

LESSON THIRTEEN

in this video, I want to talk to you about what I refer to as the, value conversation. A value conversation is a conversation that you will have with either potential clients, past clients, or existing clients. In this example, what I am going to do is cover it from a point of view of with potential clients. Then it is going to be easier for you to understand what the structure is and how the conversation takes place. At the end of the video, we can look at how you adapt it for existing clients, or past clients.

With this video and with the exercises, you will see that structure there. All the questions are already laid out for you. Therefore, you do not have to take notes of what those questions are. There is a little bit more detail of how it takes place. Let's just imagine you are having a conversation or a meeting with someone that you have not met before. They know what you do, because in order to get the meeting, you have been referred into them, or there has been some instruction in some shape or form. You have sent them an email, or they have enquired about your services. Therefore, they already know what it is that you are going to be doing, or what your service offering is.

At the beginning of any conversation, or any meeting with people, there is the typical early part, whereby people are just building a rapport. It is just the social conversation that takes place. That could be about the news headlines. It could be about sports. It could be about the weather. It could be anything at all. It is typically just that social piece.

What I want you to be aware of is that there is one important factor that you have got to be careful of. Whoever is in control of the conversation is the one that commands respect, and commands what is going on with the conversation itself. What I mean by that is if the person that you are meeting is the first one to start asking the questions, they are now in control of that conversation. What can happen is that they start interviewing yourself and asking what is it that you do? What are your service offerings? What is your price, and that kind of thing and they are now interviewing you. That is the last place that you want to be in.

What you want to do is take control of that particular conversation. How you take control of it is, you be the first one to start asking the questions. Now, you don't conduct it as an interview. You just have it as a normal casual, interview that you are going to bring people through. How you gauge that point is if you have ever driven a manual car as opposed to an automatic, there is a point whereby you have got one foot on the accelerator, and one foot on the clutch. There is a point whereby you are taking your foot off the clutch itself, and press more on the accelerator. There is just that bite, when it comes off the clutch, that you must press a little bit more on the accelerator.

The same, similar thing happens when you are having a conversation with somebody. At the point where it moves from being more of a social conversation and there is that very short pause in the conversation before it starts moving into the business side of the conversation. When you are in tune and recognise that pause, well then you have to be the first person to ask the first question.

The first question I want you to ask is along the lines of, "Okay. Tell me a little bit about the background on your company," or, "Tell me a little bit about yourself. Tell me about, how can I help you?" When you start to use question like that, what you are asking the person to do, is to start talking. You have got to ask a question that you know that the person is going to be answering, that you know they have the information. Therefore, questions like, "Tell me what your gross profit margin is?" or, "Tell me what your turnover is?," or, "Where is your marketplace going?," or, "What is your competition like?" well you have got to be very careful of those kinds of questions as sometimes your clients may not know the answer. Therefore, what you have got to do is make sure that you are not asking question that there is potential that they are not going to know. If you ask a question, "Well, tell me a little bit about your background, about yourself? Tell me a bit of background about your company? What can I help you with?" Or, "How can I help you?" Well then, now what you are doing is, you are asking them information that you know that they can answer.

Now you must allow them to talk. If you ask them a question along the lines of, "Tell me a little bit about your business." Now, that is information they definitely know. They will start to talk better. "So, how did you get into the business? How many staff have you got at the moment roughly? Or, "What inspired you to get into this particular business in the first place?" What you are doing is, you are getting them to talk about their business. That is what people love to do. If it is about their business, or about their background itself. People love to talk about that side of the business, or that side of themselves. That is the first protocol.

The next question you want to start asking once they have finished that, is "What is working well?" Or, "What successes have you had?" Or, "What has been a benefit to you in that particular business itself?" The reason why you are asking those questions is to get them into a positive frame of mind. Once they are in a positive frame of mind, then the brain can open up a little bit more. It becomes a little bit more creative, as opposed to when it is in a negative frame. The first protocol is, in that question is, "Tell me, what is working well with your business," or, "What is working well with that particular situation?" or, "What successes have you had?"

The reason why you are asking those question is to get them into a positive frame of mind. The next question that you want to ask is the magic wand question. "If there was one thing you could change, what would it be?" Again, that might be to do with

their business, or their situation, or whatever it is that they have asked you to come in to them, to talk to you about. The question again is, "If there is one thing you could change, what would it be?"

The reason why that question is phrased in that way is because you do not want them to come out with something that is totally out of this world, that is not possible to change. You are phrasing it in a way that if there is one thing you could change. Now, what I want you to listen to is, my tonality, the pause that I put in to the question itself, and the next thing then is, once you have asked the question, is literally just a stop, and listen for the answer. Again, I will ask the question along the lines of, "Tell me ..." For example. Let's just say the person's name is Jon. "So, tell me Jon, if there was one thing you could change, what would it be?" And then you are allowing that person to answer.

Now, two things will happen. One is, the person will respond by saying, "What do you mean, if there's one thing I could change what would it be? What are you talking about?" What is really happening here is the brain is trying to catch up, because it has never been asked a question along those lines before. Therefore, all it is doing is just asking for time to catch up to think about, "Okay. What would be the answer that I will give?" Therefore, all you do, is you repeat the question again, not verbatim, but you repeat it as something similar to what you have just asked.

What you might say is perhaps, "Look Jon. I'm sure there are loads of things that you want to change within the business, or in your life, or whatever it might be. If there was one thing you could change, what would it be?" If you bear in mind what I just did, I just repeated more or less the same question again. That has given time for the person to actually come up with the answer that they want to say.

Now, the other reaction that you could have is that the person will either sit back in their chair and say, "Oh my God. That's an amazing question. I have never been asked a question like that before. That is a very interesting question." Now, that is the reaction you want to have, but you want to give them time to answer.

The most critical, important thing for you to, is just to stay quiet, watch their eye contact, and listen to what they are going to say. Even though there might be a big, long pause while they are thinking of the answers, just allow them the presence of that time to answer that particular question.

As they are coming out with information, what you want to do is take notes. Whatever words that they use, you have got to be very particular in making notes of the words that they use, because they are the words that are most important to them. Therefore, when it comes to writing your proposal or feeding back to them, or having a conversation with them at a later point, what you want to refer to is those

key words, because now they know that you are on the same wavelength as them, and therefore they have security in knowing that you know what they are trying to achieve by getting you onboard. That is the reason why you want to listen to those particular words. Again, the question is, if there was one thing you could change, what would it be? Once they have given you the answer, then you are onto the next question.

The next question is, “if we solve this, what difference would that make for you, or for your business?” Now, bear in mind, what I have done is pay close attention to the actual words themselves. If we solve this, it is an opportunity that we are going to work together. If we solve this, what difference would that make to you, to your business, or whatever is relevant to the situation itself?

What you want to drive from that question is the value. What does it mean to the potential client that you are talking to? What is it that is going to be different for them? You want to drill down as much as possible by that particular question. If you need to drill them further, drill them further, meaning, if to say, “Well, yes, but, I will have more revenue into the business because, if you are working with me, you are going to help me, for example, you are going to help me get more clients. What difference is that going to make? Well, I am going to have more clients. That could be the simple answer.

I might then perhaps, go into a situation and ask, “So tell me, what is the average fee that you might charge for a client?” They may say, “Well, it is 5,000 dollars.” “So typically, how many clients can you work with, at any one point in time and how many clients have you got at the moment?” Therefore, you get the gauge of what their turnover level is. You can then say, “Well, how many more clients can you take onboard of your existing workload?” And they say, “Well, I could take on, perhaps, maybe another 10 clients. I would still be comfortable. I wouldn’t be overly worked. I could still manage an extra 10 clients.”

As feedback to the person that you are talking to, you might say, “Well, okay, so, your average fee is 5,000 dollars. You could take on potentially, another 10 clients. That is 50,000 dollars that you could potentially increase your business by. True?” What you are saying is, “okay, if I could help you with that, would that be of interest to you?” Now, you are moving the person into the next stage of asking them for the business. By having that kind of conversation whereby you are drilling down on why it is important to them, now you are getting to the real reasons of what the person wants to actually achieve.

I would like to recap on where we are right now now. The first question is about background. Next question is, so what is working well, or what is the success that you have had? The next question is, if there was one thing you could change, what

would it be? And then next question is, if we solved that, what difference would that make? Now what you are going to do is go back between question three and question four. You want to go back and say, "Okay. What else would you change? And then, if we solved that, what difference would that make? And then, what else would you change? And if we solve that, what difference would that make?"

By the time you have gone through questions three and four a few times, you now have a list of different things. You primarily try and get about three or four things that the person wants to achieve. What you are doing now, is you want to feed back to the client itself, because you want to now start getting to the point of, "Well, do you want me to help you with it?" You are asking for the business in effect. What you want to feed back to the client, hence the reason why you want to keep particular notes of the key words that the client said. "What you are saying is, okay, so what I hear from you Jon is, you want to achieve this, and if we achieve that, well then this is the difference it is going to make for you. You also want to get this, and this is the difference it is going to make for you. Do I have that correct?"

The person is going to say, "Yes," because that is what they have given you. Your next protocol then is, "If I could help you achieve x, y, and z, would that be of interest?" That is, you, ultimately asking for the business itself. Now, if you find you yourself can only help them with maybe x or y and you can't help them with z, but if you know somebody that can either solve the third thing that they want to achieve, you could either refer somebody into them, or you can give them a name of somebody else that you know is an expert in that field. Therefore, that is their problem solved and you can now start working on the other couple of problems that they actually have.

Once you have summarised that particular conversation, and you have said, "If I could help you with that, would you be interested?" That means that you are moving it to a point, whereby the person has come back and said, "Well, actually yes, I either do, yes, or no." It must be one or the other. It can't be a maybe. It has got to be from the point of view of, "Yes, I want you to help me with this," or, "Actually no. I do not want any help with that," which is highly unlikely.

Therefore, your next protocol is, what are the next steps? What do we do in order to actually start engaging with each other, to actually make you achieve the results that you want to achieve? That is the value conversation. The more you practice the value conversation with people, then the more it will feel less like a structure, or less robotic. Therefore, when you do have a real conversation with a potential client, well then it is going come across extremely well.

Now, everybody that I have worked with, from a client's perspective, that has implemented the value conversation, it has made a massive, massive difference to

them in getting new clients onboard. Now, I promised you at the very beginning of this video that I would explain, so how do I use this for past, and existing clients. Well, all you have to do is adapt the conversation from the point of view, "Well, Jon. We have been working together over the last six months. Out of everything that we have worked together on, what has been of most value to you?"

By asking that question, you are now reminding them of the value that you have delivered for them. Therefore, when you ask that question, "So, what has been of most value to you?" You can say, "What difference has that made for you, or for your business?" You are adapting that particular conversation for both an existing client, or past client, because you go to a past client and say, "When I was working with you, say two years ago, here are the things that we were working on, and here are the results we actually achieved. In all the conversation and in all the journeys that we had in me working with you, what has been the most value to yourself? And then, what is the difference that has made for you, in your business, or in your life?" That is how you can adapt the exact same conversation to an existing client, or to a past client.

When you're having that conversation with an existing client, there is the high likelihood that you could ask a question, "Is there anything else that you would like to change in your business? Is there anything else you would like to improve in your life, or your business?" Therefore, there is the potential of getting more business from working with that existing client, by having that conversation. That is why the value conversation is one of the most important things that you have got to take onboard, get practiced on, and start using with potential clients.

In the last video, I spoke about trade lists. The trade lists meaning, what is the source of your previous and past clients? What is the list of your key referrals, your key 100? What is the list of your target clients? Then I asked you to create your fast 50, meaning what are the meetings that you can start having, which are with fast 50 people? Therefore, when you start having the value conversation with those people, what you can open up is just a wonderland of potentiality for business coming into your business.

Please practice the value conversation. Get very, very comfortable with it, even practicing in front of a mirror, or practice with your colleagues, your friends, your partners, whoever it will be, in order to try and get familiar with it, so therefore you know how to have that conversation with a potential client, when it comes to it.

Thank you and I will see you in the next video.

Value Conversation

Successful Professionals don't sell, they coach buyers. By helping clients make the best decisions for themselves, we gain trust and add genuine value.

The professional asks them as soon as possible on the first consultation.

1. **How can I help you? (or What shall we talk about?)**

Contrast this approach with self-centred laptop presentations, history of the company, case studies, CVs of all the key consultants, etc.

2. **What works well already? (or What success have you had in dealing with this problem?)**

The rush to identify problems and solutions can show scant respect for the progress a client has already made. By taking our time with this step, we build real rapport and trust (as opposed to superficial body-language stuff) and therefore we are more likely to hear the real problems later. If writing a proposal, I suggest you add a section for this.

3. **If there was one thing you could change, what would it be?**

Take your time and allow them to think before answering. If the client comes up with a list, coach them gently to get to the root problem. Too often, we get so excited by the potential extent of the work, we gloss over this. This is where we help them clarify where the real root of the pain lies. If they do the analysis, there is a much greater probability that they will accept the eventual solution which they have played a part in developing.

4. **If we solved this, what difference would that make?**

This is where they come up with lots of benefits, and you write them all down - in their language. Feel free to repeat the question in several ways. Ask for the benefit of the benefit. Keep going until they cannot think of anything more. These are the reasons they will buy. You might also choose to ask them what would happen if the problem was not solved. This is useful if you suspect you might have to help them overcome later indecision - the greatest scourge of professional life!

5. **If I could help you with that, would you be interested?**

Either they are, or they aren't. There is little point in spending time on a solution where there is no genuine interest.

