

Attract or Pursue? You Choose...

Whether you're building a territory or a book of business, a big key to success is finding prospects - or more accurately, finding the right prospects. The question is whether you're pursuing or attracting your prospects. Both methods work, but attracting prospects is ever so much more fun and results in many more of your ideal prospects, rather than having to settle for whoever you can find.

The majority of people I know spend their time and money on pursuing prospects. They do things like chase them over the internet, cast out a fishing net of direct mailings, and purchase leads to hound people. There are some interesting aspects in common to these pursuing methods of finding prospects. First off, they're pretty expensive. In each of these methods, you need to pour significant money into them. And because people are so inundated with marketing messages, repeated marketing is necessary before someone will actually act on your message. This means that the significant money you pour into your marketing becomes an ongoing stream of significant money. Funny thing is - most folks have more time than money to invest in their business...

The second aspect that these pursuing methods have in common is that the effort never ends. They never take on a life of their own. You always have to drive them forward. When the growth of your business relies on pursuing prospects rather than attracting them, the effort to find new prospects is continual. If you stop the pursuit, the flow of prospects ends. A third common aspect to these pursuing methods is that they all rely on "interruption" marketing. In other words, the marketing message is thrust upon prospects. Perfect examples of "interruption marketing" are TV commercials. They're an interruption of what we were focused on. We didn't ask for them and most likely didn't have an interest in what was being promoted. The truth is that most marketing is interruption marketing. The opposite of interruption marketing is "permission marketing", which is extremely effective. Marketing becomes "permission marketing" when a prospect gives us permission to explain what we do. They essentially ask us for information. That's when our marketing message is most effective.

In contrast, attracting methods have a different dynamic than pursuing methods. Instead of pushing yourself on prospects, you end up pulling them to you. And who ends up being pulled to you? People who relate to you. People who have an interest in what you have to offer. People who share your values and beliefs. People who believe in you. And those people are your ideal prospects. Attracting prospects is a natural, comfortable, professional, and self-perpetuating process. Additionally, when someone is attracted to you, the need to sell yourself no longer exists.

OK, I'm sold. So how does this attracting business work?

There are two components to attracting prospects. You have to create the opportunities for people to find you and you have to be attractive. Let's start with being attractive. By being attractive, I don't mean having an attractive appearance. (However, you do need to have a professional appearance.) I mean that you need to become a person that others are attracted to. What kind of person are others attracted to? Use your experience as your best example. What kind of people are *you* attracted to? Who do *you* enjoy being around? What character traits do they have? What personality traits do they have? What is it about them that attracts you?

As a starting point, I've found that there are some traits that people are universally attracted to. I've found that when someone has an extremely high degree of personal integrity, they become highly attractive. People seem magnetically drawn to them. People who have personal integrity are highly regarded and well-respected.

What does having high personal integrity mean? It means a few things. It means doing what you say you're going to do. That means if you say you'll accomplish something, then you do. It means that if you say you'll be somewhere at a certain time, you are. Every time. It means that not only do you have a set of values that matter to you, but you live by those values. People can count on your word and the consistency of your actions.

Additionally, when someone has a purpose and/or something they're passionate about, they become attractive to others. You see, most people have no purpose or passion in their life, so when they come upon someone who has a purpose and is passionate about something - ANYTHING - they are attracted to them. People want to be around a person who is clear about who they are and what matters to them. Such a person is often viewed as a leader.

Can a person get purpose and passion in their life? Yes they can. It takes some self-reflection; a focus on one's philosophy of business or life. Spend some time reflecting on the thing or things that you feel are important to a person's success or happiness. Become clear about what matters to you. Maybe it's something like the importance of having integrity. Maybe it's about the importance of having a sense of humor. Maybe for you, it's about giving back. Whatever it is, become clear about it and then work to develop a clear, clean, concise way to let others know what it is.

The other component to successfully attracting prospects is to create opportunities which allow people to find you and be attracted to you. There are a number of ways of letting others get to know you. Most of these involve getting out from behind your desk and interacting with others. That means talking to people, letting others know what you are all about (not just your business, but YOU as a person), and creating the opportunity for you to assess others as prospects. Imagine talking with someone and then, after a few minutes being able to say, "I like working with people like you. People who are (friendly, forward-thinking, fun to be around, business-like, professional, etc.) Do you think you'd connect with them? Do you think they'd understand that you actually listened to them? Do you think they'd be more likely to become a client or agent? You bet.

Other ways to attract clients - to allow others to get to know you - is to write or give talks about what matters to you. By sharing of yourself, you allow others to understand who you are. Once people see who you are, you will attract the ones who relate best to you. Remember, when someone is attracted to you, the need to sell yourself no longer exists. Once you've become attractive, the pressure and stress of trying to convince someone to work with you evaporates.

So here's the question: What would you rather do? Attract or pursue? You choose...

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