

Are You Asking Questions?

By Elinor Stutz

Does your fear of offending the other person by declining their offer keep you from making sound decisions?

You began your business with a vision of something that would bring you joy. Most likely you either had a passion for your area of expertise or considerable experience of which you wish to share your knowledge. You then put a plan and goals into action to carry you through for at least a year.



My thesis today is that you need to be strong enough to say 'no' in order to get to the opportunities where you will whole heartedly say 'yes!' And my suggestion to you is you must hold a futuristic vision of your business to work toward. Apply the most grandiose dream about your business imaginable. You always need the distant vision to begin working on a plan to carry you there. As a business owner, time is one of your most valuable commodities so you must guard it carefully.

And as with all plans, you continually need to review your major stepping stones to make certain you are on track. New ideas will come and go. Only implement those ideas that will greatly enhance the development of your overall plan. Otherwise, the extraneous ideas will evaporate the time in your day.

Obstacles and detours will appear from time to time to throw you off course. The best chance you have to move past these is to step away from your work to revisit your list of yearly objectives and goals as well as your spectacular vision for your business.

New entrepreneurs, in particular, suffer from the minute details that will crop up and take over the day if allowed. Even worse is when others enter the picture of wasting a new business owner's time.

Negotiation is a word and concept you must always turn to when approached to do something out of the ordinary. As you move forward in your business, it is very important to know that a business transaction must hold something beneficial for all parties concerned. It's referred to as a win-win. You must remove any notion of an obligation.

When I first began to seek speaking engagements, I would almost take anything just to practice speaking, list the event on my website and be seen. One gentleman read my self-published book and was anxious to know much more. He devised a plan to have me speak for two hours to a group of engineers with which he was associated. On the surface this seemed like a great idea and I was very flattered. But then reality set in. The giving, as I saw it, was all on my side. The two biggest issues were the time element and the audience neither of which were negotiable.

My true targeted audience is entrepreneurs, network marketers and beginning salespeople. Car travel would entail close to two hours of time and the instruction would have been another two hours. Given the time allotment for instruction, I would have had to share so much sales information that purchase of my products and services would have been deemed completely unnecessary. This would have been a very one-sided arrangement. I declined this particular opportunity.

Someone else requested I drive an hour each way to speak to a group of 15. Once again, none of this group would be reasonable prospects for my business. It made no sense and I once again turned down the request.

Promise yourself from now on that you will be open to opportunity and weigh the benefits. Listen to the details presented and hear what isn't being said. Rather than accepting immediately, ask many questions to make certain it will be well-worth your time. When you remain open and ask qualifying questions, you will be surprised at how much more targeted business will come your way. Practice saying, *"I'd like to know more!"*

On a more positive note, I have been asked to speak at the Michigan Women convention where about 600 people will be in attendance – all of whom comprise my core audience. This is a huge difference from the last two opportunities referred to above. The possibilities for business will be greatly magnified and I greet the opportunity as an honor to be asked. The requesting party is also thrilled as they enjoy my articles and look forward to presenting me in person to their participants. It's a win all the way around.

And I am proud to say other fine speaking opportunities have arisen which were also happily accepted. In closing, learn from your experiences good and bad, keep your eye on your dream, and you will achieve the success you are seeking.

Additional Ideas to Build Business:

- Smile as much as possible
- Give every opportunity and opportunity
- Question whether you are a match
- Refer associates who may be better suited
- Listen and hear to learn more
- Ask lots of questions.

Your center of influence will grow...
And Your Business Will Prosper

Elinor Stutz through **Smooth Sale** delivers: *Sales Advice for Building Business Swiftly and Easily* as original work in the form of Professional Sales Training, Licensing of Programs, Speaking Engagements and the "Sales Tips e-zine". Contact Elinor at www.smoothsale.net or elinor@smoothsale.net. Elinor is also Smooth Sale Mentor with our [WS Team](#). Watch for her new book - *"Nice Girls DO Get The Sale: Relationship Building That Gets Results"* to be released by Sourcebooks September '06. Her Sales Toolkit and *"Smooth Selling 4-CD audio seminar"* are available now at Smooth Sale.