prevent them from making similar mistakes! But my motives aren't entirely altruistic. Delivering trainings in the community helps me build credibility, helps refine my presentation skills, and builds relationships in the community so I can be more effective at what I do.

Sales experts will tell you that the details and process of selling a service or product is the least important and effective part of sales. Developing a strong network, helping others, providing solutions and delivering value, building credibility and consumer confidence are much more important to overall business growth and success.

***Final Thought:* Think Long-Term and Revise Your Definition of Selling. There are Sales Opportunities in the Most Unlikely Places.**

## **Be Visible and Accessible**

A great measure of success in business is becoming a part of the collective consciousness of the community and/or market you serve. One way to accomplish this is by ensuring you are in front of your target audience as much as possible.

Developing effective communication vehicles to reach customers and offering services and products that are of value to the community are powerful tools for building credibility and making an impression.

Top performing sales professionals use this concept and method often and with much success. I recall a time when a colleague emailed me a free article on a topic that was directly related to the work we were both doing as sales professionals. I read the article and was very impressed with the content and amazed that it was being offered free of charge. So I looked onto the person's website and read about his service offerings which included workshops, books, and additional products. I was not willing to buy anything at that time but I liked the fact he offered free products that benefited me, and there was an invitation to join his mailing list to receive his free newsletter and updates about other free products. So I joined and thought nothing more of it or him for weeks. Three weeks later I received an email from him offering two free audio clips on topics that I found very interesting. I listened to both audio clips, took notes, and was grateful for the new information. But once again, I thought nothing more of him. Three weeks later I was knee-deep in work on a project when I received an email promoting this person's new book. I previewed the content and loved the topic because it spoke directly to what I was working on at the time. I thought it would help me immensely and decided

to purchase the book. I enjoyed it tremendously, so much so that I purchased a more extensive workshop series that was much more expensive.

**Can you see what I am getting at here?**

There is tremendous power in putting yourself in front of potential customers. One of the best ways to do this is to offer people things that will help them. This goes back to the principle of value as I define it: *Offering a service or product with no expectation of something in return.* This keeps you present in people's minds and builds a certain level of credibility so that people will seek you out when they need help.

**Do you see the power of using systems?**

This person used today's technology to be available to me so I would buy when the time was right. He built credibility through the quality of his free offerings and then remained visible. His approach was highly effective. He generated word of mouth marketing whereby other people were promoting his services/products by sharing it with work colleagues and friends. And he created a buying environment simply by making himself a resource and being easily accessible in a way that was non threatening and non intrusive.

This same concept is incredibly relevant within the mental health industry. We need to be ready and available when people are in crisis and need help. Who do they turn to when they are having problems? Who do they seek out when they have a question or concern that they believe might require clinical services? Hopefully, the answer is you.

# 2

## Summary

- Move away from the selling process and become part of the buying process. Create a shift where people seek you out to buy what you are selling. A customer-focused sales model will help you make this all-important shift.
- Focus on your customers needs and learn to sell the way people want to buy. Offer solutions and not simply features.
- Solution-Oriented selling shifts the spotlight from you, the seller, to the potential customer/client.
- A distinguishing skill of top performing sales professionals is their ability to ask thoughtful questions of prospects. Use your mental health skills to listen to customer needs and ask questions that get at the core of their wants.
- Position yourself as a trusted resource in the community by finding unique ways to offer value to customers. Reread this chapter to review techniques and exercises that will help you build value.
- Learn and adopt the principles that will help build your reputation and build visibility. (1) Give to others as often as possible, (2) Give others credit and make others look good, (3) Be better prepared than your competitors, (4) Over deliver and always follow through, (5) Think long-term and treat everyone as a customer because they are!

# 3

## The Social Dynamics Of Power, Influence And Persuasion

**“I’m gonna make him an offer he can’t refuse.”**

**Don Corleone: The Godfather**

Most mental health practitioners rarely, if ever, examine the role of social dynamics as a psychological force within their own work environment. It is such a new concept in the field that I would venture a guess that the mere mention of “social dynamics” would be interpreted solely to mean the role practitioners play in the clinical process. Clinicians study phenomena such as the importance of non-verbal communication and the role of power/perception within the confines of a therapeutic relationship, but they rarely turn an eye towards the impact of these phenomena within their own business successes and failures. In the world of business, social dynamics involving power, control, and influence play a significant role and often determine positive or negative outcomes. Buying decisions, strategic alliances, and other business activities are influenced greatly by how people judge/assess a situation and how they view you as a business professional. Right or wrong, we all make these judgments, and they, in turn, greatly influence our behavior and future decisions.

In the real world, hierarchical power structures permeate all social systems in an attempt to provide structure and order. People existing within these systems inevitably bring their own unique positions, biases, personalities, and strengths to the table. Your unique attributes, in turn, contribute to your influential power and the impact you may have within an existing environment and social structure. Make no mistake about it, we all practice some form of persuasion and influence every single day of our lives. Sometimes it is intentional, and at other times it is an entirely unconscious phenomenon.

Now let me propose a hypothetical situation. What if you became more aware of these dynamics within your place of employment? What if you were able to use this newfound awareness to create an environment where you were in a position of strength and credibility in the eye of a prospect? Few people realize that sales success in any industry involves understanding that selling is a game of psychological positioning and persuasion. Those who position themselves most effectively are the ones who earn the power and ability to manage the decision making process for the consumer. Use these principles in a smart and efficient manner, and you have the competitive advantage.

This chapter takes a closer look at the influential psychodynamics of power and control in business settings, and the role it plays in determining success and failure. It is intended to teach you how to gain power and influence in your marketing efforts so you may prosper in whatever mental health career path you choose to follow.

This topic may make you feel a bit uncomfortable. It may even make you question whether or not you are being manipulative and/or functioning in a manner that is counter to your mission as a helping professional. But I assure you that there are jewels of wisdom and knowledge within these concepts. We cannot simply ignore the power systems and structures operating in our lives, as they are an essential component of every social system. And when you take a closer look, you will find that adopting these principles simply means utilizing influential behavior and power to give people the psychological freedom to benefit from something they may really want or need.

So before moving forward, I ask once again that you set aside your beliefs and/or notions about power, perception, and control in order to look closely at the conscious and unconscious phenomena impacting business practice on a daily basis.

## **PART 1: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY POWER?**

There is some dispute among researchers as to the relationship between power, influence, control, and persuasion. **Power** at its most basic level can be defined as the potential to make and enforce decisions. The term **Influence** differs from power in that it is the vehicle people use to exert power. **Persuasion** is closely linked to that of influence. However, it has differences in that it does not involve use of coercive power, which is the case with some influential behavior. Persuasion is a process whereby someone attempts to change a belief

or attitude of an individual or group. In most cases, persuasion is a mutually beneficial process, and it is used effectively by most top performing business executives.

In 1959, researcher's John R.P. French Jr. and Bertram Raven examined and studied the concept of power in various social settings. Their efforts led to a theory that identifies five bases of social and organizational power (a sixth base was added later on). Within these bases is the belief that processes of power are pervasive, complex, and often disguised in our society. Consequently, those who are better able to understand and become aware of power bases and dynamics are in a better position to manage and prosper within specific hierarchical social structures.

The six bases are as follows:

**REWARD POWER:**

Your power over another is a function of the level of a reward that can be earned by a person and the extent to which the person believes you control or influence those rewards.

**COERCIVE POWER:**

The extent of coercive power is related to how much a person can be punished by you and the extent to which that person believes this punishment can be avoided if they comply with your directives or wishes.

**EXPERT POWER:**

Your power is the direct result of people's perception that you possess special knowledge and expertise.

**LEGITIMATE POWER:**

The impact of legitimate power comes from people's belief that you have the legal authority to influence them in some way.

**REFERENT POWER:**

This power is based on how much someone likes you as an individual. They may be drawn to your communication style, your personality, charisma, or confidence. The transference phenomena may also play a significant role as your power over another may be a function of how much you are able to

influence another person's feelings of personal acceptance, approval, and self-esteem.

### **INFORMATION POWER:**

Power can also be obtained by one's ability to control information needed by others in order to reach an important goal.

These forms of power are used or experienced by all of us at some point in time, and they often lead to different outcomes. In business, there are times when coercive power is essential to bringing about movement and resolving issues. C-Level executives use their position of power and authority to bring about order and to ensure effective and timely decisions are made for the good of the organization. Private practitioners use their power as an expert in a specific field to win business, to make clinical decisions, and to drive the treatment process.

The initial goal regarding this discussion is to become more aware of power dynamics within your social networks and to begin to recognize the different bases of power that are being adopted by those you come into contact with as you go about your day. This "awareness" step will begin to give you insight into how power dynamics impact you and how you use your own power in specific settings.

Now that we have identified and defined these concepts a logical question for many of you might be... "How can I use these forms of power to position myself effectively in the marketplace?" It starts with making an effort to level the playing field.

## **PART 2: FINDING YOUR POWER**

Every business interaction involves the use of the principles of power, influence, and persuasion. They are critical components to help achieve goals and objectives at all levels. In addition, virtually every social interaction involves some form of negotiation that is in essence a sales opportunity.

We can identify numerous examples in all areas of life, but for our purposes, I have listed a few that directly relate to the mental health profession.

- You may work for a large organization and are designated to be the leader of an important internal project. Part of that assignment involves gaining

buy-in from others in order to overcome obstacles, accomplish tasks, and achieve success. In addition, you will need to possess a degree of power and utilize your influence to make decisions that will move the project forward. Your colleague's perception of you as a competent project leader will strongly determine the level of support and assistance you receive.

- If you are looking for a new job opportunity, one of your primary tasks will be to identify an approach that will convince others of your value. If they perceive you as being someone who can fulfill a need within their business, then the power shifts from the organization to you, the candidate. They begin pursuing you and make an effort to give you an offer you will accept.
- When a new client comes to your private practice, they receive and process information and immediately form impressions about your credibility and whether or not they will benefit from your services. They analyze everything from the first hello to the look and feel of your office.

What you will note within these examples is the importance of perception and the role of power and influence in determining success. Research in the area of power, influence, and social dynamics shows that within any interaction there is one party who holds the majority of power. The person who possesses that power is the one who ultimately controls the process, flow, and outcome of that interaction.

## **PERCEPTION AS YOUR REALITY**

Sales expert, Jeffrey Gitomer, in his effort to convey the importance of perception states, "Throughout the process of trying to get your way, other people are receiving your message and forming an opinion of it. As you try to persuade people into seeing your point of view they are perceiving you and that perception is your reality!"

When I talk about the role of perception in human interactions, along with the idea of harnessing power and control in the work environment, I am referring specifically to the importance of being aware that social positioning, social value, power, and control are present at varying degrees in all interactions, and they often exist at an unconscious level. If you become aware of these phenomena in your daily interactions, you will be able to work more effectively within the hierarchical system that is present at that time. You will see the dynamics at play and will begin to recognize those moments when you have inadvertently given up your power. Recognize these

patterns, and you will begin to take back your personal power. The idea here is not to achieve power through manipulative tactics but to recognize the role of effective positioning and the impact sub-communication has within the workplace. Your recognition of these concepts gives you the ability to change specific behaviors within yourself and to use customer focused sales concepts to earn a positive position of power and influence.

## WHO HOLDS THE POWER? HOW TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

As you strive to grow your practice and career, you may notice that more often than not you are in a weaker position than that of the consumer/prospect whom you are trying to convince to use your services. This is especially true if you are relatively new to the field. Why is this the case? There are many factors and perhaps the most important of these is the concept of **greatest need**.

Essentially, the person with the greatest need is the one who relinquishes their power to another. As a result, if you have not demonstrated your value to the consumer, then you have unknowingly placed the potential consumer in the ultimate position of power. Whether you have done this consciously or not makes no difference. What matters is that the consumer has perceived you as being the one in need, not them. When this happens, your chances of earning their business greatly diminishes.

Has this ever happened to you? Rest assured that you are not alone in this regard. In fact, it is a natural process and there are practical steps you can take to build up your strength and power so that you ultimately level the playing field. **The key in the beginning is positioning!** You must take steps to position yourself in the community where you offer tremendous value and are highly visible within your target market. You do this by adopting the customer focused sales principles we discuss throughout this book so that people begin to seek you out for services and assistance.

The world of professional sales offers us an important lesson with regards to the relationship between consumer need and power. The biggest differentiating factor between top performing sales professionals and those who struggle has to do with the awareness of power dynamics and the ability to create need through value based service or products. Top performers recognize the relationship between need and power in business situations, and they have the ability to obtain and use this power throughout the negotiation process. The same holds true for the mental health industry. Those who create the

greatest need and keep a certain level of power and credibility are the ones who will be the most successful.

### **EXPLORING POWER DYNAMICS: A MENTAL HEALTH EXAMPLE**

Let's use an example from the world of mental health to explore this process further. Suppose you are an experienced clinician looking to grow your business by choosing to offer additional workshops for the community. You develop a variety of workshops on troubled adolescents and parenting skills. You contact various organizations asking to advertise your service offerings, and as a result, you are given an opportunity to speak at a Rotary Club meeting of 40-50 professionals in the community. On the day of the meeting you arrive and are given 15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting to talk about who you are and what services you offer. You develop some nice brochures and leave them for people who might be interested. Who has the power in this scenario? What are some of the power dynamics? Hold that thought for a moment.

Contrast this with a slightly different scenario where the Rotary Club identifies an increasing problem concerning adolescent violence and other risky behaviors that are having a negative impact in the community. A club member mentions that there is a clinician in the area who has done research on the topic of risky behaviors for adolescents. That clinician is you. They contact you and ask you to speak on the subject matter. You are positioned as the featured event on the agenda for the evening. You give a brief training on the topic and open the floor for questions, which leads to a lengthy question and answer period. Following this discussion you inform the audience of your intent to start a new educational group for parents on how to address problematic behaviors in adolescents.

These two scenarios are vastly different when we look at the dynamics of power, persuasion, and need. In the initial scenario you are clearly in a weaker position than the audience. The simple fact that you approached them about attending one of their meetings immediately placed you in a more subservient and weaker position. In addition, you had no differentiating factors, meaning there was no credibility or awareness building generated about your services and expertise. You were simply viewed as one of many clinicians in the community coming to them asking for their business. You were just another face in the crowd. As a result, you had very little influence and no control over the process. The audience would hold the power throughout the interaction, and they would be the one's to determine the outcome of the meeting.

In the latter example you were immediately put into a position of strength and credibility because the group contacted you about a specific need and believed you had the ability to meet that need. As a result, the relational dynamics were vastly different. You would step to the podium in front of an audience that did not need to be convinced or sold. You would be seen as someone with answers, someone who could solve their problems. They were, in essence, willing buyers in this scenario, and therefore, you would have much more control over the situation and would be able to manage the meeting in order to achieve a particular outcome. Research shows that this position inevitably leads to higher sales success rates.

There are numerous business examples that can demonstrate the presence and importance of power and control in determining business success. The goal for all of you in the profession is to identify ways to **level the playing field** or, better yet, to **transcend** it so you operate from a position of strength. Watch and see the results when you begin making this effort.

### **PART 3: TRANSLATING POWER INTO INFLUENCE**

Power is often exhibited and revealed through a person's ability to use influential tactics and techniques. An important next step in the discussion of power is to identify ways in which you can translate this power into highly effective forms of influential behavior.

What follows is a discussion of cutting edge principles and techniques based on time tested psychological principles of human behavior. These are incredibly powerful principles of influence that will bring about dramatic results for you!

#### **USING THE POWER OF GROUPS**

There are numerous historical examples, both good and bad, of the power and influence of the majority. Groups can be highly influential to the point where others will put aside their initial impressions based on the overarching opinions of the group. Can you recall a time when you were highly influenced by the opinion, position, or actions of the majority? Was it difficult to hold onto your initial impressions? Did you question your own viewpoint in light of what the group believed?

So what in the world does a discussion about the power of the majority have to do with your role as a mental health professional? Well, let's begin to put what we have learned thus far about power and influence to good use within our profession. If we know and understand that people tend to gravitate toward groups and are highly influenced by the power of the majority, it would stand to reason that a highly effective selling strategy for you would be to identify and foster a group of your own!

A great first step would involve making an effort to define your group, meaning identifying and reaching out to those people who have used your services and benefited from them. This group will serve as your "promotional group". If used correctly, this group of people can be very powerful and will possess a high level of influence over others in the marketplace. Keep them connected with you in some way whether it be through free service offerings, mailer updates, or volunteer services in the community. The key is to identify and nurture your own group so that you can call upon them when the time comes. When you begin to market your services out in the community, I recommend that you aggressively gather information about your promotional group and display this information through testimonials and success stories so that everyone can see. If you are able to define, build, and grow your own group, a group who believes in you and supports you, then future clients will follow their lead.

Is the relevance and importance of this information to the mental health profession becoming a bit clearer?

Let's explain this concept another way. Suppose you are a clinician offering what you believe to be outstanding mental health services. Over the years numerous people and their families have used and benefited from your help. If this is the case for you, find ways to show potential clients that others have gained tremendous satisfaction and healing from your services. If you do this effectively, these potential clients will tend to follow the lead of the group, and the chances of someone choosing to use your services will increase dramatically. Always remember, it is human nature to make decisions based on the opinion and input from a group rather than taking the risk to go it alone.

Forming and defining your own promotional group will not only increase the likeliness of potential clients choosing to do business with you, but it will also positively influence their satisfaction after they use your service! That's right, people will be influenced by the majority before, during, and after they have utilized your services.

Have you ever dined at a restaurant known for having the best food in your local area or attended a concert given by a musician whom the world recognized as historically significant? I would bet that your impressions of the food or the performance at the concert were influenced by the impressions provided by the group who identified them as being the best. Sure the concert may have been excellent but hearing from others and being told that the musician was the best in decades made it that much better! The reason for this has to do with the fact that when you use a service or purchase a product, your expectations are molded somewhat by the group, which serves to enhance your overall experience.

The take away for you with regards to the power of the majority is to begin to use this power to your advantage by defining your own promotional group and utilizing their incredible influence to improve upon your success.

### **OPENING THE DOOR TO BIGGER OPPORTUNITIES**

I learned early on in my career about the power and relevance of achieving something small as a stepping-stone to much grander opportunities. Top-level sales professionals understand and use this concept brilliantly, and we can all benefit from their knowledge and skill in this area.

I recall one such sales expert whom I first heard about through a colleague of mine. My friend suggested I look at this person's website as he was offering a free book I could download. I could not believe it! What a steal I thought. Here is one of the best-recognized people in his industry offering me an 80-page book on a topic I found extremely interesting. What I did not realize at the time was the fact that he was guiding me through a sales process focused on long term growth and results. I certainly knew there was some promotional intent behind his offering, but I found his material to be well done so I signed up to be on his mailing list just in case he offered some other excellent free stuff! What occurred was something entirely different. This small step of getting me to visit his site led to my downloading and reading his book, registering to be on his mailing list, and eventually purchasing many of his product offerings. To this day I continue to purchase his products as they continue to give me great value and benefit.

This experience encapsulates another key psychological principle of influence:

**The most important step towards getting someone to choose to use your service or buy your product is to get people to agree to small things first. The bigger opportunities will come later.**

The idea here is to hook people first and gain their interest by offering quality resources and valuable information that you offer free of charge.

Once again let's put this into terms that speak directly to those in the mental health profession. Suppose a psychotherapist in private practice decides to offer free one-page fact and resource sheets for families around the issue of Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD). This therapist gives this information to a friend who works in the school system, thereby opening the door just a little bit. A family gets hold of this reference sheet and finds it extremely helpful and useful for relating to their child. They make a point of thanking the school principal for offering this information, which leads to a discussion about who offered the information in the first place. Before long, the entire County learns of the PDD resource sheet, and the psychotherapist receives high praise for her/his expertise and support of the community. Eventually, the therapist is asked to give several speeches to families across the County about social skill development with adolescent age children. He/She becomes recognized within the school system as someone teachers and guidance counselors should refer families to when there are mental health problems or concerns. The end result is a consistent referral resource that helps to grow his/her practice by leaps and bounds!

Hopefully, you can see the sales progression in these examples. It is also important to note that the idea of offering something for free is an effective sales technique only if you have a good plan as to how to go from opening the door to uncovering wealth building opportunities. You must define a step-by-step plan for how you will guide a potential client to the next step of the buying process, and you must have the ability to deliver at each step. The sales expert who earned my business had a process where I went from visiting his site to taking a deeper level of action by downloading his book so that I eventually began purchasing his products.

As you work towards building your practice and growing your career, look for small windows of opportunity and small commitments first! Once the door is unlocked it is much easier to get inside.

## **THE INTRIGUE OF THE UNFINISHED: USING TEASER CAMPAIGNS TO BUILD BUSINESS**

People have a difficult time when something is left undone. For most of us, there is a desire to bring closure to an unfinished thought or idea. We become more engaged in the idea presented and begin searching for ways to fully understand and complete the idea, thought or concept.

Now stay with me here because the information I am about to tell you next is the most important of all for determining success in the profession. It is the crown jewel of all the principles presented in this book for one major reason...

Okay, could you begin to feel a change from within as you were reading the last two sentences? Were you anxiously or excitedly moving forward to find out how the last sentence would be completed?

Essentially, I created an engaging moment that was enhanced further by the fact that I left something unfinished. Just when you were about to get to an important point I ended the thought, which in turn increased your desire to take action in order to complete the thought and reveal the answer. In this case the action was turning to the next page. It would have been very difficult to choose to close this book right after the unfinished sentence. This phenomenon is extremely valuable in the world of marketing. When used properly it provides you with a psychological edge that will engage people and get them to move closer to making a decision to use your services.

### **TEASER CAMPAIGNS IN MENTAL HEALTH:**

Let's look at a mental health example to further clarify the power of this influential technique. Suppose I choose to advertise a new life change workshop that is designed to empower people to create richer and more meaningful lives for themselves. I might post a statement on my website or as a printed advertisement. It might look something like this:

*"Do you find yourself stuck in a rut where life seems to lack meaning and fulfillment? There are seven key steps to enriching your life in ways you may not have imagined. Are you utilizing all of these principles?"*

Or you might try this:

*"Are you finding yourself feeling down on a daily basis? Do you wake up in the morning dreading the day to come? There are powerful solutions, and they can be employed now to produce immediate results. To find out more about these solutions contact Joe Smith at 777-7777."*

I would suggest taking a look at your marketing efforts, and begin to think of ways in which you can employ this principle of influence in order to compel people to see who you are and to explore what you do. This technique is a powerful way to engage people and to move them through your sales process.

## The Use of Framing

One Saturday afternoon while driving with my family, my wife began talking about an advertisement in a free local quarterly guide she picked up earlier in the day that peaked her interest. She began reading some of the statements from the advertisement. "Listen to this." she said to me as she began reading statements asking the female reader if she had ever uttered these words:

*"I Feel like I'm going Crazy"*

*"Who is this person in my body?"*

*"If he says that to me one more time, I'm going to rip his head off."*

She chuckled as she read the ad and then went on about what the family says in response to a woman's behavior and/or attitude...

*"Mommy, you are so mean."*

*"You need to chill out."*

*"You need to get some help."*

This time she laughed and then told me to keep listening as the advertisement ended with an explanation as to what the reader typically does...

*"You run yourself ragged taking care of everyone else."*

*"You scream at your kids, then you feel guilty."*

*"You take antidepressants, but you are still depressed."*

The ad then went on to ensure the reader that they were not alone and that they were NOT CRAZY. Following this was a brief discussion about the relationship between hormones and the specific feelings and behaviors identified in the advertisement. The ad concluded with a statement about the kinds of programs and services available that went beyond psychotropic medications and psychotherapy.

This was an extremely effective and powerful advertisement created by a woman who worked to alleviate these symptoms through hormone therapy. She was able to talk about life situations and circumstances in a manner that spoke to my wife and in a way that made sense in terms of how her services could help with some of the problem areas identified. What she used effectively was an influential tactic known as **framing**.

A frame is a mental window through which we view reality or a particular problem. In most instances, we frame reality in terms of our own unique issues, interests, and beliefs. So, as an example, a woman dealing with the many demands of being a mother, wife, and professional might see her increasing frustration as a problem she needs to simply deal with silently. She may think to herself, working mothers have been juggling these demands successfully for years. Or perhaps a woman reading this advertisement views these problems on a psychological level and believes they require some form of counseling or behavioral intervention. What the woman who posted the ad was able to do so effectively for the reader was **reframe** the problem or problems in such a manner that the person was compelled to listen and to see that perhaps there were other factors involved and other solutions.

This is a good example of framing an issue to influence the outcome. It involves recognizing and speaking to the emotional triggers, wants, and needs of others in order to change people's perceptions and to influence the decision making process. In this case, hormone therapy or consultation might be a more effective intervention than other competing services such as psychotherapy and psychiatric intervention.

I have seen many examples of people who have effectively used framing to gain power and influence. I recall one therapist in my community who was excellent at the technique of framing. His skill in this regard gave him access to markets that other therapists could not penetrate simply because he was so effective at using this approach. He would often speak with certain groups and communities who had a significant level of resistance and prejudice towards psychotherapy. They viewed therapy as a weakness or as something that offered them little to no value. However, once they heard from this therapist, their viewpoint typically shifted. He was able to do this in much the same manner as the woman who posted the advertisement promoting hormone therapy. He used examples common to many people that elicited strong emotional responses and that helped to capture the audience's attention. He was then able to bring about a shift in their frame of reference by explaining how his approach to counseling would positively affect these problems in highly practical and life changing ways.

In summary, improving upon your ability to frame a situation so people are able to see your reality or your point of view can go a long way to uncovering opportunities. Therefore, take time to understand hot issues that will engage others and lead to a shift in awareness on the part of the consumer.

## **PART 4: USING PERSONAL POWER EFFECTIVELY**

One of the best ways to maintain a high level of power and influence is to avoid behavior that puts you in subservient and supplicating roles. What most do not realize is just how relevant the role of perception is within our social and professional interactions. How we behave and interact with others can convey many things to a potential client. As an example, if you portray a sense of confidence through your behaviors, many people will be comforted by their belief that you will be able to care for them and address their needs. Now think of a time in your life when you met with someone about a need and that person did not exude confidence. There was just something about that person that made you uncomfortable and made you wonder how in the world you could remove yourself from the situation. Can you remember times when this happened to you? Chances are, in those instances, you did not want to buy whatever that person was selling!

In this section I briefly discuss and review some practical nonverbal and verbal communication tips and techniques that will help you hold onto personal power.

### **NONVERBAL CUES**

For many years now researchers have studied and stressed the power of nonverbal communication. Research in this area finds that over 90% of our communication is based on our nonverbal cues. Yes, as mental health professionals we all know this to be the case but do we practice this in our daily lives? Below are some good examples of nonverbal cues that negatively affect personal power.

- Lack of eye contact

In most cases, those in positions of authority tend to do a better job of using eye contact effectively. Studies in the area of professional sales communicate the importance of holding appropriate eye contact to instill a sense of confidence and control during negotiations. Other studies show that those in weaker positions of authority use less eye contact with a superior than with someone who is deemed their equal by virtue of their social status. They are also the first one's to look away from the person they are talking with, and this also serves to establish a social hierarchy.

In the mental health field clinicians conducting an initial assessment will note level and use of eye contact as an important clue in terms of sense of

self-worth and feelings of discomfort and anxiety. It is important to use eye contact effectively so that you can gain and hold onto a certain level of power and influence.

- Closing Yourself Off

When you take up too little space or you sit in a closed position you create the appearance of someone who is worried about infringing on the space of another. It communicates on a deeper level that you feel inferior to another and when you do this, naturally you set up a social dynamic where the other person or persons are in a stronger position precisely because you have given them this power. The reality is that people with power take up space and stake their claim to wherever they are at that moment. Try it sometime! The next time you go to a business meeting avoid the temptation to take as little space as possible. Find yourself a prime spot at the table and give yourself room to be. Then observe the group dynamics and see how this new position affects the hierarchical structure of the group.

- Leaning in

I realize that in some clinical settings leaning in is a technique used to show interest in the patient, however, in many other situations it can be viewed as a supplicating behavior where you are deferring to the power of another. Remember that the purpose here is to discuss the impact nonverbal behaviors have on your personal power and ultimately your ability to sell yourself and your services. Therefore, always remember that leaning in to the speaker automatically creates a power differential that does not stand in your favor.

## **VERBAL CUES**

Not too long ago my colleagues and I were speaking over the phone with a potential out of state vendor about the possibility of developing a website for our organization. We were looking at a handful of candidates, most of whom we met face to face since they were from our local area. As a result, it seemed that this vendor would be at a significant disadvantage trying to sell his services. Turns out he won our business without ever meeting us in person, and this was due in large part to how he presented himself during the conference call. He had a calming influence; he did a great job of listening to our needs; and he was able to provide honest and succinct answers that exuded a sense of confidence in his abilities. He did not seem over eager like many of the other candidates. In fact, it was very clear that while he would

love to work with us, he did not need our business; and it was this position that gave him a level of credibility and influence.

A few days later we met with another web developer and the dynamics were significantly different. This group appeared over eager and needy. As a result, our team felt somewhat uncomfortable during the meeting. As the meeting progressed, it became apparent that they had their own agenda; and this got in the way of their ability to hear our concerns and to understand our needs. At one point I recall that they shifted focus to tell us that, in their professional opinion, we needed a suite of marketing services and, not surprisingly, they had the ability to meet all those needs!

We interviewed a third organization; and before we could even begin the meeting, they spent 30 minutes telling us about all of their accomplishments without any concern for our needs and how they proposed to meet those needs. This organization lost all power and influence before they ever began discussing how their services would help solve our problems.

The developer who won our business presented much differently than his two main competitors. He was thoughtful in his responses; he asked great follow up questions that showed he was listening; and he was honest to a fault about what he was and was not able to do. He was able to accomplish all of this over the phone using excellent verbal skills that were incredibly powerful and convincing.

Here are just a few of these verbal skills worth noting:

- Control the meeting by setting clear boundaries and staying focused

When you are selling a service, facilitating a meeting, or giving a presentation, be sure to stick to your agenda. If others ask questions, politely tell them you will get to their question once you finish your current presentation or discussion. The most common thing to do in these situations is to attempt to immediately respond to the prompts of others, thereby veering off course and losing your focus. Shifting your focus quickly and often comes across as being over eager and needy. In addition, many people in attendance will become frustrated by your inability to manage the meeting. A more powerful position to take is one in which you set clear boundaries and remain focused.

The web developer we spoke with over the phone was very sophisticated in this regard. He was presented with an initial request about our need for a new website so when he was interrupted with a question, he politely thanked the person for asking the question and then said he wanted to be sure he addressed our initial overarching needs first and he would be happy to discuss other issues later. His responses were commanding but not arrogant, powerful but not pushy or abrupt. One thing was very clear, he was in charge of the meeting, and this reality was a relief for our team, as we did not have to work to get what we wanted. He was going to do the work for us so we could make the best choice possible

- Slow Down & Use More Deliberate Speech

One of the biggest mistakes people make when they first start selling something is to talk fast and furiously. This is another way in which you can lose power and credibility quickly. In the world of professional sales, people who are worried that they will be rejected or cut off by a potential client tend to talk too quickly in an effort to get as much information communicated as possible before this occurs.

The person we chose to develop our website spoke in a calm, relaxed, and confident manner. When questions were asked he often paused for a moment and then began to address the question in a deliberate manner. The message it conveyed to our team was that this person was thoughtful, patient, and competent. As a result, we felt very confident he would do an excellent job for our organization.

I suggest taking some time to notice when you are rushing your speech and begin making an effort to slow down, relax, and confidently present your point. This is an excellent way to maintain power and influence.

- Avoid Losing Your Voice

What I am referring to here is not the literal concept of “losing your voice” but the phenomena where a person’s voice loses its power at the end of a sentence or statement. Let me explain further.

Think of a time when you were speaking with a person or group of people, and you were not feeling very confident or secure. During those moments have you ever noticed your voice lose its strength near the end of a sentence as if your words began to disappear into thin air? Many people fall victim to this but are unaware of its occurrence or relevance. In these instances your voice begins clearly. However, as you continue it softens, and the words near the end trail off and are unintelligible to the listener. Pay attention to your speech patterns, and see if you fall victim to this under certain conditions. Chances are that this phenomenon occurs during those times when you are feeling uncomfortable.

Professional speakers pay particular attention to this concept because they know it communicates weakness to the listener and a general lack of confidence in oneself. Remember this during job interviews, when you are selling a service, or when you are giving a presentation to your leadership team; and make an effort to end your statements with impact and power!

### **In Closing**

Remember that a healthy awareness of the reality and presence of power and influence can have a dramatic impact on the overall success of your business. Understand the role power plays in your profession, and use some of the practical techniques we have discussed to improve your own power, influence and persuasion.

# 3

## Summary

- Sales success in any industry involves understanding the role of psychological positioning and persuasion in everyday interactions. People's perception and interpretation of your position of power will have a significant impact on your ability to sell yourself and your services.
- Every social interaction involves some form of negotiation that is, in essence, a sales opportunity.
- Social positioning, social value, power, and control are present at varying degrees in all interactions. The person with the greatest need is the one who relinquishes their power to another. Use various tools and techniques presented in this chapter to be in a position of strength during business interactions.
- Some important marketing concepts worth noting are: Leveraging the Power of Groups, Learn to Open Small Doors that Lead to Greater Opportunity, Use the Intrigue of the Incomplete, and The Art of Framing. Review this chapter for details about all of these principles.
- Nonverbal and Verbal messages you use everyday play a significant role in determining your position of power in personal interactions. Use those that are beneficial, and work to get rid of common ways of interacting that will place you in a lesser role.

# 4

## Finding Your Place in the Field: Effective Strategies for Building Credibility

From 1961-1963 a Yale University psychologist named Stanley Milgram conducted a series of sociological studies focusing on the conflict between obedience to authority and personal conscience. The outcomes of these studies led to some surprising and important findings pertaining to influential power and the importance of authority.

In summary, college students volunteered to participate in a research study about the effect of punishment on learning and memory. Or so they thought! Students were met by a man in a lab coat and clipboard and could see in plain view another man sitting in a glass room with electrodes attached to his head and body. The students were unaware that the man in the glass room was a paid actor. As the experiment began, the lab technician informed the students he would be asking the man in the glass room a series of questions, and if the man answered a question incorrectly, he would instruct the student to administer a shock as a form of aversive stimuli. The “shock” of course would never actually occur, but it would certainly appear to the student that it was administered, as evidenced by the painful reaction of the paid actor in the glass room. With each wrong answer the intensity of the shock would increase. As the experiment progressed, students would supply the shock, and the actor’s painful reaction would intensify significantly. The experiment continued to move forward, and it became more and more apparent that the shocks were now seriously harming the man in the glass room. In spite of this knowledge, students continued to follow the directives of the lab technician.

The results of the experiment surprised everyone. Not until the volunteer was in extreme pain and stated he could no longer provide answers did anyone participating in the experiment choose to stop, and even then only a few actually did so. Amazingly, 65% of the students participating in the

experiment were willing to go even farther and administer shock voltages that would have been fatal to the volunteer had they been real.

The study was replicated using several different populations and has been repeated over the years by other psychologists around the world with similar results. Milgram concluded that the overall results of the study had to do with “a deep-seated sense of duty to authority within us all”. Participants in the study were significantly influenced by the identified authority figure in the study and were willing to obey his directives in spite of the physical harm inflicted on another.

This study not only provides evidence as to the power and influence of authority, it also reveals just how important it is to build credibility and earn a certain level of authority within your profession. There are few things in the world of business that will get you more clients and beat out your competition than being recognized as an expert in your field. As the Milgram study suggests, being viewed as an authority figure in some way, shape, or form creates a vastly different perception and image of you in the eyes of the community, and this perception can either help or hinder your success depending on which side of the credibility continuum you fall in.

How do you accomplish this? There are numerous ways and in this chapter, you will be presented with specific strategies and techniques that will help you to build credibility, earn authority and position yourself as an expert in your field.

## **FIND YOUR MARKET NICHE**

After graduate school I took an entry-level clinical position and entered the profession full of excitement and optimism. Unfortunately, years passed and I never found the spark or passion that would propel me to bigger and better things in the field. Oh, I could create some sort of excuse and say I was new to the field and still finding my way, but the fact of the matter was I had been presented with numerous opportunities to learn, study and grow as a clinician and simply chose not to take the challenge. As a result, I would come to work, do what I was asked and then leave as quickly as possible to pursue other interests. The impact of this approach was profound. I became competent in several clinical areas but never excelled in any particular discipline. If a person had a mental health problem, they certainly would not have sought me out for clinical advice because my skill level and range was no different than that

of the majority. I simply did not have the depth or breadth of knowledge that would launch me into greater opportunity and career growth.

This dilemma was much more significant than I realized at the time. For instance, I had some experience with substance abuse treatment and I could facilitate recovery groups but if you wanted a presentation on a specific area of substance abuse treatment or an expert in the field to provide consultation services, then I was not your man. I could also provide cognitive behavioral therapy for people who were depressed, but if there was an extremely severe or complex case no one would have thought to call me to help, and I doubt I would have been comfortable doing so.

Research shows that it takes an average of 5 years to become good at something, 10 to become excellent and 15 years to become an expert. It takes time, discipline and dedication to learn a skill at a level few people achieve, and those who dedicate themselves to this endeavor have a tremendous advantage. There is simply nothing quite like being known as an authority figure to drive business your way.

My advice, whether you have just entered the field or have spent many years practicing, is to identify an area within the overall market in which you can become a known entity. People often make the mistake of trying to be all things to all people. They become generalists, which creates the perception of mediocrity and positions you right smack in the middle of the marketplace. You run the risk of becoming lost in the crowd of faceless people who are all competing for the same job opportunities and the same prospects. The solution is to become what your competition is not by becoming an expert and/or specialist in one or two smaller segments of the market. Identify areas where there is less competition and position yourself to be at the forefront of that market.

How do you choose your market niche? I suggest identifying what interests you and then thoroughly researching those areas to determine the viability of that particular market. A good place to start would be asking yourself these questions.

- Do you already have a head start in certain sub-specialty areas?
- Do you have a captive audience or group of people who can serve as a foundation for growth within an identified market?
- Is the specialty you are considering specific enough to make you unique yet large enough to support your efforts?

- How many prospective customers are there for this market niche you have identified?
- What/Who are your primary competitors within this specialty?
- What competitive advantages do you currently have?
- What is the timeline in which you can effectively position yourself within this market?
- What are the financial growth opportunities for this market?

Many business professionals make the mistake of jumping into a venture without effectively researching the market to determine its viability and how it fits them. Take the time to be strategic in your career planning, and avoid the temptation to skip this step! Below are some helpful research tips to get you started.

- **Professional Associations:** Research mental health associations to learn about major players in the industry, innovative services, and specialties along with training opportunities to begin the process of building knowledge and expertise.
- **Demographic Data:** If you are looking to target and research consumers directly, you will need demographic information for your geographical location. A good starting point on the Internet would be: [http://www.esri.com/data/community\\_data/community-tapestry/index.html](http://www.esri.com/data/community_data/community-tapestry/index.html). You can enter zip codes for your area to generate reports that will include average household income, age, population size, and much more. The service is free and is an excellent tool for researching market segments.
- **Census Data:** U.S. Census data can also be a helpful tool and guide. It will provide you with all kinds of information about your geographical area. <http://www.census.gov/>
- **Researching Businesses:** Bizstats offers you information about small companies within a particular market segment. For example, if you are looking at substance abuse treatment programs, it will allow you to research the average profit margin for that market; and this can help you decide whether or not your specialty market is worth exploring further and who your competition will be. <http://www.bizstats.com/>

Effectively identifying smaller segments of the market and building expertise in those areas will take time, dedication and hard work, however, the rewards are well worth the effort. One of the great secrets of top performing sales professionals is the fact that they are willing to target unique markets and dedicate themselves to becoming experts and leading authorities within those areas. If you move yourself in this direction, you will open the door to much greater possibilities. And along the way, as you grow in the profession and work towards your goals, you will be able to use your expanding knowledge base to build systems and service offerings that will earn you increased credibility, authority, and recognition in the field.

## **TURN YOUR KNOWLEDGE & EXPERTISE INTO VALUE FOR CONSUMERS**

Successful sales professionals set up marketing vehicles and systems that offer tremendous value for their customers. This value goes well beyond the scope of their product or service and is perhaps one of the most important lessons to learn as you market yourself and work towards increasing your reputation in the community. Offering free services to potential clients is a great way to build credibility, and there are a variety of ways in which you can accomplish this and begin the process of building a reputation within your target market. Let me give an example to show how adding value can increase your credibility in the eye of the consumer.

Several years following graduate school I decided that one of my areas of expertise would be career development for healthcare professionals with my unique sub-specialty being the effective use and integration of sales/marketing principles to build career growth. My initial approach was to build a training program based on my breadth of knowledge in this area and to offer this training as a free service to specific populations. My initial point of entry was graduate schools and universities in my geographical area. School administrators were more than happy to have me come and present on this topic since I was offering a free service. I delivered the training on a few occasions and provided participants with several different ways to reach me and to become a part of my resource group where they could receive updates in terms of service offerings, trainings and events that would help build their careers. Students enjoyed the program and gave positive feedback to administrators, which led to increasing opportunities to present at other universities beyond my local area. This initial 1 ½ hour free training gave significant value to the students who were preparing to enter the marketplace, and as a result, my target market

expanded significantly. The overall benefits to me were numerous, and below are just a few that resulted from this initial step.

- Visibility in my local community and beyond.
- Establishment as an expert in a particular niche market.
- An opportunity to edit and expand my training programs and workshops by testing out content to see what was effective and not so effective.
- Growth of my user group so I could market my services to participants both now and in the future.

The general take away from this discussion - choose from a variety of vehicles and techniques that will allow you to reach consumers from a position of authority. Find opportunities to showcase your knowledge and expertise. Your efforts in this regard will begin building your influential power and will help to expand your consumer base.

## **A GUIDE TO BECOMING PUBLISHED**

Imagine someone in the community who has been feeling depressed for several weeks. They thought their mood would improve over time, however, they continued to experience many common symptoms associated with depression. This person did not know where to turn for help so he/she went online and conducted an Internet search by typing in the words “therapist and depression”. What he/she finds are a few links that identify editorials, press releases, and expert articles written by you! In this instance you have just ended any chance of other mental health practitioners in the community earning that person’s business.

Now you may be saying, “How in the world do you obtain that kind of publicity? It’s extremely difficult to get into a newspaper or have an article published. I don’t think it’s really realistic to think you can accomplish that.” I am here to tell you that it can be accomplished, and it is much easier than people would have you believe. The secret lies in understanding the resources available to you and using them to your advantage.

Everyday there are television reporters, newspaper writers, and thousands of professionals on the Internet who are starving for new and interesting information they can market to their audiences. If you understand their

needs and identify the systems they access, then you can be very successful in providing them with information that will serve to enhance your credibility. In today's world marketing experts and sales professionals are all aware of a vast array of resources you may not have known existed. Here are a few of those publishing secrets that will get your name out there and help earn you recognition in your industry!

## **ARTICLE WRITING**

A little over a year ago I was talking to a former college classmate, and he began telling me about some of the work he was doing. During our talk he referenced several articles he had written that were picked up by regional business magazines across the country. He informed me that the publicity he received from some of his articles led to tremendous business opportunities that helped launch his career.

"I never knew you were such an excellent writer." I said. He responded by telling me he wasn't really a great writer. He simply identified a topic he thought was "hot" within the marketplace, did a little research, and decided to write about it. "Yeah, but it must have been truly impressive if you were able to get it published and reach such a broad audience." Wrong again! He told me he used one of several online directories that publish articles, and he assumed I had known about these services since everyone in his business knew of them. Sadly, I had no idea what he was talking about so I decided to do a little research and discovered some incredibly powerful resources.

One of the great things about the Internet today is the amount of marketing opportunities available to you. The web is so decentralized and has become such a social medium that it holds tremendous power for those who understand its technology. Online article directories are one of those opportunities worth learning more about!

These directories are searched by thousands of people everyday who are looking for content for their newsletters, websites, newspapers and journals. The better sites typically have a review process where you can submit an article for publication. A team of editors will review your submission and determine if it is suitable for online publication. Once it is approved you have earned publication status on the world-wide-web! Even better is the fact that these services are typically free of charge and allow you to include a bio of yourself. In addition, you can track who has read your article and who has chosen to publish it on their website.

When you submit your article in this format, you give viewers permission to use your article for their publications as long as your name and contact information is included. Article marketing such as this ultimately produces a viral effect that is highly valued in the marketing world. Internet users visit these sites in search of interesting content. If someone likes your article, they may choose to use it on their website or in their newsletter thereby giving you exposure to a totally different audience. In addition, if someone were to search a specific topic on the Internet that you wrote about then they would find a link identifying you as an “expert author”. How are people able to find you on the Internet? Search engines rank order information, and one of the main criteria they use are linkages you have with other websites. The more you are linked throughout the web the more you are recognized by these tools and the more accessible you become.

Having a presence on the Internet gives you tremendous credibility and leverage. This is extremely important in today’s world since most savvy prospects will do research on the Internet before making a purchase decision. They may hear about you and choose to search your name online. What if your name came up referring to several publications you had written? Better yet, what if links came up where other vendors quoted you and your article? It happens all the time and it can happen to you just as easily!

Online publications are great marketing tools, and I would recommend you take advantage of these services as soon as possible. Begin writing today, become published on the web and watch your network and credibility grow!

Here are a few online publication resources I have found that will help get you started.

[www.ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com)

[www.articlemarketer.com](http://www.articlemarketer.com)

[www.submityourarticle.com](http://www.submityourarticle.com)

## **GENERATE YOUR OWN PR**

Public relations is another area of business greatly effected by the rise and expansion of the Internet. In the past, press releases were highly regulated. Gatekeepers could be found everywhere, and you needed the right relationships if you were to generate publicity through the media. But no longer! You don’t need public relations firms or strong relationships with reporters and

influential media types to get the publicity you seek. All you need is some creativity and the right resources to begin issuing your own releases online!

This method costs money. However, it is worth the investment simply because it can be such a powerful tool for you. One reason why it is so powerful is that press releases you generate online are automatically included in news sections on sites such as Yahoo! and Google. Your press release will be front and center next to the top news stories of the day. Think about it! Do you ever browse these major news sites? What impression would it create for you if a colleague of yours were listed among the major news stories of the day? What would your prospects or potential clients think when they see you listed in that section? Once again, this type of marketing will create a tremendous credibility gap between you and your competition.

On top of all of these benefits, there is the possibility that other news outlets across the country will use your press release. If it is a significant topic and if there is broad enough interest you may find it picked up and used by any number of media outlets – Television, Print, Internet.

So what do you write about in a press release? A few paragraphs about a topic of interest to you would be a great start. For example, let's say you are a psychotherapist with a specialty in trauma work. You are beginning to treat more and more servicemen and their families as a result of the current political climate. You could talk about statistics related to trauma at home and abroad, talk about the lack of recognition and services to support our troops, and offer some key points of consideration in terms of clinical interventions. You do all of this and use your name in the process.

*“Trauma Assessment and Intervention Sorely lacking on our Home front.”*

*Ms. X, licensed therapist and trauma counselor, finds that trauma related difficulties are on the rise and families are suffering greatly due to a general lack of awareness and lack of treatment services...*

Get the idea? Take a look at some of the press release sites available to you and try it out. Very few people are taking advantage of these resources, and you'll be pleasantly surprised by the results when you do. Below are a few of these services worth looking into.

[www.prweb.com](http://www.prweb.com) (One of the best Press Release Sites on the Internet!)

[www.onlinepressreleases.com](http://www.onlinepressreleases.com) (Another good press release site)

[www.falkowinc.com/inc/proactive\\_report.html](http://www.falkowinc.com/inc/proactive_report.html) (Excellent press release newsletter offering up to date information and resources)

## **WRITE A BOOK!**

So far we have talked about article marketing and online press releases as excellent tools to become a recognized expert in your field. These techniques represent steps few people in our industry use to build recognition and authority. The great thing about these techniques is that they serve as a springboard for greater opportunities. For example, you may start by publishing an article online and find the experience worthwhile and enjoyable. As you further identify your niche markets and you immerse yourself in learning and growth around these areas, you'll find that new ideas will come to the forefront. These ideas might lead to the creation of more articles. Later on down the road you might use the skills and techniques identified in these articles to create a series of presentations or workshops that helps grow your practice and increase your visibility. Ultimately, this process of becoming an expert creates a snowball effect. Your motivation and focus brings about a growth in knowledge and skill level, which in turn, gives you the ability to offer more services.

If you find yourself in this mode, then let me suggest one more logical progression – become an author and write a book. Why not? If you've come this far, then writing a book is not out of the realm of possibility.

I am not necessarily proposing that you write a book, take it to a publisher and have it become a New York Times Best Seller. That may be one possibility for sure, but there are other possibilities available to you. Marketing guru, Mark Joyner, wrote an e-book called "The Rise of the Author" that I highly recommend you read. In it he talks about the unique opportunity available to all of us at this moment in time. The evolution of the world-wide-web as a decentralizing force gives people incredible opportunity and influence if they choose to take action. Traditional publishers recognize this shift, and they are terrified of the future implications for their industry. Their stranglehold within the profession is slowly dissipating as more and more people choose to self-publish and leverage the power of technology and the Internet in the process.

## **E-Books**

E-books are a great example of this phenomenon. They are becoming more and more accepted in contemporary society, and as result, more and more quality products are available via e-book.

If you have written several articles about a topic of interest to you, then why not combine these articles into an online book you use as a marketing tool? Being an author of a book whether it is published by a major outfit or online, will take you to a whole different level of credibility and respectability within your industry. It will open up opportunities not available to you in the past such as speaking engagements, consulting projects or high-level job opportunities.

Creating an e-book is a great first step and once you accomplish this you have several options moving forward. You can offer portions of the book to your prospects and/or user group as a free preview. You can sell the book online and build awareness of your expert status. If it does well and garners attention, a publisher with the means and financial power to produce and market your book on a larger scale may approach you.

My point here is to encourage you to be open to the realm of possibilities. With a little time and effort you can create a book in some way, shape, or form. And, once again, the Internet offers you incredible opportunity! Want to create real impact and take advantage of online e-commerce? You can post your e-book on Amazon.com by simply registering with them! People will be able to search a topic or search your name and find you and your book available for purchase.

Once your e-book is available for purchase there are even more exciting opportunities available. Consider this interesting opportunity! Amazon has a ranking system based on number of books purchased within a set point of time. If you understand their system, you can dedicate your marketing efforts within specific time periods to produce a temporary spike in sales. If you do this effectively, you too can become a best selling author on Amazon! Marketing expert, Mark Joyner, studied this process and at one point in time, his book, "The Irresistible Offer", became the number two bestseller on Amazon. How much credibility does that afford him? How much influence does he have when he is able to make the claim that he is a best selling author?

The answer is obvious, and it can work for you!

## **THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING**

If you were to ask a group of people at the top of their respective industries to identify the most important and effective skill that helped them achieve success, chances are the majority would list public speaking ability. At its core, public speaking is about the art of persuasion not presenting information. You are speaking on a specific topic in order to gain audience trust and buy in; and if you do this effectively, you are on the fast track to success and growth in your field.

Public speaking is the most powerful sales tool you have at your disposal. It builds a tremendous amount of credibility, effectively grows business networks, and offers value to others through knowledge sharing. There is no better way to sell yourself and promote your services! Yes, it takes preparation and effort. Yes, there are many people who fear speaking in front of a group, but you can overcome these fears easily if you follow the other steps we have discussed and identify specialty areas of expertise that you are passionate about. Nothing builds confidence quite like preparation and passion.

If you would like to rise above 95% of all people in your marketplace, begin studying presentation skills and become comfortable as a public speaker. The more opportunities you have to speak and the better you become, the more persuasive and influential you will be.

### **SECTION 1: THE DO'S & DON'TS WHEN PRESENTING**

While public speaking is an incredibly powerful communication tool, it is also one of the most misused. With that in mind let's examine some incredibly useful techniques that can turn your average everyday presentation into a powerful high impact experience that will leave a lasting impression.

#### **Starting your Presentation**

Too many presentations lose people right off the bat for a variety of reasons but perhaps the most important one has to do with the introduction. The beginning of your presentation sets the tone immediately; and if you lose the audience right from the start, then you have a tough road ahead of you.

Have you ever watched American Idol? Most people who watch the show say they know on the very first note whether the person singing is going to have a great or not so great performance. That first note is felt immediately, and if it is experienced positively, it creates a memorable experience for the audience. The same holds true when we talk about giving a presentation. The next time you attend a presentation listen for the first few words, pay attention to your initial impression, and see if that has any bearing as to the overall quality and value you associate with the entire experience.

### **TRANSFERABLE CONCEPTS:**

One of the best ways to create a powerful first impression is to approach the beginning in a less traditional manner. A great way to accomplish this is through the use of story. It does not have to be a personal story. Any compelling story related to your topic will do. The first thing that a good story does is identify a theme or common experience that serves as a **transferable concept** for the participant. By this I mean that audience members can relate to the story and will be able to identify their own personal experiences as you go through your presentation.

Let me explain this a bit further. I often give career development workshops to university students. When I do so, I begin with an amusing story about my own experiences coming out of college and/or graduate school. Why? First and foremost the story contains powerful lessons learned that I will emphasize later on in the workshop. The second reason is that audience members will be able to relate to my experience and will search for a like-minded story from their own personal history. When doing this, people are able to see the linkages and commonalities between my story and theirs. This helps build immediate rapport and quickly engages the participant because they now see how the information presented will be directly related to their needs.

### **SURPRISE THE AUDIENCE BY AVOIDING THE PREDICTABLE**

I would also suggest taking the story theme even further and make an effort to begin your presentation as if you were in the middle of your speech. Avoid going through the basic introductions, agenda and overview of what you hope to accomplish. If you feel this is a must, then have someone else do that part for you. When you get up to begin your talk, pause for a brief moment and then launch into your story without any prompting.

***Tip:** Don't tell the audience you are going to begin by telling a story. Simply begin your talk with the story itself.*

Be passionate, intriguing and powerful as you tell the story. This simple surprise is a nice little gift for the audience. It compels them to listen as they will be intrigued by your approach and will make a concerted effort to understand how your story will fit into the greater whole of the presentation.

## Ask a good question

A great alternative to telling a story is beginning your presentation with a powerful and thought-provoking question. Once again, I recommend avoiding the traditional introduction. When I use this approach, I try not to telegraph my beginning by telling the audience what I will be doing. I use the element of surprise to quickly gain interest and buy-in from the audience.

I have used this technique quite effectively with some of my graduate school career workshops. This particular question tends to elicit strong emotional responses from the audience:

*“How many of you right now find yourself constantly thinking about how you are going to realistically make a living as a mental health professional?”*

Once I ask this question I remain silent for a period of time. Sometimes people are compelled to respond, and a dialogue begins. At other times the room stays quiet. Either way I have created a shift in energy within the room by asking a blunt and honest question that everyone can relate to on a personal level. My next step is to follow up this question with some compelling statements that communicate hope and encouragement. After all, the main goal of my workshop is to teach people how to build wealth and success as a mental health professional, and the information I offer will be invaluable to the audience, because it contains information that is proven to improve career growth and success in the field! I am not shy or subtle about my claim. When you are presenting to an audience, be clear and very direct about the value of your expertise.

## Other Important Tips

There are many other important skills and useful tips that will help fine-tune your public speaking skills. Below are some of the ones I find most useful.

### **Present new ideas not just new information**

- Offering useful information is one thing, offering new ideas that participants never thought of before is a whole different ballgame! I

attended a sales workshop not long ago, and I left incredibly motivated to change some of the ways I went about doing my business. I was inspired because the presenter offered new ways of approaching my day-to-day activities that I had not thought of before. It opened up new areas for growth.

- Try to identify two to three new concepts and ideas that you will feature in your presentation. Your audience will buy you and your message if you are able to do so.

**Present exciting and new material that people can apply in their lives**

- This is really a spin off from the first tip, but it takes it a step farther. Be careful about offering new ideas that are great from a theoretical standpoint but virtually impossible to apply in the real world.
- Generate ideas and concepts that people can relate to easily so they begin telling themselves, “That’s a great idea, I can apply that to my line of work immediately and it will yield some powerful results. I’m going to give it a try.”
- Inspire action in people by communicating ideas that are transferable and real.

**Stick to Your Plan: Control the Flow**

- It is easy to get sidetracked when audience members ask questions. When a question is asked that is not quite on task, politely inform the audience that you will answer that specific question at the end of the presentation.
- Why dismiss good questions? It is important to stick to your plan and structure. You are not dismissing questions, rather you are saving them for a more appropriate time.
- However, be forewarned, if you take this approach you **MUST** answer the questions at the end of your talk.

**Don’t Demand the Audience Participate**

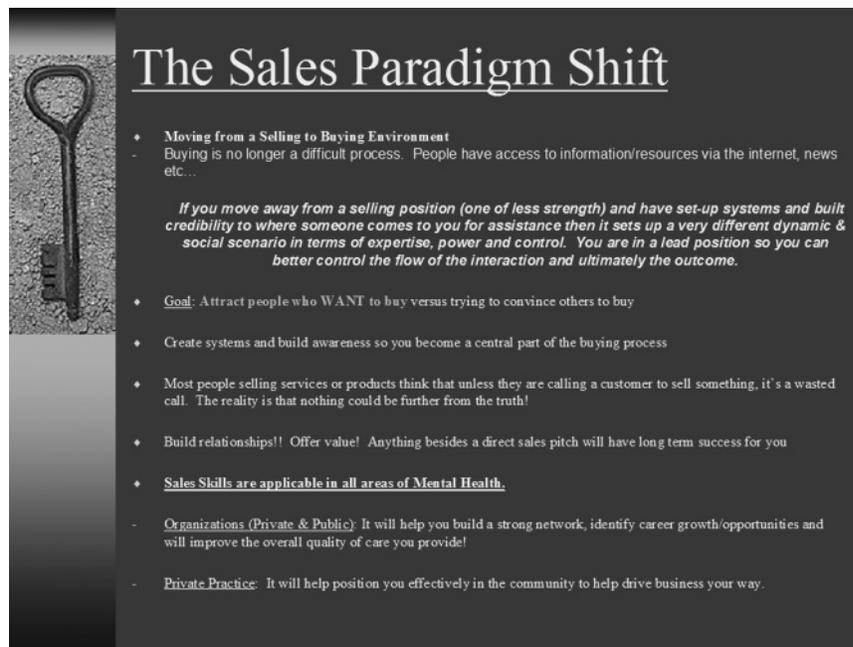
- Ugh...nothing makes my blood boil more than the overuse of audience participation. Okay, I understand that people have good intentions when they take this approach. They want to engage the audience and keep them engaged by asking them to participate. However, be careful when you

take this approach. Too many questions or attempts to have the audience participate can become patronizing and annoying.

- Some of my pet peeves in this area:
  - (1) Consistently asking obvious questions where everyone knows the answer. Of course no one is answering you. The answer is obvious!
  - (2) Saying hello to the audience and then pausing because you are waiting for an enthusiastic hello back. Don't patronize people!

## SECTION 2: THE POWER POINT DILEMMA

PowerPoint has become a critical and essential part of any public speaking opportunity. I've used PowerPoint in a number of different capacities and, for a brief period of time, I considered myself to be somewhat of an expert. Allow me to show you one of my "masterpieces".



**The Sales Paradigm Shift**

- ♦ **Moving from a Selling to Buying Environment**
- Buying is no longer a difficult process. People have access to information/resources via the internet, news etc...
- If you move away from a selling position (one of less strength) and have set-up systems and built credibility to where someone comes to you for assistance then it sets up a very different dynamic & social scenario in terms of expertise, power and control. You are in a lead position so you can better control the flow of the interaction and ultimately the outcome.*
- ♦ **Goal:** Attract people who WANT to buy versus trying to convince others to buy
- ♦ Create systems and build awareness so you become a central part of the buying process
- ♦ Most people selling services or products think that unless they are calling a customer to sell something, it's a wasted call. The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth!
- ♦ Build relationships!! Offer value! Anything besides a direct sales pitch will have long term success for you
- ♦ **Sales Skills are applicable in all areas of Mental Health.**
- **Organizations (Private & Public):** It will help you build a strong network, identify career growth/opportunities and will improve the overall quality of care you provide!
- **Private Practice:** It will help position you effectively in the community to help drive business your way.

Sadly, as you can see, these slides were painful to view and rarely engaged the audience. In an effort to ensure all my ideas were captured I would write long sentences and paragraphs as if I were writing a research paper. In addition to the information I packed into these slides, I also took full advantage of all the

bells and whistles PowerPoint offered - the use of sound, text sliding in and out, and clip art images posted wherever I had space. What did this accomplish? Not much other than boring my audience to death. My point is that these mistakes and mishaps are not out of the ordinary. Most PowerPoint presentations today are dreadful but can be easily remedied in a short period of time.

True success with PowerPoint has to do with balancing knowledge sharing with the emotional needs, reactions, and responses of your audience. When you are giving a presentation you are playing to the needs and wants of your audience. You are, in fact, selling ideas and concepts, and this requires an ability to engage others.

Now let's see how PowerPoint can be effectively used. Recently, I coordinated a workshop on neuropsychiatry and neuroscience. Neuroscience is not exactly a "light" topic, especially for a two-day workshop. I knew that the subject matter could potentially be a tough sell for participants depending on the public speaking skills of the psychiatrist who was giving the talk. He could have easily launched into statistics and a detailed analysis and explanation of biology and chemistry that would have put the audience to sleep no matter how insightful the information. So imagine my pleasant surprise when he began the workshop with a slide of a famous French painting. The painting was of a nude woman in a park surrounded by several men. With much lighthearted humor he asked the audience what in the world this woman was doing prancing around with no clothes. He used this as a starting point for his neuroscience model. He did this by looking at human behavior (in this case, the nude woman) and then took the audience deeper and deeper until he came to the cellular and chemical levels that were ultimately driving this woman's peculiar behavior.

As the presentation went on, he incorporated a wide variety of images and video clips you would not expect from a talk on neuropsychiatry. He used video clips of his dog to discuss the neuroscience behind behavior and motivation; he showed images and clips of important research studies with lab rats and tragic stories of people who had suffered severe brain damage. All of this supported his explanation of a detailed and sophisticated neuroscience model. This is a great example of just how effective and powerful slides can be when used appropriately.

Let's look more closely at some PowerPoint slides that are significantly more powerful and effective than the work I previously presented. As an example, let's say you worked for a family treatment center specializing in child abuse cases. You are looking for donations from the community and funding from

state agencies. You might try using a slide such as the one below and make it the foundation for talking about what you offer.



Or perhaps you are giving a talk on the problem of homelessness in your community in an attempt to foster support for increased housing and hospital programs for the mentally ill. Instead of giving a list of statistics or a long list of detailed bullet points you might try something like this:



The use of images is an excellent way to communicate emotion that can emphasize the importance of your proposed initiatives and interventions. As your audience responds to the power of the image or images, you can reinforce your ideas through the power of a story.

With all of this in mind, here are a few practical tips and techniques to consider the next time you are working on a PowerPoint presentation.

- (1) Limit the amount of text you use on your slides.
  - Some experts suggest no more than two to three words per bullet point. Others suggest limiting the number of words on a slide to ten.
  - The main message here is to avoid using slides as a documentation tool or as a way for you to explain your message through words. The words you use on a slide should serve as cues that complement the real content, which comes from you.
- (2) Try to focus on one concept/idea per slide.
- (3) Make a verbal point, and reinforce it with a slide, not the other way around!
- (4) Use slides that tell a story rather than relate a fact.
- (5) Use images whenever possible.
  - Substitute images and video clips for words whenever possible.
  - Images are far more powerful and engaging.
- (6) Practical Matters
  - Avoid distracting technical concepts: Don't have images spin in and out. Don't use moving text, or fancy slide transitions.
  - If a slide appears too "wordy" or confusing then make additional slides to accommodate your ideas and content.
  - If you are struggling over a slide that you want to make work but it just does not seem to fit; it is most likely not worth including in your presentation.
  - Avoid using clip art of any kind if possible. Generic Clip Art looks amateurish. Unique cartoons and powerful images are great, but basic clip art will bring down the look and feel of your slide show.

- Use a white background. Avoid using fancy and overdone backgrounds that take away from the presentation.
- Use a basic font that is clear and easy to read.
- Don't hand out printed copies of your slides. Handouts should complement your presentation. Handouts will distract the audience so they will pay attention to what's next versus focusing on you and your presentation. If you feel the need, you can always give copies after the talk.

# 4

## Summary

- The Milgram Studies offer insight into the role authority and credibility play in the sales process. Research findings reveal a “deep-seated sense of duty to authority within us all”.
- There are few things in the world of business that will get you clients and beat out your competition more than being recognized as an expert in your field.
- Finding your specific market niche is an important step in building credibility. Find a specific market where you can become known, and avoid the trap of trying to be all things to all people.
- Create marketing vehicles and systems that offer tremendous value for consumers and keep you highly visible.
- Build credibility by becoming published. In today’s age of the Internet there are numerous ways to publish articles, issue press releases, and author books. Review this chapter to learn about some great resources that will get you started.
- Create memorable presentations by using slides that support your speech. Use stories and thought provoking questions to engage the audience. Get participants to relate your talk to their own unique world.

# 5

## Understanding Buying Motives in the Mental Health Profession

Many of us in the mental health profession have had an experience or two when we made a significant effort to develop and offer a unique clinical service we thought would be an instant success. Unfortunately, most of us have also experienced the frustration of discovering that there was little demand for the service in spite of people's initial feedback and encouragement. And no matter how much more effort and time spent marketing the service, it still produced very little positive results. In this chapter we take a closer look at this problem by exploring the psychology behind human motivation and the buying phenomenon.

The "frustration experience" I reference above is quite broad in its scope. It can be and is experienced at all levels within the mental health profession. Some examples of what I am referring to are as follows:

- An Eating Disorder Clinic of some prominence is forced to close its doors due to increasing costs and a shrinking consumer base. Its closing brings about complaints from members of the community arguing the need for these services.
- A state mental health agency is overrun with mental health problems in the community with little to no support from the state government. The result – a rise in violence, an increase in homelessness, and limited support resources for those in need. These negative events do little to motivate state representatives to act.
- A therapist responds to years of community feedback asking for a substance abuse education program for adolescents. He opens his doors for six months but is unable to sustain a census beyond three to four people and ends up closing the group.

One of the common themes within these and other scenarios is the "perceived and expressed need" of these services without the call to action that motivates

prospects to use or sign off on these services. There becomes a definite distinction between wanting a service and using a service. This phenomenon will be the primary focus of this chapter.

It is an important topic to discuss, because we are dealing with subtle differences that, if understood more fully, will help you to make more accurate decisions when choosing to go to market with your product or service. As sales guru, Jeffrey Gitomer, states - Your reasons for selling “are one one-hundredth as powerful as the customers reasons for buying.” Whether these reasons are logical or not makes no difference when looking at sales success factors.

## TRIGGER POINTS

I was first introduced to the phrase “Trigger Point” during an interview with a successful sales professional as part of my research for this book. His introduction of this concept gave me great insight into some of the reasons why he was so successful in his industry. Very little is known about trigger points in the mental health profession, and yet the concept is incredibly important for understanding the buying phenomenon.

In essence, trigger points are events that **create an essential need** for a person or group of people. When we apply this to a business development model, we see that trigger points are the stimulus behind any buying decision and/or action that moves someone toward a buying decision.

And here is the most important point with regards to this phenomenon - If a person experiences a trigger event, **THEY WILL ALWAYS BUY.**

Once this kind of event takes place the only real question becomes, who will they choose to buy from. Recognizing, anticipating, and understanding trigger points in people will help you position yourself so they choose to buy from you.

## EXAMPLES

Let’s look at some examples to help clarify what we mean by Trigger Points and then discuss their overall utility in the mental health profession.

I’d like to start off by using a common business example to illustrate the presence and absence of buying motives. I enjoy Best Buy so let’s look at

a couple of scenarios that might occur at their store. In this first example a woman goes to her local Best Buy in search of a new computer. She has a perfectly fine computer at home but fancies herself to be a tech junkie so she is always keeping an eye on new trends in the marketplace. She tells the salesman she is looking for the latest and greatest computers currently on the market. The sales person chooses to spend a significant amount of time chatting with her about the best computer systems Best Buy has to offer. He enjoys her energy level and interest. An hour passes, and she thanks the salesman for his time and leaves the store empty-handed. In this scenario, there is no trigger event, no pressing need for this woman to purchase a new computer, because she already owns one that allows her to do most of what she wants.

Now let's look at a different scenario. In this example, a father and son come to the store looking for a computer before the son goes off to college in a few weeks. The father wants to make sure his son has the necessary resources to be successful when he goes off to school. This is the trigger event, and it should signal to the salesperson that the only question now is whether or not the father will purchase a computer from him.

The salesman who recognizes which prospect will have the highest probability of delivering a sale (the woman looking for the best technology or the father/son duo) will be the one with the most sales success at the end of the day. Why? He will be more targeted in his sales approach and will essentially qualify prospects more effectively in order to determine where he should spend the majority of his time.

### **What about the mental health profession?**

Let's consider a family struggling with a child who is demonstrating increasingly bizarre and dangerous behavior. Not an uncommon scenario in our line of work. Let's also say that the problem behaviors have escalated to the point where no one is safe in the home. When this unfortunate scenario becomes a reality, it serves as a trigger event for the family to seek out mental health services. It may be unclear what will best meet the needs of the family, but they will no doubt be seeking and using some type of mental health service. A mental health professional who successfully speaks to this trigger point, whether it is in an advertisement or through some other communication vehicle, will be the one most likely to be given the opportunity to provide services for the child and family.

Now let's look at another scenario and see how it might be different and why.

A father contacts a therapist with questions about his 17-year old son as his son has run into some trouble at school. School counselors and administrators have noticed a change in the young man's behavior to include skipping class, angry outbursts, and suspected use of alcohol. The school spoke with both parents and gave them the therapist's contact information as a referral source. They suggested the family seek counseling services for their son. The therapist, during the initial phone call, makes an effort to answer some of the father's questions, and they schedule a family session. On the day of the session the family does not show, and they do not return the therapist's follow up phone calls. In this scenario there really is no true trigger point from the family's perspective. As a clinician, you may believe that the young man's problems suggest a definite need for clinical intervention, but the family obviously does not view it as that critical a situation. They were ambivalent from the start and most likely contacted the therapist to appease the school. Whatever the rationale behind their decision, it is clear that there was no current pressing need that would motivate them to seek out and use counseling services.

This latter scenario speaks to one of the main challenges mental health professionals face on a daily basis: breaking through denial systems that prevent people from seeking appropriate treatment. Someone who understood buyer motivation principles might have been skilled enough during the initial conversation with the father to elicit an appropriate trigger response so the father would have been able to recognize the severity of the problem and the importance of seeking help for his son.

The proper application of the trigger point concept will help produce positive results for you. In essence, there are two main components or uses for trigger points that are directly applicable to your work situation. They are as follows:

### **1. A Market Research Tool**

- Trigger points help you to recognize and focus your resources only on situations where essential need is present, thereby, improving your ability to generate business.
- Trigger points are an effective prospecting tool. They give you the ability to work more efficiently and to be more targeted in your outreach efforts.

They offer a system for qualifying consumers so you can choose what population to focus your business development efforts on.

- Trigger points serve as a barometer to help you decide whether or not to offer a service and to better understand where consumer need is most pressing and most important.
- In larger organizations, an analysis of trigger points can help you determine overall marketing campaigns and business relationships/partnerships to seek out.
- In private practices, trigger points can help you define your market niche.

## **2. A Way To Bring About Hidden Buyer Motivation**

- Trigger points give you the ability to speak directly to the pressing needs and hidden concerns of consumers.
- Your awareness of automated-response systems resulting from specific trigger events can help you move people along the buying process continuum.
- Eliciting behavioral responses by uncovering trigger events is not about manipulating people to do something they don't want, rather it is about freeing people up and giving them permission to access things that are of important value to them and their well being. It is about finding the emotional triggers that speak to people and giving them permission to act. The father-son example discussed above is a good one to explore. Can you identify the trigger stimuli that will resonate with the father so the child can get the help he needs?

Both of these components speak to the power of trigger points once you understand how to incorporate them into your professional practice. Are you looking to increase your chances for success in whatever services you choose to offer? Do you want to work smarter and be more productive with your time? Understand and explore the presence of trigger events, qualify your prospects, recognize the behavioral cues that lead to buying decisions, and use this knowledge when conducting your day-to-day business.

## LESSONS IN BEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY: USING TRIGGER POINTS IN YOUR MARKETING MESSAGES

While “essential need” is the hallmark of the trigger point phenomenon, there is an interesting twist to this story that leads us even further into the realm of behavioral psychology. It is here that we recognize the power of **automated response systems** and the critical role played by the existence of specific environmental stimuli. Skilled marketers are highly attuned to these phenomena. Why? Because they use this knowledge to create powerful marketing messages that cue powerful emotional responses they hope will increase buyer motivation. Once you are aware of the presence of trigger points, and you understand the environmental cues that release these triggers, you are doing a much better job of reaching out to your consumer base.

In the hands of unethical professionals this knowledge and these skills can be manipulative and deceitful. However, in the hands of others, it can be used to identify the correct message and the right communication vehicles that will resonate with potential buyers. It is for this reason that I believe we should take a look at the research done in this area. It may help you identify better ways to empower and motivate people so they will choose to use those services that will help them in the long run.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

In research psychology circles there are numerous studies identifying fixed action patterns in animals. There is, of course, the famous Pavlovian principle but there are also a wide variety of clinical research studies exploring behavior sequences in animals. In these studies an animal goes through a series of behaviors depending on the stimulus that is introduced. Researchers have found that once you have isolated the trigger event you can substitute it with something contrived and still bring about the same response pattern. A classic example is the research done with mother turkeys and their maternal instincts. If a chick makes the appropriate “cheep” sound, its mother will care for it. This is the key trigger event. If that specific sound is not present, the mother will kill the chick. Reliance on this stimulus is so entrenched that researchers can introduce seemingly ridiculous substitutes for a baby chick (even stuffed animals portraying natural enemies); and if these substitutes contain a tape recorder playing the required “cheep” sound, then the turkey will care for the object as if it were its own.

What does this research have to do with our examination of human behavior? For starters, it demonstrates the existence of pre-programmed response systems that can be triggered at seemingly inappropriate times if someone understands the trigger event. Human beings also possess these automated response systems. They are, in fact, quite prevalent in much of our day-to-day activities. One reason why these automated response sets exist has to do with living in a highly complex and sophisticated world containing mass amounts of information. In order to thrive in this environment we must adopt principles to help us classify, organize, and process much of the information we encounter. In most instances the response sets we create are highly effective, accurate, and beneficial. They allow us to make quick decisions and to be more efficient with our time.

Some examples of response sets or principles we commonly adopt are listed below:

- **Higher Price = Better Quality**

How often do we associate high price with quality? Fairly often. In most cases it is an automatic association. Retailers have been known to take advantage of this principle by over-pricing merchandise that has been difficult to sell. The price increase often gives the impression of added value to the consumer, which in turn increases sales.

- **Specific Education/Degree or Title = Expertise/Authority/Credibility**

We have already discussed the importance of taking advantage of this principle by taking steps to build genuine credibility. This credibility increases your power as a mental health professional.

- **Professional/High Quality Advertisements = Good services and/or products**

## **BREAKING THROUGH RESISTANCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR AUTOMATED RESPONSE SETS**

I cannot stress enough the value you receive by simply being more aware of trigger events and automated response patterns. Powerful marketing entities craft their messages with behavioral cues in mind. They understand that people can respond to specific environmental cues in unique ways, however,

they are also well aware of general principles and stereotypes adopted by the majority that bring about common behavioral response patterns.

If, for instance, you receive something in the mail that you have learned to associate with being an advertisement, you may be “cued” to toss the piece of paper in the trash without ever looking at it. There are numerous cues that trigger skepticism and resistance in people. In many industries it is so easy for a consumer to “turn you off” that it becomes essential for you to study and understand the way a cynical consumer population acts and reacts in order to shape a strategy that will penetrate their skeptical defenses.

The key is to remove the cues that trigger automated response patterns and keep your prospects from immediately putting up their defenses. Once you have lowered the resistance factor and defenses are down, then you make an effort to communicate enough valuable information to build both curiosity and credibility.

## **PROSPECTING: SELLING TO THE “RIGHT” CONSUMER**

The ability to sell your services is the lifeblood of any organization and any working individual. One of the biggest stumbling blocks in sales is the process of trying to find someone to sell your services to. It’s hard work to uncover the proper consumer base. It is a process where you will experience considerable challenges and frustration. Too often people are not up to the challenge, and as a result, they begin to cut corners when looking for consumers, or they quit the process outright.

Many people start off with good intentions and a sound plan only to lose steam when their efforts are not immediately rewarded. The result is often a lackluster approach where ineffective sales strategies like cold calling or paying for lead lists become the norm. Unfortunately, these approaches end up being counterproductive. They continue to build frustration, because they are largely ineffective. The reason for this has to do with the fact that these approaches cause you to reach out to an audience without making the effort to identify them as valid prospects. In essence, you cast your line into a vast ocean with little to no understanding of what lurks beneath.

Prospecting is a common sales term used to define a process for identifying potential consumers. And exploring this process is where we will uncover

solutions to the challenges we all face when trying to find a proper audience. Developing a prospecting system that reaches out to a specific set of consumers with needs and resources that match your service offering represents a big step in the right direction. It begins with an understanding of referral entities and where they fall on a sales continuum.

Most people believe they have a good understanding of their market when they have a list of names, phone numbers, and addresses. Even worse, they will tell others they have a long list of “prospects” or they will say they have done their research, and the population size of a specific area gives them access to “over 10,000 prospects”. The mistake here is being fooled into thinking that these are in fact “prospects” in the truest sense of the word.

Below are four industry standard groupings sales and marketing professionals use to identify potential consumers. These groupings are very helpful for improving sales conversion rates.

### **GROUP 1:**

#### **The “All” Category**

This is the group people are drawing from when they “cast their line into a vast ocean” or when they tell you there are “over 10,000 prospects” within their market. In this group there are no exclusionary criteria used. You see this group at face value. It is all encompassing and all-inclusive.

Less than 10% of referrals in this category lead to a sale.

### **GROUP 2:**

#### **Suspects**

In this group a person uses some basic criteria to begin defining a potential group of suspects you believe might be able to use what you are offering. In this group you might look at age, gender, income level, geographic location, family structure, line of business, and the like. You have eliminated those people who would have no use for your services and have identified a smaller group of people who might be interested in your service or product.

In this category you have a 15% chance of getting a sale from a referral.

### **GROUP 3:**

#### **Prospects**

In this group you have identified people you know can use your product. This sometimes occurs when a client gives you the name of an individual or organization they know will benefit from your service. Other times you identify true prospects by talking to them and finding out if they have a need you can help them fulfill. Regardless how you come about this information, you have narrowed the field once again by identifying people you know can use your service and will benefit from it.

Once again the percentages for making a sale increase. Within this category, your chances of closing a sale are about 40%.

### **GROUP 4:**

#### **Qualified Prospects**

This final group includes those people who not only can use your services but also have the resources and means to use these services. It is here that you determine if they have the financial resources necessary, if they have a “pressing need” to acquire your service, and if they see value in what you are offering.

Your chances of obtaining a sale with this group are over 60%!

The further down the line a referral is on this continuum, the more likely you are to make a sale. Why is this so important? The primary reason is that only a certain percentage of people in the marketplace are actually ready and willing customers. The key is to find out who those customers are and avoid spending time and effort selling to those who will never buy from you.

Find the consumer with the pressing need and develop lead generation systems that will target people at higher levels along the prospect continuum and you will find success.

# 5

## Summary

- A Trigger Point is an event that creates an essential need for a person or group of people. Trigger Points are the stimulus behind any buying decision and/or action that moves someone toward a buying decision.
- If a person is experiencing a trigger event, they will always buy. The only real question is whom will they choose?
- There are two main uses for trigger points in the mental health profession. (1) A market research tool enabling you to prospect for appropriate clients. (2) Uncovering hidden buyer motivation by speaking directly to the needs and wants of potential consumers.
- You can use awareness of pre-programmed automated response sets and take appropriate steps to remove or diffuse them. Your ability to do so will help reduce common defensive reactions that present obstacles for selling services.
- Prospecting is a term used to define a process for identifying potential customers.
- There are four main levels when we talk about consumers. The four levels are defined as follows: (1) The “All” Category (2) Suspects (3) Prospects (4) Qualified Prospects. The higher the level of the consumer the better chance you have of obtaining a sale.

# 6

## Customer Based Selling in Mental Health Organizations

Many of you work within a larger behavioral healthcare system where success and survival depends on many factors:

- The service volume provided
- The amount of billable hours obtained
- The production of measurable results such as reduction in family violence based on your clinical interventions, improvement in school success or increased productivity of employees to name a few.

The principles presented throughout this book will help contribute to your individual success, but they also directly apply to the collective goals of an organization regardless of the business model. This means they apply equally to a private for profit business, a non-profit community organization, a large state agency, or any other behavioral healthcare business entity.

This chapter offers a few additional pieces of information specifically geared towards success factors for behavioral healthcare organizations.

### **SECTION 1: BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **USING A BUSINESS MOTIVATION MODEL**

Success and growth for behavioral health companies involves the establishment of strong partnerships with other businesses in the community. An example would be a private mental health organization that must establish contracts with state agencies who are looking for community based services for their clients, or a psychiatric hospital which builds relationships with other hospitals and emergency rooms in the community as a major source of business. A

critical factor for winning contract bids and becoming a provider of choice is the ability to understand the business motives and profit model of your prospects. In short, it requires use of a model that gets to the heart of a business leader's mission and overarching goal. That goal is profit, which can be defined in many unique and interesting ways.

Let's look at a real life example as a point of discussion and clarification. Several years ago there was an organization offering residential services, and they were looking to expand their presence in the marketplace in order to increase call volume, improve their payor mix, and improve admission rates. The company had a high quality clinical model and a proven track record of success. Their intake process, however, was lengthy, cumbersome, and highly selective by design. They viewed this as essential to maintaining the best care possible as "quality" was to be their differentiating factor in the marketplace.

Let's contrast this with the approach of a competing organization that also offered quality services. Their clinical offerings were not as extensive as their competitor due to the fact that they chose to contribute time and resources in other areas. They built strong relationships with state agency leaders, they streamlined their admissions process, offered 24/7 referrals, and broadened their admission criteria.

Who ultimately won out? You guessed it, the organization that built strong relationships and offered fast and efficient admission service. On the surface this example is basic and obvious. However, if you look deeper you will see the presence of a model that speaks directly to the business needs of your referral sources. I call this the Business Motivation Model.

There are three main questions all business leaders want answered as they work towards achieving their mission and goals. They are:

1. How do I increase revenue?

Increasing revenue can be accomplished in different ways depending on the needs of the organization. Companies can create significant market differentiation if they show how their services will improve the bottom line of their partners. Some examples of how to increase revenue are:

- Increasing the number of successful admissions/clients
- Improving payor mix or dollar value of a sale
- Servicing larger audiences through an improved service model

2. How do I decrease the cost of doing business?

Business leaders are well aware that price is not always the answer when looking at decreasing costs as there is a difference between cost and price! A negative effect of making decisions based on price alone would be choosing to go with the cheapest provider for creating a marketing campaign when the end result leads to the creation of an ineffective message and minimal reach with potential consumers. This results in additional unexpected costs as a result of troubleshooting and a revision of your overall plan. Choosing a more expensive provider who offers more value and reliability would create a savings and benefit that far outweigh the short-term difference in price.

3. How do I increase efficiency?

Businesses often improve their financial well being by increasing overall efficiency. An organization may revamp their procurement process, improve the accuracy/efficiency of their billing methods, or streamline their services in an effort to build revenue. There are numerous ways a vendor can contribute to the bottom line by helping to improve overall efficiency of their business partners. This was exactly the approach taken by the residential program that chose to streamline their admissions process for the benefit of their referral sources.

Those who offer services that address the three business components outlined above are the organizations that ultimately win out. In the case above, the latter organization understood that state agencies work on difficult cases and often struggle to find help in a timely manner. As a result, they broadened their admission criteria and developed a fast and efficient referral process. This change in service helped to increase the overall efficiency of the agencies that utilized residential services. In addition, employees for these agencies spent less time searching for appropriate placement for their clients. Thus, they were able to use this time to focus more on client needs, and this translated into higher quality services and improved measurable results for the agency.

In summary, this residential organization understood the business needs and profit model of their referral sources. They improved the overall efficiency of their partnering agencies, which in turn contributed to each agency's profit model thus serving youth effectively! The result for the organization was a full census and a waiting list from several state agencies. They became the provider of choice and a trusted partner in the community by contributing to the bottom line of their partners.

## FEAR NOT NUMBERS!

Using financial figures to explain your value proposition is the most effective way to engage and motivate business leaders. It is also one of the best ways to beat out your competition and win business.

A simple but powerful example would be a psychiatric organization looking to formalize a bed rate agreement with a large hospital. They generate buy-in from the prospective client by discussing cost savings for the prospect. And the best way to reach an agreement with a hospital CEO and CFO is to show them how your service will directly impact their bottom line. An example might look something like this.

<b>COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS</b> <i>Psychiatric Partnership Agreement</i>	
<b>Estimates</b>	<b>Cost/Savings</b>
10 psychiatric admissions per month serviced at your hospital at \$1,100.00 per day <i>(Average Length of Stay: 5 days per person)</i>	\$55,000.00 Month
Additional Nursing Staff: 30 hrs per week at \$18/hr	\$2,160.00 Month
<b>Total Cost Per Month:</b>	<b>\$57,160.00 Month</b>
<b>Total Cost Per Year:</b>	<b>\$685,920.00 Annually</b>
Use of Our Psychiatric Inpatient Services Rate: \$700 per day for 1 month	\$35,000.00 Month
<b>Total Cost Per Year If Services Used:</b>	<b>\$420,000.00 Annually</b>
<b>Savings Per Month:</b> <i>(Differential between General Hospital vs. Psychiatric Hospital)</i>	<b>\$22,160.00 Month</b>
<b>Total Savings Per Year:</b>	<b>\$265,920.00 Annually</b>

*(\* This number does not include employee turnover, safety issues, injuries, impact on overall quality of care resulting from servicing psychiatric patients at the main hospital.)*

If you were selling these services and you were using a business motivation model, your summary might sound something like this, “This bed agreement contains no long lasting commitment on your part. You simply pay when you choose to use our services. The agreement creates a formal relationship between our two healthcare entities so that we can meet your needs quickly and offer effective services to your patients. Based on the estimates you provided us this agreement will generate an immediate savings of \$22,160 for the first month with a total savings of \$265,920 in the first year. Keep in mind that this number is conservative in that it does not take into account the improvement in workplace productivity, quality of care, and the reduction in staff turnover.”

The ultimate power of this approach is that there is no real selling involved. Once you show numbers in terms of revenue generated or cost savings businesses will have no choice but to buy!

## **SECTION 2: CALL CENTER SALES STRATEGIES & TACTICS**

Do you work in an organization whose success is highly dependent on front-end systems, processes, and people to feed the pipeline for your business? Wait, don't answer that because you and I already know the answer! Everyone is dependent on a customer service process that interacts effectively with potential consumers. Without it there is no service or business to be conducted. I have seen businesses small and large fail due in large part to ineffective customer service on the front end of their service model. An excellent way to improve this important business function is to adopt the solution focused and customer-oriented sales model discussed at length in chapter two. The key elements of that model are:

- Sell the Way Customers Want to Buy
- Be Present, Listen, and Ask Questions
- Give Value & Offer Solutions

- Be Persuasive
- Go Above and Beyond

These principles offer organizations a powerful solution for marginal customer service by expanding the reach, scope, and power of your service model.

But don't take my word for it. Let's take a look at some common customer service positions, and you will begin to recognize opportunities where your organization can improve its customer service/sales model so you are building business opportunities rather than missing out on them.

**“SORRY. IT'S NOT IN OUR SCOPE.”**

This statement is a common response you will find in all industries, and it is a true killer in terms of business growth and development. It comes in many forms such as, “We don't offer those services. Those are the responsibility of another organization so you need to contact them.” Or how about this one, “The only option you have is this. If you don't do that, I cannot help you.”

As a sales professional working for a private, for profit organization I absolutely love when competitors take this approach with potential customers! Why? Because I know our organization can easily distinguish itself and make a lasting impression with prospects by simply being more customer focused and adopting principles like giving value, offering solutions, and following through.

There is nothing essentially wrong with saying it is not a service you provide. It may in fact be completely removed from anything your organization offers. Take this example as a “for instance”. What if you worked as a triage team member for a psychiatric hospital and someone called wanting tutoring services for their child. This is certainly out of scope for you, right? They are not requesting mental health services, and they don't need inpatient care. They want tutoring for a child having problems with mathematics and science. But what if we adopted some of the customer-focused sales principles and used them for this specific scenario? Is the question about tutoring services really out of scope then? If we take the viewpoint that “every situation is a selling opportunity”, if we think long term, if we look to give value and to sell the way customers want to buy, you will find that this parent's request is closer to a sales opportunity than you may have realized.

Don't believe me? Or do you think I'm being unrealistic? I understand that customer service positions in mental health are high stress and fast paced jobs. However, your organization will ultimately choose to identify with this reality or they will decide to transcend and overcome the obstacles preventing it from being a best in class performer. I can guarantee that if your organization is not making this kind of effort to improve, another organization will; and when that happens, it will distance itself from you in the mind of the consumer.

## Long Term Benefits

Let's continue to challenge the thought that the initial call about tutoring was out of scope for a moment longer. Who was calling to inquire about tutoring services, and can you visualize what challenges and concerns they have? Perhaps it is a concerned parent who was referred to the psychiatric hospital by friends after doing a lot of talking in the community about his/her child's problems. Could it be possible that this child is in need of tutoring because of some behavioral and emotional problems? What if this child was a fine student until his father began drinking and his mother became depressed? Maybe environmental stressors led to the child becoming frightened, angry, and disillusioned. Would that not present an opportunity for mental health services?

I do not mean to imply that a customer service representative should always probe deeply in an effort to identify underlying needs, however, there are many instances where it is extremely effective and helpful to do just that. This is where the power of presence, listening, and asking good questions can make a difference between good customer service and outstanding customer service. But let's say that in depth probing is not appropriate for this specific case. The mere act of being a valuable resource for the family will produce powerful long-term benefits for you and your organization. Let me clarify further - if you choose to not immediately label the request as "out of scope", and you decide to offer value in some way, shape, or form then you will have laid a foundation for a successful long-term relationship with that family. Therefore, instead of telling the parent you cannot help you might politely say, "My organization does not offer tutoring, but let me ask you a few additional questions about your child, and I will see if I can find the best resource for you". After further discussion you tell the parent you are going to do some research and will get back with them shortly. You contact a few providers and then call back the parent with three referral options. You tell the parent you scheduled a tentative appointment for the child at one organization; because

they had an unexpected cancellation, and initial appointments are typically booked months in advance due to lack of availability. This will certainly leave a different impression than the initial response, and once again you have sold your organization to this family!

Let's take this scenario even further. Since the family was highly impressed with your efforts, they talk with their friends and family about the organization. They might say, "You know, I called over there and they didn't offer those kinds of services, but they were so helpful and actually found some great resources to help my child". And what about the organizations you referred to the family? Let's say you found a large non-profit organization that offered tutoring for the community. Would they not be pleased that you thought of them? Do you think they might see a fair amount of children who have mental health issues that contribute to struggles in school? Who do they currently refer to for treatment services and why? The fact that you are giving value to them will certainly make them consider your organization as a viable resource option. Let's also say that this organization has a large and powerful board of directors. What if they began hearing positive things about your organization as a result of your efforts? The list of potential benefits goes on and on! And all because you chose not to say, "Sorry, we don't do that".

### **Exercise: Six Degrees to Behavioral Health**

This is a great exercise you can have fun with as part of a customer service orientation program. It is very similar to the process we just went through with regards to the tutoring dilemma. I recommend using it to help develop a more expansive customer service model and work culture. Below are some parameters for this exercise.

**Purpose:** To connect a scenario to a possible mental health need that your organization provides and to offer some form of help to the customer. You can do this in as many steps as possible. The need can be a hypothetical, and it can be future based. The only requirements being that the steps have a logical progression.

**Points:** A team of facilitators awards points for each team that successfully makes a positive connection and comes up with an effective solution/intervention.

Level 1 (1 point); Level 2 (2 points); Level 3 (3 points).

1. Break up into two to four teams depending on the size of your group.
2. Give each team flip chart paper so they can write down their ideas.
3. Develop a series of index cards that present specific scenarios.
  - Level 1: Contains more obvious scenarios that are easier to connect. (*e.g., Do you offer a group on eating disorders?*)
  - Level 2: Contains more challenging topics. (*e.g., Request for tutoring services*)
  - Level 3: Contains the most challenging and unrelated requests. (*e.g., I am looking to sign up my child for T-ball*)
4. A team member from one of the teams selects a card and reads it aloud.
5. The team has 10 minutes to discuss scenarios similar to the tutoring scenario presented above. They write down their steps and interventions on flip chart paper, and a group member presents their results.
6. The facilitator team chooses to award points or not based on their efforts.
7. The team with the most points wins the challenge.

### **“IT’S NOT US IT’S THEM.”**

I was a member of a collaborative venture involving a group of private non-profit organizations offering family services in a community-based format. Services included a parent education program, case management, and family counseling. Our team staffed cases on a weekly basis to discuss progress, and on one occasion we were complaining about a specific group of families who were a part of the program but were not utilizing the services offered. One senior manager motioned to close the cases of all these families arguing that, “They don’t want the services and show no motivation to change. We can’t help them if they don’t want the services so why bother following up with them. We need to close these cases and focus our attention on those who really want our help.”

The reality of this scenario is that our collective frustration caused the entire team to personalize the inaction of these families. We felt our team had gone to great lengths to offer quality services to the community. As a result, when

they were underutilized the families became our scapegoat. This approach is quite simply unacceptable in a world where business survival revolves around measurable results, cost savings, and revenue generation. Yes, we can make a case that some people refuse to access services even if they desperately need them. However, my response to that argument is - SO WHAT!! Do we change the circumstances by resisting the reality of the situation? If we were not willing to accept the events as they currently existed, then I argue that our group was the one unwilling to change, not the families.

A smarter approach would involve looking at what one might be missing in terms of meeting customer needs. Are there barriers or obstacles preventing families from accessing services? If so, are they complex variables such as cultural issues preventing families from utilizing services or are they more practical issues such as lack of transportation or childcare? Are these the right services according to members of the community? If they are not, then what are the right services and why?

It goes back to the fundamental concept discussed earlier about the importance of creating a buying environment by removing barriers and creating want/need so people will buy. In this case, I believe our responsibility should have been to look at where the disconnect was in terms of what our team saw as valuable services and what families saw as nothing more than a hindrance.

Always remember the key principles involved in customer based selling. They will help you grow your business and improve your overall service quality.

- Sell the Way Customers Want to Buy
- Be Present, Listen, and Ask Questions
- Give Value & Offer Solutions
- Be Persuasive
- Go Above and Beyond

# 6

## Summary

- Earn more business by understanding and speaking to the three key business questions important to all business leaders. (1) How Do I Increase Revenue? (2) How Can I Decrease Costs? (3) How Can I Improve Efficiency?
- When possible, create a powerful value proposition by using facts and figures that can clearly show savings offered and the possibilities for improving efficiency and increasing revenue. Create a “no choice but to buy” scenario for customers.
- Use customer-based selling principles to improve upon your organization’s customer service skills. Reread this chapter for detailed approaches and practical exercises.

# 7

## Winning Job Search Strategies - Selling Yourself!

It had been six months of frustration and disappointment. Six months searching for a new job with few options and limited results. Until one day, Mr. X received a call about an opportunity that seemed both interesting and promising. He had an initial screening interview conducted by the department manager, and it went well. The second round interview was conducted in panel format. The competition for this position seemed tough, but he prepared well and could feel his excitement build at the prospect of landing this job. Mr. X left the panel interview quite optimistic. He answered all their questions well, and the CEO seemed impressed. The CEO's excitement leaked out on a few occasions as she began to talk about growth of the program as if Mr. X were already a part of the team. Mr. X just had a feeling he did well and would get an offer. Two days later he received a call from the Assistant Executive Director offering him the job!

*"Mr. X, we were all impressed with your experience and your treatment philosophy, and as a result, we would like to offer you the position as Clinical Director. As we mentioned earlier, you will be responsible for the management of two treatment programs and will be supervising a staff of seven employees."*

He enthusiastically replied, *"Thank you! I enjoyed meeting the entire leadership team and am really excited about being a part of the organization."*

The Assistant Executive Director continued, *"Great. The offer for this position is \$37,000 annually with benefits."*

Mr. X had secretly dreaded this moment. Everything seemed a great fit, but he knew, based on past experience, that there was still one big hurdle and that was salary. And there it was. His worst fears validated as she told him the offer. He took a deep breath and stumbled over his next statement, *"I am*

*excited about the opportunity but was looking for something a bit higher in terms of salary.”*

She responded by saying, *“Unfortunately, we don’t have any room to negotiate. A portion of the monies allotted for this position are grant funded, which restricts our ability to negotiate.”*

*“Is there room for salary growth based on performance?”* he asked.

She paused, *“Not really. Our organization has looked into this. We may be able to offer a small increase to about 39,000 in years 3 and 4 of the grant but that is all. This is one of our highest paid positions.”*

*“What about a Cost of Living Increase?”* he asked

*“Other than what I just told you, there are no more funds for the position. In addition, since we want to ensure these programs are a success, we are requiring a 2-year commitment by the person who accepts the position.”*

At the time of this real life scenario, Mr. X was an eight-year veteran in the industry with management skills, a track record for success, and excellent references. This was the third opportunity he applied to where he was offered a salary that was virtually impossible for him to take. And yet, Mr. X remembers contemplating the offer for a few days following his conversation with the Assistant Executive Director. After all, who knows what else is out there? He thought that perhaps if he took the position and paid his dues, other opportunities in the organization would arise two years from now. He began to question his worth and value. And then Mr. X began to rationalize.

*“Well, we’re in this field to help others, not to make a lot of money.”*

Thankfully, he chose not to take the position and instead continued his search. It was a long process, but it was one that was worthwhile as it gave him the chance to hone his job search skills, learn better ways to promote himself, and uncover better opportunities in the mental health industry.

I mention this example because even now, I hear from people in the profession who rationalize in the same manner Mr. X had years ago. And my message to all of you in this chapter is not to do this!

You do not have to settle or rationalize your way into a position or career path where you compromise your value. There are opportunities in mental health where you can achieve your goals, but to do so you must take a different approach and conduct your search in a different manner.

In this final chapter, I present some key principles, tools and techniques you can use to sell yourself and define a career path that matches your needs and your strengths.

## **EXPLORING YOUR INTERESTS & DEVELOPING A CAREER PLAN**

If you are looking for a richer and more rewarding job experience, you must develop a written career plan. I say this because the first shift you need to make is to think of career planning as much more than a series of steps you take to find a job that will pay the bills. It involves looking at all aspects of yourself: your likes/dislikes, your unique skills and interests, as well as self-destructive thought processes and behavior patterns. True career development and growth is a self-exploration process. Practical job searching skills such as interviewing techniques and resume writing are important, however, they will not necessarily help you find a career that transcends the term “work”. Yes, I understand that this is starting to sound like a self-help book, but I assure you there is true substance with this kind of approach; and it is vastly different than what 90% of people do when they are looking for employment.

Creating and using a career plan is the first step to beginning an effective job search. The pages to follow identify three key reasons why this step is so important to your success.

### **REASON 1: CAREER PLANS HELP YOU TO UNCOVER YOUR TRUE WANTS**

We all have our own negative and self-limiting beliefs that can serve to prevent us from even entertaining certain opportunities. We might self-sabotage our ideas and interests by labeling them “frivolous” or “unrealistic”. A good career plan helps break through any resistance or negative beliefs you may have.

It gives you permission to explore your interests and helps to crystallize them through the development of goals and tasks to accomplish those goals. Career plans add balance to our wishes and desires.

## **REASON 2: CAREER PLANS BRING LIFE TO YOUR GOALS**

Want to know a 100% certainty in the area of career development? If you do not give yourself permission to nurture a particular interest or desire of yours, then it will most certainly not come to fruition. The reason why is obvious. Let's say you secretly desire to become an expert author in the area of adolescent mental health issues, but you do nothing to feed your energy around this desire. This means you do not seek out job experiences in this area to develop your skills and knowledge base, and as a result, you never even attempt to research book ideas nor do you ever put pen to paper. Well, chances are that you won't ever become an expert author in that field!

However, let's say you act on this desire, meaning you take steps towards a goal or goals. It may be that you simply express your specific interests and desires to others in the field, which leads to someone introducing you to a psychologist who just so happens to specialize in adolescent development research. She offers you a volunteer research position, which you happily do in the evenings and on weekends. Your work with this person helps to build your knowledge and skill in the field, and you begin to identify specific areas in the field you find fascinating. The psychologist you volunteer your time with recognizes your excitement and invites you to several national conferences where she introduces you to others who share your passion. As the years go by you gain a reputation as an expert in adolescent development, and this opens up the possibility for you to become a college professor at several leading universities. You accept a position at a school with a strong psychology department. A well-known professor at the school invites you to assist her in various research projects she is currently working on. The outcomes of these studies are published in several leading academic journals.

This is not a fictitious scenario, and the message it contains for all of us has to do with the power of intention. If you truly set your sites on something, then you will put your energy out into the world and ultimately create space for opportunity to present itself to you. In this case the simple expression of interest and passion led someone on a career journey that transcended the idea of mere employment for employment sake.

Career plans help to express your intention thereby bringing life to your goals.

### **REASON 3: CAREER PLANS KEEP YOU FOCUSED ON THE PRESENT WHILE BEING MINDFUL OF THE FUTURE**

Written career plans help to serve as an effective navigational tool. I have found that reading my career plan on a daily basis serves as a daily affirmation that helps keep me on task. It is also highly effective at keeping me focused on the present moment rather than getting completely lost in future wants and desires. This latter concept is critical because most people believe that career plans are entirely about future goals and accomplishments. In reality, well-done career plans provide you with specific actions and targets to work on in the here and now, while defining a long-term path you believe in and buy into.

Many people believe that writing down goals and developing a career project plan is too obvious and too simplistic. As a result, few people actually take the step to write down a detailed plan. However, research shows that people who simply took the step of writing down high-level goals ended up achieving almost 80% of those goals by the end of their first year.

I encourage you to give it a try to see if it has this kind of positive impact for you.

### **GOAL WRITING**

You can choose several approaches with regards to goal setting, and most will produce positive results for you. Some people choose to define a specific career goal, write it down, and use it as the foundation for their job search process. Others, like myself, take it another step and define a detailed plan complete with tasks and activities that support objectives, which in turn support the achievement of an overarching goal. There is no right answer as long as you are able to develop and define a career goal that is right for you.

Below are a series of goal defining steps adapted from author Joe Vitale in his book, [The Attractor Factor](#). His framework has proven to be the most effective process I have found in all of my research and experience. I encourage you to use it as you create or redefine your career goals.

#### Step 1: Write Down Your Wants

- Take a blank piece of paper, and write down what you “want” from a career. This is a difficult exercise for most people. You may find yourself

trying to be practical or realistic. For now, start from a different point of reference, and write down your career wants! We'll get to the practical matters later.

- Being practical or realistic from the start puts you at a surface level where you are face to face with what appear to be limited career options within the profession. You cannot go beyond some of these limits until you open yourself up to greater possibilities.

#### Step 2: Now Write Down What You Really Want

- Now that you have made an effort to write down your career desires, take a moment to review them once again. You may find that your list remains somewhat limiting in spite of your best efforts.
- Take another step towards your true intentions and once again write your wants, but this time write down your real wants.
- Stretch yourself a little and give yourself permission to go beyond what your limits might appear to be. Let go of everything you have been told is impossible or unrealistic. Keep in mind that a goal should energize and excite you!

#### Step 3: Identify One of the Goals on Your List

- In step three you begin the process of starting to identify a specific goal. It is here that you begin to narrow your focus.
- Find one career desire from your list that gets you the most excited. (*Example: I want to run a successful consulting practice.*)
- Now turn that statement into a specific goal. (*Example: I want to run a financially prosperous and regionally recognized consulting practice targeting large to medium sized businesses with the goal of improving organizational performance and bottom line financial results.*)
- When writing a goal it is good practice to develop a goal that is dynamic, meaning it is a goal that speaks to a process rather than simply identifying something static such as wanting to become a famous writer or to own a mansion by the ocean. Dynamic goals are more empowering.
- Once you create a goal you can then take steps to build a detailed plan that will include specific objectives that identify those tasks needed to achieve important targets such as the development of specific service offerings (*e.g., Service offerings*

*will include culture/climate services, leadership training, and the development of competency based hiring models) or the production of a business plan.*

Step 4: Write Down the Goal as if You have Already Accomplished It

- In this step, author Joe Vitale emphasizes the importance of visualizing goals as a present day reality. Putting your goal in the present tense brings new energy to it and helps to break through any resistance or doubts you may have about your goal. It brings a level of acceptance that is extremely motivating.
- Therefore, take your goal, and re-write it as if it is already taking place.
- *“I am running a financially prosperous and regionally recognized consulting practice serving large to medium sized businesses. Our organization has a proven track record of improving organizational performance and bottom line financial results for our clients.”*

Step 5: Beware of the Ego

- A challenging task for anyone choosing to make an effort to define a career goal and build a career plan is acknowledging your desires, accepting the reality of the unknown and realizing you do not always have control. The power of creating a career plan is that it helps to position you in such a way that you uncover new opportunities. Some of these may be completely unknown or unpredictable.
- If we focus solely on our specific desires and we do not get exactly what it is we have defined, then we run the risk of becoming frustrated and closing ourselves off to other opportunities.
- A great way to diffuse this so that you are open to the vast array of opportunities is to include a qualifier at the end of your goal statement. Include a line such as, *“This or something even more exciting and rewarding.”* This reminds you that your efforts may lead you to unique and interesting opportunities you had not anticipated.

These are simple steps that can help you build a solid foundation from which you can create a detailed career plan. I encourage all of you to make an effort to try this process as it has produced tremendous results for myself and for those who have worked with me. If you would like more information about these steps I highly recommend you read The Attractor Factor by Joe Vitale.

## **BE A SALESPERSON & SELL YOURSELF**

### **FIRST & FOREMOST: YOUR JOB SEARCH IS NOT ABOUT YOU!**

When most of us begin looking for new employment, we think about our own interests, needs, and wants first and foremost. And taking this frame of reference is a necessary and important part of any job search process. However, you must be careful not to forget the most important people in this process – the hiring organization and/or managers. The overarching reality here is that the job search process is NOT about you. Perhaps a better way to think of this is in terms of the hiring process versus the overall job search process. If you are to succeed at earning opportunities, you must focus on the needs and wants of the person who is doing the hiring. This represents a rather significant paradigm shift for many job seekers, and it is a shift that will produce great results for you.

You can use this customer-focused philosophy to produce powerful results, and there are several exercises and methods that can assist you. One of the more effective exercises you can use prior to applying for a position involves visualizing the demands currently being placed on the hiring manager. Better yet, if you have been or are currently a manager, think about a time when you needed to hire someone. Once you have done this, take a moment, and write down those ideas that come into your head. An example might look something like this:

## **JOB OPPORTUNITY:** **Child/Adolescent Therapist for Residential Treatment Program**

- Job includes a lot of crisis intervention work due to acuity level of patients.
- Days are most likely unpredictable and fast paced.
- Manager who is looking for a therapist, may be taking on a caseload and doing direct care work herself in addition to management responsibilities.
- Manager may also be concerned about the long-term negative effects being understaffed has on her entire team.
- Quality of care may be compromised, which may lead to concerns from referral sources.
- Probably very difficult to balance management, clinical development, and clinical care of patients when under-staffed.

This simple exercise will help you to focus on the needs of the hiring manager and the organization. It also brings to mind important sales concepts we have discussed in previous chapters: selling on value and trigger points.

- If you are able to identify the trigger points or pressing needs of the hiring manager, you increase the chances that a manager will contact you. In the above example, the trigger points would include a need for continued quality of care for patients and an overworked manager who needs some relief!
- In addition, if you are able to clarify how you may be of value and how you can help solve a problem or fill a need, then you also significantly improve your chances.

After you have written some good ideas about the key stressors within the hiring organization, you can take the process a step further, and write down some key areas you can emphasize in your cover letter and on your interview. These areas will serve as the foundation for your value proposition. Some examples are as follows:

- I am highly motivated and reliable. I am able to take on challenging tasks and achieve positive results quickly. I can offer specific examples to support this fact.
- I am a quick learner and will be able to take on a caseload within a few weeks.
- I have a strong skill base giving me the ability to immediately begin running clinical groups.
- I respond well to constantly changing environments and can give detailed examples as proof.
- I am easy to work with for both managers and colleagues alike and can offer references and examples to support this fact.

By identifying these elements you are beginning the process of crafting a message you want to convey throughout the job search process. You can use these value-based messages in all aspects of the job search process. Remember, you sell yourself by thinking about the needs of your customer. In this case your customer is a potential employer.

## **A SURE FIRE WAY TO “TURN OFF” THE HIRING MANAGER**

As a hiring manager myself, I see well intentioned and well-skilled people miss out on opportunities right from the get go. This happens when people convey the wrong message in their cover letter or email response. Here is an example of what I am referring to:

*“I am searching for an opportunity with an up and coming organization where I can learn and grow in my career. I am a highly motivated individual seeking an organization where there is room for advancement.”*

Any variation of this is a true killer, and the main reason why is that you are focusing on you and not the person reviewing your application. In most cases, the hiring manager who is reviewing these has limited time during the day, and you may be one of several hundred applications on her desk. If she reads your letter, and it begins with a sentence focusing on your needs versus picking up a letter from another candidate that launches right into a

statement about the organization's needs, then it is obvious who will win out in that scenario.

Once again, the overall message here is to focus on the needs of the customer and build a strong value message that will capture his/her attention and encourage him/her to buy your services by giving you a call to schedule an interview!

## **NETWORKING SKILLS**

Research studies estimate that only 25% of job openings are listed in the newspaper or through Internet based job search companies. The best opportunities are often never advertised, and as a result, they require a very different approach if you are to uncover them with any level of success.

The most effective approach involves focusing on long-term outcomes. Why is it smarter to dedicate the majority of your time to long-term strategies versus using more traditional short-term methods? Some of the reasons have to do with the amount of competition you will find in the marketplace and where in the “job opportunity life cycle” you typically find traditional job postings.

## **THE VALUE OF LONG TERM STRATEGIES**

If you are using want ads and/or online postings to find opportunities, you are competing with a very large group of people, and you are doing so without any competitive advantage. When you choose to apply to a generic want ad, it is similar to someone who chooses to sell their broad-based services in the greater marketplace. Nothing has been done to narrow your focus or to identify the right prospects for you. You are responding blindly to an advertisement and positioning yourself as one of many in a vast pool of candidates. The only way you can distinguish yourself using this approach is through passive marketing vehicles such as your cover letter and resume. There are no opportunities to leverage relationships or to show proven results. As a result, your success rate with this approach is greatly reduced.

One reason why a long-term approach is more effective has to do with the life cycle of job opportunities. As we have already noted, many of the really exciting and promising opportunities never make it to the want ads. These opportunities are often given to people who are already a part of an

organization's network. A hiring manager may create a new position or offer an existing one to someone they feel comfortable with or who they already know to be a good worker. So, by the time an ad is posted, it has most likely already gone through an internal search process. In many cases, you may be applying to a position that already has a few solid candidates that are well into the interviewing process.

As a result of these challenges, I recommend taking an approach that all successful salesmen take when they are selling their services and/or products. That approach is a long-term, value based and relationship centered one. It is a process you should be following even when you are not looking for employment.

I often talk with graduate students about the value and power of using this approach while they are in school. I like to use sales expert, Jeffrey Gitomer's motto, "Think End of Time, Not End of Month" to explain what I mean by this unique approach to career enhancement. This statement speaks to the power of focusing on building relationships and on emphasizing the needs of others versus adopting a self-serving approach where you are only concerned about short-term pay-offs. If you take the time to focus on meeting the needs of others and building relationships, opportunities will begin to present themselves to you.

### **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING**

Informational Interviewing is an excellent job search approach you can use to effectively build your network and uncover hidden opportunities. In my experiences, it is the most effective job search approach available to you!

In summary, it involves contacting leaders within your industry and asking them if you can meet to learn more about the work they do. The idea is to build a knowledge base that will help you decide where you would like to focus your career development efforts and to understand what skills and competencies are essential if you are to be successful. It is a great way to grow professionally while building a strong network at the same time. You will also find that people are much more approachable using this method versus calling for employment. People, for the most part, enjoy helping others and imparting wisdom so do not be shy about asking. More often than not, you will be rewarded with face-to-face meetings with top-level professionals you would not otherwise have a chance to meet.

Below are the main steps outlining the informational interviewing process:

**Step 1: Identify a group of individuals and organizations in your field to contact.**

**Step 2: Research your target group, and develop a short commercial about why you are calling.**

*“Hello, my name is Joe Smith, I am a vocational counselor with Organization Y. I’m interested in the addiction field, and I heard you give a talk on the recovery group process for adolescents a few months ago. I was wondering if I could meet with you briefly to learn more about the work you do so I could begin taking steps to enter the addiction treatment field.”*

**Important Note: Do not ask for a job!**

In step 2, be clear that you are doing research to determine where you want to go in your career. Your goal when you call is to simply get an appointment to meet and not to earn a job interview.

**Step 3: Ask Good Questions**

Have several good questions you can ask that show you have put a lot of thought into this process. The quality of your questions will be a distinguishing factor for you.

**Step 4: Have Your Resume in Tip-Top Shape**

Bring your resume with you because you never know when you might need it. The people you meet will be assessing you and forming their own impressions. They will be thinking... *“Where might this person fit now or down the road in my organization?”*

**Step 5: Make a Positive Impression.**

When you meet with one of your leads, be sure you have prepared for the meeting and are knowledgeable about the person’s practice and/or organization. Remember, while you are not directly asking for a job, you are being interviewed! Be prepared to make a positive impression as people will be assessing you, and it may lead to a job today, tomorrow, or down the road!

I know several people who went into an informational interview and came out that day with a new job! The person you are meeting might think of someone they know who is hiring, and they may choose to refer you to them. In other instances, they may be compelled to offer you an opportunity within their department or on their team. The lists of possibilities are endless, and it all starts with getting your foot in the door so you can build your network.

**Step 6: Always Leave with Something Before You Go!**

Step six adopts a classic best practice sales principle. Be sure you ask the person you are meeting if they can recommend other people in the field to talk with or if they know of any professional development community events. The idea is to walk away with ever expanding opportunities you can explore.

**BEHAVIORAL EVENT INTERVIEWING**

The interview process today often consists of highly sophisticated assessment tools and research based applications hiring managers use to predict the level of success a candidate might offer. One common approach used is called “Behavioral Event Interviewing”. This approach to interviewing takes the position that specific competencies and characteristics are essential to success in the workplace. In many instances, these characteristics outweigh skills and experience.

As a hiring manager myself, I discovered that the people who were most successful in my organization were those who tended to have a certain set of characteristics that transcended years of experience and specific skill sets. Industrial organizational psychologists support this assumption. Their research shows that skills and formal education are simply a baseline component of success. In reality, each position has a core set of competencies that determine the successful from the not so successful. And if an organization is able to identify those competencies that are most critical to their line of business and work culture, they can search for candidates who possess these competencies and ultimately find the best candidates.

So what are competencies? Some good examples are as follows:

- Leadership
- Analytical thinking
- Initiative

- Interpersonal skills
- Creativity
- Motivation
- Problem solving
- Adaptability
- Emotional control
- Team-work

These are just a few examples of competencies and the overall model is important for you to understand, because it can help you shine in an interview.

If a hiring manager presents a scenario asking you to tell him/her about a time when you had to solve a difficult problem, you can assume they are looking for and assessing your level of problem solving abilities. This approach has proven to be extremely effective, and one reason why is that it gets to the essential success factors for a job. Many people can present well in an interview or look fantastic on paper. However, managers can get a real look at a candidate's potential by examining real world situations. Many organizations hire human resource consulting firms who help define competency models that are used as the main component of an organization's hiring process. These can be very sophisticated models based on vast amounts of data to improve validity and reliability. Take adaptability as an example. A company may have adaptability listed as a critical success factor and within the adaptability competency they might have a rating system to help managers determine how sophisticated a candidate is with regards to that specific competency. The more sophisticated the level of adaptability, the higher the score.

Below is an example of one organization's use of adaptability to assess candidates.

## ADAPTABILITY

**Level 1:** Employee is able to put a task on hold in order to focus on a new task/demand.

**Level 2:** Employee demonstrates an ability to work in a constantly changing environment whereby they may be asked to work on an issue with accounting and then brainstorm with clinicians about treatment programming.

**Level 3:** Employee, faced with multiple demands, identifies a unique approach and solution so that all tasks are completed successfully. This might include negotiating and partnering with other departments and/or individuals. Additional resources that are managed by the employee help to ensure work is being completed while freeing up his/her time to work on other activities.

One great way to make an impression during an interview is to emphasize key competencies you believe you possess and give specific examples throughout the interview process. If you work well in teams or if you have great analytical skills, find opportunities to provide examples.

Keep in mind that competencies often win out over work experience and skill. How you say? Well, let's say you interview a highly skilled person with a significant amount of job experience. The only issue is that he comes across as a bit arrogant, and you begin wondering if he might be difficult to work with and to manage. Days later you interview a less experienced person who offers you great work examples that show an ability to work well in teams and a proven track record in a constantly changing work environment. Who would you choose if you were the hiring manager?

Keep competencies in mind as you go through the hiring process!

# 7

## Summary

- A written and detailed plan is an essential component for building career success.
- There are three main benefits a career plan offers: (1) Uncovers Your “True” Wants (2) Builds Motivation and a Level of Activity That Allow Opportunity to Find You (3) Keeps Focus on the Present While Being Mindful of the Future.
- When conducting your job search, take the position that your search is not about your needs but about those of the potential employer. Demonstrate how you can solve a problem for the company or meet their needs, and you will greatly improve your chances of being hired.
- Informational interviewing is one of the most powerful job search tools and will help you uncover excellent opportunities that are never advertised.
- Behavioral event interviewing is becoming a more common approach adopted by hiring managers. It is designed to identify competencies that are critical to success. Examples of competencies are as follows: analytical skills, creativity, initiative, teamwork.

# 8

## Conclusion

As we bring things to a close, I need to take one last moment to emphasize my belief that the mental health profession offers a multitude of exciting, enriching, and rewarding opportunities. The possibilities for success are numerous regardless of what you hear or in spite of your past and present experiences. Some of the keys to overcoming obstacles and uncovering opportunity within the profession can be found in the many sales principles discussed in this book. These tools and techniques will help add to your existing skill set and will change the way you operate within the field so you can build even greater success.

I have talked at length about financial rewards, career growth, and competing successfully in the profession throughout this book. I realize that, on the surface, this overall message runs counter to the values and tenants within the field, however, this does not necessarily need to be the case. In reality, much of what we have discussed brings to the forefront the overall importance and power of psychological principles in all aspects of our lives. I believe understanding the social and psychological dynamics within the work place is essential for our own well-being and professional growth. In addition, this understanding will help you develop an enriching and rewarding career where you not only help others but where you help yourself in the process.

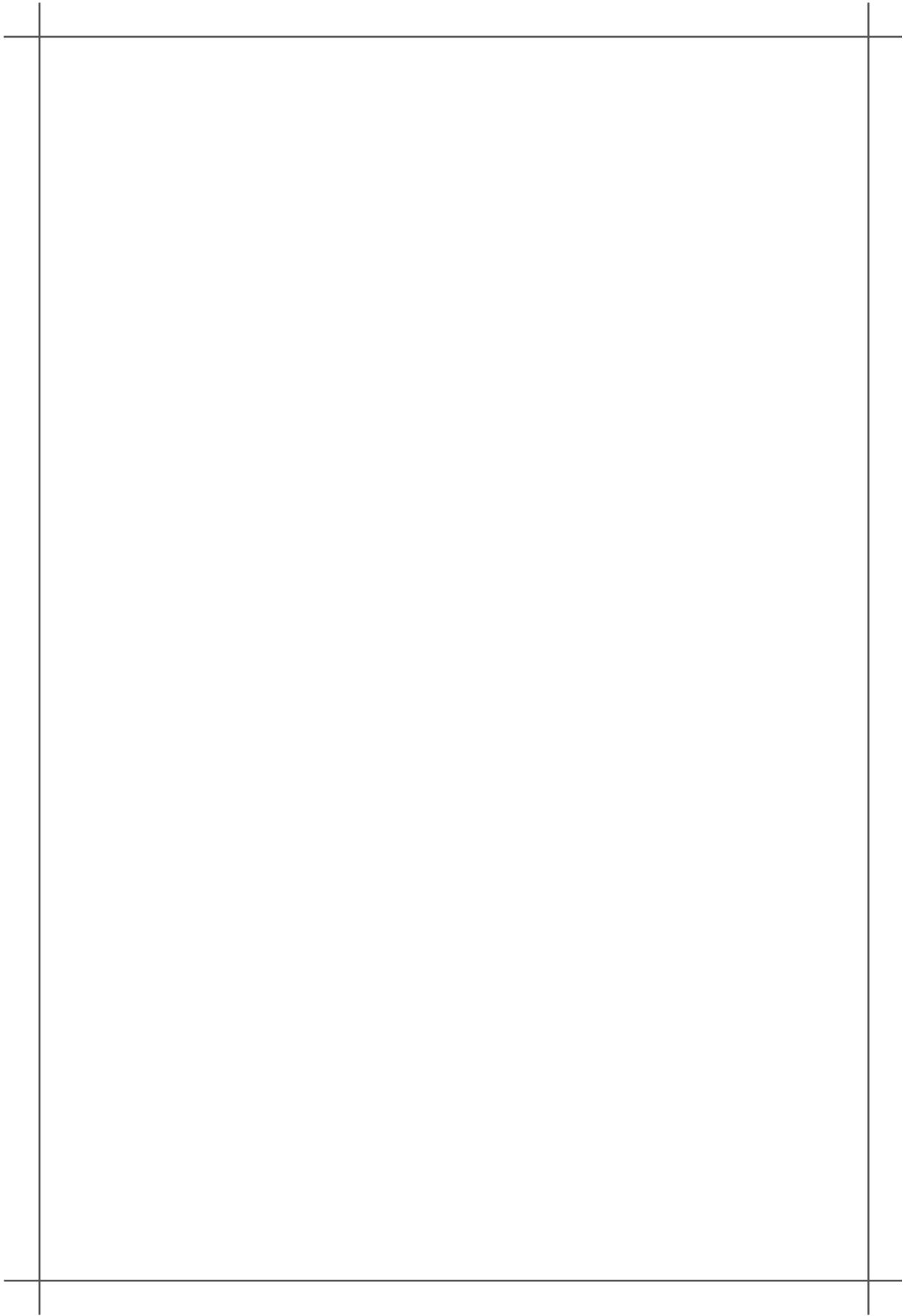
Having said this, it is important to note that my use of the term “generating wealth” in the title of this book can be interpreted many different ways. I see it as a metaphor for those very ideals we seek for our clients: self-awareness, peace, balance, and prosperity.

And in the end, lasting success in any profession comes down to good intention, integrity, and quality. These sales concepts will create a lasting impression with consumers because of your ability to consistently offer high

quality/value-based services that will add richness to their lives. It is within this realm that true success takes place.

I encourage you to find opportunities to use some of these principles, and choose those that are in harmony with your value system and philosophical approach. Your ability to customize these approaches within your daily life will lead you on a path to success that you may not have imagined possible.

Good luck and all the best!



## Bibliography

Balfour, G. (2005). *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Adamant Media Corporation.

Beckwith, H. (1997). *Selling the Invisible: A Field Guide to Modern Marketing*. New York: Business Plus.

Carnegie, D. (1981). *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. New York: Pocket Books.

Cialdini, R. (2007). *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. New York: Harper Collins.

Drucker, P. (2003). *The Essential Drucker: The Best of Sixty Years of Peter Drucker's Essential Writings on Management*. New York: Collins Business Essentials.

French, J. & Bertram R. (1959). *The Bases of Social Power*. In Principles of Management (2008), [www2.eou.edu/~blarison/321afren.html](http://www2.eou.edu/~blarison/321afren.html).

Gitomer, J. (2005). *The Little Red Book of Sales Answers*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Gitomer, J. (2007). *The Little Green Book of Getting Your Way*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc Publishing as FT Press.

Joyner, M. (2002). *Mind Control Marketing*. Steel Icarus.

Joyner, M. (2008). *The Rise of the Author...and the end of publishing as we know it. A technological prediction by Mark Joyner*. Mark Joyner, Inc. [www.theriseoftheauthor.com](http://www.theriseoftheauthor.com)

McCord, P. (2007). *Creating A Million Dollar A Year Sales Income: Sales Success Through Client Referrals*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

McCord, P. (2008). *SuperStar Selling: 12 Keys to Becoming a Sales Superstar*. New York: Morgan James.

*Power, Influence and Persuasion: Sell Your Ideas and Make Things Happen*. (2005) Boston: Harvard Business Press.

Rumbauskas, F. (2003-2008). *Cold Calling Is A Waste Of Time: Sales Success In The Information Age*. FJR Advisors, LLC

Rumbauskas, F. (2007). *Selling Sucks: How to Stop Selling and Start Getting Prospects to Buy*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Suler, J. (2002). The basic psychological features of cyberspace. In The Psychology of Cyberspace, [www.rider.edu/suler/psyber/basicfeat.html](http://www.rider.edu/suler/psyber/basicfeat.html) (article orig. pub. 1996)

Vitale, J. (2005). *The Attractor Factor: 5 Easy Steps For Creating Wealth (Or Anything Else) From The Inside Out*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



David P. Diana received his B.A. from Boston College and his M.A. from George Washington University. He is an experienced clinician and business consultant who has worked for many organizations in both the public and private sector to include IBM, PricewaterhouseCoopers, HayGroup, AVON Cosmetics, U.S. Customs, and the IRS.

He currently works as the Director of Business Development for a private behavioral healthcare organization in Charleston, SC.

He lives in Mt. Pleasant, SC with his wife and two sons.

Should you have any questions or comments about the book please contact him at [david@davidpdiana.com](mailto:david@davidpdiana.com) or visit him at [www.scresourceconnection.com](http://www.scresourceconnection.com)

