

Dear Master Coach

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November 2014



Dear Master Coach:

How do I market my coaching business in order to attract my ideal clients? There are so many pushy sales and marketing tactics out there and I don't want to approach my potential clients that way, it's not who I am as a coach. How do I present myself authentically and still get the steady stream of clients I need to make my business financially sustainable?

Certified and Self-Effacing

Dear C&SE:

I know what you mean. Most coaches hate talking about themselves. But sadly, being certified doesn't make our phones ring. So here's the paradox: If we have a comfortable, calm and authoritative way of talking and writing about ourselves and what we do, clients are more able to find us and then to trust us. This is an iterative process, especially for new coaches who are rightly focused on just coaching a lot.

That said, here are five things that successful coaches do:

1. Listen (you're great at that, right?): It's far more endearing if we focus on coming up with great products and services for our clients than if we focus on the reverse.
2. Make sure your biggest fans and referrers (family, friends, colleagues, strategic alliances) know about your ideal client so they can connect the dots. They are already in your corner and will appreciate knowing how you can make them look good. (For me this has involved lunches, walks, complimentary sample sessions, Rotary presentations, auctions and hand-written thank you notes.)
3. Get great at improvising elevator speeches. (Check out my three-minute audio intro [here](#).)
4. Play this game: *You've got eight minutes in front of 100 great people. And embedded in the audience are ten ideal clients. (Also present are several people who have little interest in your services—this is normal, your best can't possibly appeal to everyone.) What will you say so that at the end of your eight minutes those ten people will seek you out and ask for your card?*
5. Spend at least a half-day a week on things like this until you've got a steady flow of increasingly ideal clients. Then keep doing it. Think of this as overcoming initial inertia and getting momentum on your side—like rowing a boat or riding a bike. Word-of-mouth will begin to happen.

Here's the key: You've got to do this stuff in your own way or you won't do it. Sadly the majority of certified coaches who want to be entrepreneurial coaches don't ever make the income they'd like to make. Those who do figure out a way for these five practices to be fun, personal and sustainable.

You can do it tiger.

PEB, MC

Listen to Patty's "Dear Master Coach" monthly 3-minute answers at: <http://www.seattlecoach.com/dearmastercoach.html>