

Sales Solutions

How to focus on consulting projects you'll enjoy

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - September 29, 2006

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Many of you have written with questions about starting and maintaining a sales consulting business. You've decided to leave your jobs and take the plunge into the world of the self-employed. Good for you. It can be both exciting and terrifying at the same time.

A common question I get is "How do I stay focused on doing the work I love when prospective clients ask me to do projects I'm not really interested in, especially when I could use the work?"

Staying true to yourself and doing the work you enjoy, in other words, doing the work you quit your job to do in the first place, can be extremely difficult when money's tight and you need the work. It's easy to get distracted and be tempted by the money, but staying true to yourself will pay off in the end.

In order to stay focused, start by making a list. Write down the specific reasons you decided to start your sales consulting business in the first place. What kind of projects do you want to do? On a piece of paper describe the perfect project, in detail. What makes you the expert for this type of project? Who is the customer? What is their industry? How do they go to market? What are they willing to pay for your services? What is the length of your ideal project? How many projects can you do simultaneously? How well will you perform for your clients knowing you're doing exactly the kind of work you love to do?

The clearer you become on exactly what it is you want to do, the more focused you will become and the better chance you'll have of getting the work you want.

Also, although it may sound strange, write down the kind of projects you don't want to do. On a piece of paper describe that project in detail as well. What is it about this type of project that disinterests you? How well would you perform for your clients knowing this type of project isn't what you want to do? How much of a disservice are you doing for your clients by taking on the kind of work you ultimately don't want to do?

Now, consider this. Every time you take on a project you don't want to do, even if you need the money, when the right project comes along, you won't be available because you'll be sidetracked doing work you hate.

During those times when the wrong projects seem to come your way, remember to stay true to yourself, continue to pursue the projects you're interested in, and stick with where you feel you can offer some value to your clients. Get on the phone and make cold calls. Write about your expertise and get articles published in trade magazines and newspapers. Go to networking events. Work your contacts. Do whatever you need to do to get the work you want and you will have a successful sales consulting business.

The energy and focus you put out to the universe will come back to you in spades if you're patient, persistent, and proactive.

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