



Never Hurts to Ask

By Darrell Morris

Prospecting for new clients is an ongoing essential part of any business. It would be fantastic if people were lined up outside our doors every morning just waiting to sign up for a new membership, or that we would never lose a client; but those kinds of things just do not happen in the real world. Chances are you'll find yourself having to aggressively market your business and sell your services to be successful.

Most people, even experienced sales personnel, are not completely comfortable with the idea of prospecting for new business. There are several reasons often given such as fear of rejection, fear of offending or just feeling as if they have ineffective prospecting skills. Concerns over being rejected and/or offending typically pass once someone has acquired some experience in prospecting. If, however, you are concerned about your prospecting skills there are steps you can take to improve them.

Setting Aside Time

The first step in developing strong prospecting skills is an ability to discipline your use of time as it relates to prospecting. Consciously set time aside that will be used strictly for prospecting. Don't try and talk yourself out of it or find excuses as to why you can not make a few sales calls. Schedule your prospecting time when you are at your best, not when you are tired, hungry, burned out, stressed or desperate for appointments. Set aside one to two hours of time and just stick to it.

Listen and remain focused

Chances are you'll face a lot of negatives or reasons why they aren't interested in your services. Do not get discouraged. As long as you are still having a dialog, you may be able to address their concerns and change their mind. Listen and respond to what the individual is saying or asking. Stay focused on what they are saying, not on what you want to say. Encourage them to talk about their needs, their requirements, and their experiences, not yours.

Ask for it

For whatever reason, people always seem to hesitate when it actually comes to asking for their business, but why? What's the big deal? Asking for business in a direct, warm and friendly manner is a professional and honest way of doing business. Easiest thing you can do is just to ask for their business and just wait for their response. Sure, you may

receive an answer like” no thanks” or “I have a membership at another club”, but at least you’ve gotten the prospect to start talking and can address their specific concerns.

It’s likely that you will not get someone to sign up the first time you call them. However, if you’ve taken the time to listen and build a rapport with them, you’ll be in a better position to be able to call them back and talk to them again, or even to get them to come into the facility and try your services. Patience is a must in sales. It requires time and effort on your part, but the rewards are truly worth it.

Darrell Morris is a dedicated Fitness Professional and Licensing Manager for Achieve Fitness USA. For more information email him at Darrell@AchieveFitnessUSA.com or visit www.AchievePartnerPrograms.com