

COACHING

What do you do?

By Michael DeVenney

IT IS SUCH A SIMPLE QUESTION YET HAS SUCH a difficult answer. Your answer is also pivotal to your success.

Being able to answer the question “what do you do?” in a way that is natural, compelling and differentiating will make an immediate impression on your audience and go a long way to making the first good emotional connection.

Think about the last time you attended a business dinner and were introduced to a significant prospect. You have been waiting for months for the opportunity to meet and dazzle her and now you have it. She smiles and asks you about yourself.

How do you reply?

Most of us stumble around and mumble something about being a financial advisor, an accountant or a lawyer with some firm.

How natural, compelling and differenti-

ating is that? What generally happens is she smiles politely and moves on.

“What do you do?” is a loaded question. The answer is not about you oddly enough. The right answer is about what you do for the person who is asking the question.

The answer to the question comes from knowing what makes you unique—it is simply how you position yourself to attract business. Look from the outside in rather than the inside out. Your unique selling position comes from your clients rather than from you.

Your unique selling position is a brief statement of four or so sentences that clearly and concisely captures the essence of what differentiates you from the market. It is a compelling message that you deliver consistently with passion, speed and confidence.

It's not a slogan.

Step one in forming your unique selling position is understanding what you do for clients and how these actions are of value to them. Remember, it is about them.

Write down the actions you take consistently to create success for clients. If you have trouble, go to the source—ask a few of your best clients. Now take the list and circle the common themes and key words that resonate with you. If you do not know the value you provide you will never be able to sell your value.

Next, think about what you do and provide as many responses as you can to the following statement for a prospect considering working with you: “you get...”

Finally you have to put it all together.

Your old response might be something like, “I provide a full financial plan, portfolio analysis and recommendations for security positions that fit your risk profile ...”

Oops, sorry, I already drifted off and started thinking about the crab puffs. Traditional answers almost always talk about process—you need to talk about emotions.

Try a different approach. “All my clients use my Financial Success Perspective. It's a three-step process I take to help you clarify, focus and follow through to see visible wins.”

Really, that sounds unique and I start thinking about what that would mean for me and you are already there.

“What's important for clients with Perspective is the confidence they gain. When you know exactly what decisions you need to make to get from where you are now to where you want to be, you just relax and enjoy the journey.”

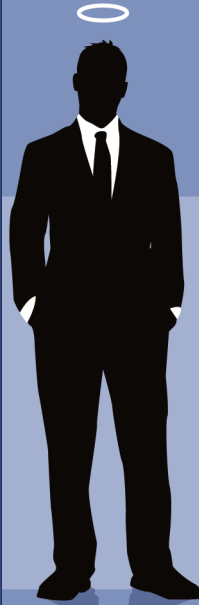
Now that's a sensational opportunity—how much would I like to enjoy the journey! Take the stress away and I am your client.

“It's all about confidence. The Perspective shows you how to always have a bigger future.”

Talk about a powerful promise. Confidence is the gold ring we all want. My next question is about how this would work for me. Whether I am a physician or not, it doesn't matter—I want to know if

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you can do this for me. I don't care which firm you are with—I just want you to help me.

Start by asking questions of your clients and yourself about what you do for them. Look at what is important and then just play putting four lines together.

Think about your unique advantage as what clients get from working with you. It is about the capability you provide, the creativity you bring with your instincts and habits that provides solutions for them—not services.

Invest the time. Answer the question.

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