

Title:

Thinking About More Business

Word Count:

936

Summary:

What does an old Russian joke have to do with getting new business?

Did you increase your business in the past 12 months? Don't discriminate between more new clients or old clients spending more money -- count the increase either way. If you didn't, you really should be asking yourself why not.

Yes, I know -- it all started with the Internet implosion. Then came terrorist attacks. Next, the global recession. And after that, a war that threatened to destabilize the world...

Keywords:

Article Body:

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Did you increase your business in the past 12 months? Don't discriminate between more new clients or old clients spending more money -- count the increase either way. If you didn't, you really should be asking yourself why not.

Yes, I know -- it all started with the Internet implosion. Then came terrorist attacks. Next, the global recession. And after that, a war that threatened to destabilize the worldwide political structures for peace and harmony. Who knows what's next, but the fact is, none of these "cataclysmic" events has really mattered.

How can I say such a thing? Because for most of us, several more clients or a few additional transactions can turn a mediocre year into a great one. And large scale macro-level trauma and transition don't really impact our micro-level ability to find that next client or do the next deal. The only place those macro-things matter is in your head, but -- for good or for bad -- what happens in your head tends to powerfully affect what happens in your business.

Yefim, a Latvian émigré who worked for me years ago told a joke (if you can call

it that) from the old Soviet Union. He said, "What's the difference between an American and a Russian?" "The American expects things to get better, and the Russian hopes they don't get worse." Well, after a year or two of lackluster, even dismal, business, you're probably getting more like the Russian: not sure if things can ever get better. And you're questioning whether you can expend any resources to do anything about it.

When you believe the world is going to hell in a hand-basket, not taking steps to improve your business seems natural. You expect that clients and prospects will say no to even your best proposition. After a while you simply stop trying.

Thinking about more business starts with thinking such a thing is possible -- nay, probable --but if you've read this far you still may be a believer. And if you think increasing your business is possible -- despite what's reported on the evening news -- then it is time to get busy. No more excuses. Not the weather. Not the season -- I don't care if it is Summer or Christmas or Ramadan. Not even the economy.

So what's the good news? In 1966, Richard Farina wrote a book called "Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me." Feel that way? Great, because making a difference is going to be easy. You've probably been dormant so long, any improvement will look simply marvelous.

Here's the secret.

There are only three ways to grow your business: you can find new clients, you can have your clients buy from you more often, and you can have clients -- old and new -- buy more each time.

"You mean that's it?"

Listen closely, grasshopper. This little formula can yield great insight into how to approach your business right away -- if you let it.

Want help? Answer the following questions.

What ways are you currently using to find new clients now? Go ahead -- make a list, even if it's only in your head. Are those ways working? (No -- probably not, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this.) Are they the same ones you were using a year ago? (Shame on you -- they weren't working a year ago, why should they work better now?)

What new products or services have you introduced in the past six months to help

your current clients? (You haven't-- no one's spending any money.) Of course not, they already have all the stuff you sell they think they need.

What new combinations of products, or products and services, or subscriptions, or renewable services, or... It boggles the mind how many ways there are to increase the value of each individual purchase. How many of these new offers have you made to your prospects and clients in the past six months? (I'm not even going to wait for your answer.)

If you meditate on each of these questions like a Zen Koan -- you will assuredly invent at least two -- and perhaps many -- new ways to increase your business.

Of course, these aren't the only things you can do, but they are a great start.

Can't come up with any ideas? Let your clients do the work for you -- after all, it's in their own best interests. Do a survey -- call up 10 or 20 and find out what they need from you that they can't get. Even simpler -- use one of the online survey tools like <http://surveymonkey.com> or <http://zoomerang.com>.

While you're at it, you may want to insure that your core product still makes sense. After all --clients aren't buying it like they used to. That can only mean a few things -- either you're doing a bad job telling people why they want it, or they just don't want it.

Both of these problems can be fixed, but it's important to make sure you're fixing the right one. If you fix your marketing and tell people about something no one really wants, you're just wasting money. On the other hand, if your products really are right for the market, but you're not communicating effectively -- you might end up changing your products unnecessarily.

I hope you realize from this simple exercise how easy it is to quickly begin generating new and increased business. Just ask yourself good questions and invent some good answers. After all, that's what thinking is.

Then take those thoughts and put a few into action.

--PL

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