

## Marketing Activities

As we've already discussed, enrollment — the direct interaction with potential clients and referral sources — is the most critical component of your marketing! Regardless of what other activities you do, keep in mind the guidelines and process of enrollment. In this section we'll talk about some additional marketing activities.

Contrary to popular belief, your marketing activities do not require fancy brochures or business cards or a website. All of these are useful materials when you have an idea of your niche, your services, and your value to the world. The following activities are appropriate when you are in your first one or two years of coaching (and after that too!)

### Determining Your Niche

A niche is a specific group of people that you want as clients, or a specific focus to your coaching (which might imply a certain set of clients). Example niches include: men and women age 50 to 70 who are either newly retired or will be retired in the next five years, breast cancer-survivors, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, female executives, first level managers, college-bound teenagers, or devout Catholics wanting to blend their faith and career. Niches can be demographic-related, meaning that you can describe specific characteristics of your potential clients such as age, sex, income level, religious denomination. Niches can also be content- or lifestyle-related, such as spirituality or people who are critically ill. The potential clients for these niches can come in all shapes and sizes, demographically speaking.

Having a primary niche helps focus your energy and time on a specific group of people. You are no longer trying to be the “coach to the world” but have selected a section of the world on which to focus. The key word here — and a challenge for new business owners — is the word focus. No matter how in-depth your training, nor how masterful your coaching, you will naturally be a more effective coach for some folks and a less effective coach for others. Finding a niche that suits you will help you focus on those folks for which you will have the greatest impact.

By focusing on a specific group or type of people, you can discover how to come in contact with them — where they spend their time, what activities they take part in, and what associations or organizations or groups they belong to.

You are already a part of many niches! They are at your fingertips right now. Look for a niche that you feel an affinity for, that you have experience with (perhaps even belong to right now), feel a connection to, and enjoy working with.

### Networking

When you are just starting out, any visibility is good. You want as many chances to talk about coaching as possible! Find out what kind of networking events happen in your area and attend lots of them, not only to meet different people but also to determine which networking events might be the most beneficial for you. These networking events might be business related (Chamber of Commerce), or professional associations (of nurses or project managers or teachers), or community events (Friends of the Library or Toastmasters), or community service organizations (Rotary and Kiwanis and Lions) or Leads Groups (LeTip or Business Network International). Whatever the group, attend for a few times before you decide to join, to make sure that it is the best use of your time. You will have many more opportunities for networking near at hand than you can attend on a regular basis, so you need to choose carefully. Select which networking opportunities are best for your niche and your personal style.

When attending a networking event, it's not effective to just hand out business cards and shake hands. That's not a way to make connection! Better to go and connect well with only 3 people than go quickly through a crowd and hand out 30 business cards. Don't forget the steps of enrollment — connect, learn about them, coach, make an offer, ask for the business, agree on next steps. One of your goals in attending the networking event will likely be to become more comfortable talking about coaching, and your services. They are perfect opportunities to practice your enrollment skills. If you leave the event with just three people more aware of the power of coaching, you have had a very successful event!

Networking — which is merely meeting and talking with people — can result in new clients, but often not right away. If you exchange business cards with the people you meet, you can follow up with them the next day by phone or email. A simple note of “I was delighted to meet and talk with you last night” is sufficient. If the person seemed interested in a sample session or more discussion about coaching, and you hadn't asked them for their business yet — do it! You will need to keep in touch with some folks over time and continue to build the relationship. It is also helpful to return to the same networking venue regularly (i.e., for several months) so that you become more familiar to the other attendees.

Remember that networking events are set up for people to meet each other and talk about their businesses, so be sure to listen, and listen like a coach. Don't be overly eager to talk about yourself — the best way to promote coaching is to act in a coach-like fashion which means being over there and listening and asking powerful questions. Don't worry about doing it “right.” Instead just get yourself out there, be coach-like and authentic, meet people, and talk about coaching. Over time, you will learn what naturally works for your own style.

### **Personal Letters and Phone Calls**

Your most readily accessible group of potential clients and referral sources are your friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and family. If only half of your personal acquaintances referred one client to you, you'd have a waiting list!

When you are ready to start your business, send a letter (hard copy or email) to all your acquaintances telling them about your new adventure and what a difference coaching is making in your life. The goal of the letter is to get them as excited about coaching as you are, NOT to recruit new clients! No one wants to receive a “sales letter” but your acquaintances will want to hear about this new chapter in your life and how they can help you be successful. The letter should not be too long, no more than one page, and it should not contain lots of detail. You want to enroll, not overwhelm, the reader.

Send out the letters in batch sizes that you can easily manage the follow-up calls, because each letter should be followed by a phone call! Just sending the letter won't do you any good, it's the phone call that will help secure a referral source or potential client.

The intention of your follow-up call is to learn more about where they're at in their lives, and answer any questions they might have about coaching. Reiterate your excitement about what you are doing, and share your vision for coaching. Just as in networking meetings, don't try to explain coaching just do it! Ask powerful questions, help them see something in their life from a new perspective. Also, ask if they would be interested in a sample session. Often if you present it in a way like “One way you can support me is to learn more about coaching in case you meet someone who would benefit from coaching. Would you be willing to have a 30-minute free coaching session — no obligations attached — so that you can experience the coaching process?” Of course, you need to use your own words!

### **Speaking and Workshops**

One of the best ways to get visibility for your business is to speak to groups, large and small. As you begin to explore the various opportunities for networking, you'll discover some groups that might be interested in a speaker for their meetings. Contact them to find out their speaker requirements and how to apply. Get out there and speak about goals, balance, perspectives, values, the Saboteur, procrastination, or any subject that points the audience toward a more fulfilling life and the value of having a coach.

A suggestion is to have some type of drawing, perhaps for a month of free coaching. Audience members will provide their business cards (that you draw from) which will provide you with a record of who was at the event.

Speaking to associations and groups can be hard work, and the assignments are typically pro-bono. It's not a way to make money (unless you speak often enough that you can become a professional speaker) but it's a great way to increase visibility.

### **Get a Coach**

Starting a coaching practice is filled with new and unfamiliar tasks. Your Saboteurs will be working overtime to keep you in your comfort zone and acting small. An experienced coach will help you stay aware of the Saboteur and on the path toward your own dreams. Many potential clients will ask you "Who is your coach?" and "If coaching is so powerful, why don't you have one?" They do have a point!