PROSPECTING | COMMUNICATION | CREATING | RELATIONSHIP | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Prospects: Potential Possibilities

When you prospect for potential possibilities you are in the driver's seat.

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Who loves selling? Really? The truth is, all of us are selling in one way or another.

We are 'selling' who we are and what we do. We are 'selling' possibilities.

When we offer products or services, we are selling! So, if 'selling' is a turnoff to most individuals and we all have to do it to financially survive and thrive, what's the answer to this dilemma? I believe the answer is 'prospecting' – engaging in ways to find the *right* potential customer, client or partner.

The key is 'engagement'. Do you know anyone who got 'engaged' on their first date? Who do you know that made that kind of decision without 'getting to know' the other person, testing the relationship and feeling confident that moving forward together was right for both individuals?

OK. So you may be thinking, we're not asking or expecting anyone to make a life time commitment when we're selling. I agree. We are, however, looking to create relationships that over time could potentially produce increased business. (By the way, this *is* the critical component to one's success!) If we handle our behavior, our approach and the sales cycle with integrity, patience and respect, we get past the typical, turned off way of selling that people dislike. This mind shift has the potential of creating significant results.

Prospects are everywhere. You can find people through business card bulletin boards. You can copy information from magnetic signs on cars. You can search for prospects in publications. You can ask for referrals from existing customers. You can post what you're looking for through social media channels. And, you can network. It doesn't matter what venue you use.

> **The key to this effort is NOT selling. The real opportunity exists when you recognize the *potential* that a prospect could offer.**

I call this system The 4 C's: **Converse. Connect. Collaborate. Create.** This approach is not "I have what you need!" The respectful and acceptable approach is in *thinking*, "Do I have the solution, the answer – the product or service – that meets that person's needs?" This mindset takes selling to an entirely different direction. To be successful in engaging others with what you offer, it has to first start with a ***conversation.***

It's the initial exchange that takes place because of a genuine interest in getting to know one another. Many individuals (I know and so do you) look at this initial step as the selling stage and by hitting hard, miss the mark. NO ONE WANTS TO BE SOLD. And, ironically, people are willing to buy IF it's the right person, the right product/service AND the right time. Hence, the realization that prospects may not initially be buyers. They are, however, potential possibilities.

If you are still with me (and I hope you are) you have an initial conversation and can conclude it's headed in the right direction. The door hasn't closed. The opportunity to sell remains open. Next step: ***Connect.***

That's the time to discover or uncover what you have in common. What are the issues/challenges/ideas that your potential customer has shared that lends favorably to what you offer? Happy with work? Looking for an opportunity? Stressed? Family life? Curiosity? Anything you can learn to move the conversation to a connection keeps you in the game and your prospect open minded.

We are now moving to the best part. By beginning with an initial conversation, you have laid the groundwork for a productive relationship. Step #3 is ***Collaborate*** – both parties recognize that moving forward together has *mutual* value! It's now your job to figure out how you're going to share your information, what you want your prospect to do and to guide the process. This is the exciting part of prospecting. You've had a conversation and you both recognize there's a connection. The two of you are on the same page. Congratulations. Because you took a prospect through a respectable and non-selling process simply by sharing information, you have established potential possibilities. Those possibilities are endless.

What follows (Step #4) is ultimately what you ***Create*** by working together. You've done your job. You've prospected without pushing. You've differentiated yourself from everyone else who continues to go after sales the traditional – hard selling way instead of prospecting for potential possibilities.

This 4 step system works when you work it. Take your time. Lead with a respectful approach. Listen to learn. Pursue with passion. Not every conversation will produce results. Those that move forward, however, will give you the encouragement and the drive to keep going. Remember, it's all about the 4 C's System: Converse. Connect. Collaborate. Create.

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Bonnie Ross-Parker, is a multi-dimensional businesswomen/entrepreneur with a background in education, franchise development, publishing, mentorship, network marketing, and community development. She combines vision with a unique

set of skills. Formerly the Associate Publisher of *The Gazette Newspaper/Atlanta*, Ms. Ross-Parker now focuses her energies as the Chairwoman of the Cooperative Business Community for TNNWC Group LLC. She is the champion and chief advocate for the establishment of the interconnection of business networks around the world for the purpose of building the Global Interconnected Cooperative Business Community (GICBC).

In 2002, Ms. Ross-Parker created and incorporated The Joy of Connecting® gatherings for women. Nationwide, The Joy of Connecting® is an absolutely unique interpersonal customer acquisition/marketing program serving entrepreneurial, business women and professionals who are serious about growing their businesses. In September of 2009, The Latina Joy of Connecting® was created to bring a strong bond of sisterhood to women multi-ethnically and internationally.

Ms. Ross-Parker is a graduate of George Washington University, and earned a Certification in Network Marketing at the University of Chicago. Several of her articles on owning one's own business and entrepreneurship have appeared in publications including: *Wealth Building, Home Business Magazine, Business to Business and Entrepreneur's Business Start-Ups.*

In 2002, Ms. Ross-Parker received The Athena Award ~ an honor designed to acknowledge women of leadership in cities throughout the United States. In September, 2005 she was honored by the Women's Leadership Exchange, a New York based organization, as an Influential Woman of Georgia and currently serves on their Atlanta Advisory Board. She is a featured speaker with the Direct Selling Women's Alliance. In May of that same year, Bonnie was honored by The International Toastmaster's Organization of Georgia with their annual Communication & Leadership Award. Most recently, Bonnie Ross-Parker was one of 8 women selected from hundreds of submissions to be recognized as part of the traveling *Princess Di Exhibit's Women's Wall of Achievement:* Celebrating Atlanta Women, 2010.