

Your Insecurity Is Showing

By: Michelle Davidson

Some people seem to be natural-born sellers. They can walk into a room, strike up a conversation with anyone, and sell them anything.

Then there are those who never thought they'd be involved in sales, who struggle with marketing their services and having conversations with prospects. Often they lack confidence, are wary of talking about how they help clients, and back down when buyers push back on price. If they had their druthers, they'd simply do their work and people would find them and hire them. Unfortunately, it isn't that simple.

The good news is even the most timid service professionals can do things to improve their marketing and sales—and increase their confidence along the way.

Beef Up Your Online Presence: This is a simple one. Make sure the bio on your website, your LinkedIn profile, your Twitter profile, or other social media network are complete and includes compelling information that makes people think, “I want to work with that person.”

As Anne Scarlett says in her article *How to Remain Relevant In an Ever-Changing Business World*, “Are you findable? If someone were to search for you online, what would they discover? Would they think “*savvy, progressive, and intriguing*”? Or would they think “*outdated, stagnant, and stale*”? Or even worse, would they see very little—or nothing at all—about you?”

Before a buyer talks with you, chances are he will search for you online to make sure the conversation is worth his time. If he can't find you or doesn't like what he sees, chances are slim he will agree to the meeting let alone hire you.

Reach Out to Prospective Clients: It's tempting to rely on “if you build it, they will come” marketing. Yes, you need a strong online presence, but that alone will not generate new business. You have to reach out to people, says C.J. Hayden in her article

The 3 Rs of Professional Services Marketing.

“You do have to reach out and not simply wait and react, even though outreach is often more uncomfortable,” she says. “Build relationships, cultivate referrals, and reach out proactively to prospects and referral sources rather than waiting for them to find you.”

Schedule Time to Do Business: When you don’t feel comfortable doing something—or downright hate it—it’s tempting to push it off to the point you never do it. To prevent that from happening, schedule time to do business. Block off a certain amount of time each day and put it in your calendar. Make it a standing appointment that you must keep, suggests Scott Ginsberg in his article *Everything I Need to Know about Sales I Learned from Heath Ledger’s Joker*.

“When I first started my company, I knew money was the inevitable hurdle I was going to have to vault,” he says. “So, my mentor forced me to spend two hours a day, every day, asking customers to buy—in person, over the phone, via email—it didn’t matter. Every morning from 9-11 a.m., I put on my sales hat—and I hated every minute of it. Assigning monetary value to my intellectual property tied my guts into knots. In fact, every time I picked up the phone, I prayed for the call to go to voice mail. But that standing daily appointment was exactly what I needed to grow as an artist.”

Learn and Practice: Remember how you felt when you started a new job or took on new responsibilities on a project? You didn’t know the ropes yet and felt uncertain. But after learning what to do and doing the work for a while, your confidence rose, you became a master, and people began turning to you for help.

The same approach applies to sales. The more confident you are, the better you are in conversations with buyers. And to increase your confidence, it’s simply a matter of learning what to do and doing it, says Mike Schultz in his podcast interview *2 of the Biggest Mistakes Sellers Make During Negotiations*.

“After about 800 hours of negotiating or essentially half a full year of business—if you’re just negotiating—you start to get really good at it,” he says. “But you can start to get a lot more comfortable at it after doing it a few times and having some training to know what to do.”

Michelle Davidson was Editor of RainToday. As such, she oversaw all of the articles published on the website and published the weekly newsletter, the Rainmaker Report. She also produced the site's weekly podcast series, *RainToday's Sales Tips & Techniques Podcast*, and the site's webinars. You may contact her via Twitter at [@michedav](#).