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What to Say After Your Elevator Speech: The 30-Second Follow-Up

By Veronika (Ronnie) Noize, the Marketing Coach

Many of us spend a lot of time getting our ideal clients' attention by creating killer elevator speeches, but that's really only the beginning of the sales cycle. Once you've got their attention, how do you "tell them more" without getting the dreaded slack-jawed glazed-eye look of sheer boredom in response? Answer: You talk about their situation, and your solution to it, in more detail.

Now don't worry; it's not nearly as hard as it sounds! The good news is that using this simple five-step formula to create your 30-second follow-up will be easy compared to creating your elevator speech, and as a matter of fact, you're going to use some of the information you developed in that exercise.

Specifically, you're going to review the sections of the Killer Elevator Speech Tool that cover who your ideal client is, what your ideal client needs and wants, and what you do to fulfill both that need and the want. But first you're going to have to rephrase some of your elevator speech development material into a question that allows your prospect to further identify with your service, and that further qualifies that prospect for you. The best way to do that is with a common problem-solution scenario that you address in your business.

The Five Elements of Your 30-Second Follow-Up

The first element is your client description. Since you've already created your elevator speech, this should be a no-brainer for you. The second element is the situation, which describes the basic scenario or condition of the prospect. The third element is the barrier, which is what gets in the way of success and creates a problem. Often barriers are fears or deficits. The next element is the problem created by that barrier, and is what people want help with. Once the problem is identified, you present the final element, your solution.

Let's use my process as an example. As you know, my elevator speech is "I help small businesses attract more clients." When someone indicates interest, I respond with an identifying and qualifying question that goes like this: *"You know how some small businesses have a lot of passion around their product or service but they're scared of or hate the thought of marketing themselves so they never really build up that business to the level of success that they want or need it to be?"* followed by the briefest of pauses.

This question paints a picture of the client (small businesses), the situation (more passion around the product or service than confidence or expertise in their marketing skills), the barrier (fear or lack of knowledge of marketing) that most of my clients feel, and the result of that barrier which is the key problem (not getting enough clients to build the business) and allows my prospect to see clearly what (and who) I'm talking about.

In addition to creating an identification feeling that reinforces the potential of us doing business together, this specific description of the situation reduces the need for my prospect to admit any anxiety he or she may have around the problem.

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The slight pause allows my prospect to imagine the scenario that I'm describing, and picture herself in that position. I know when she has done so when I receive some sort of confirmation, which can be as simple as a raised eyebrow, a nod, a smile, or sometimes as enthusiastic as a verbal response such as "Do I? That's totally me!"

After receiving confirmation that my prospect understands (and hopefully, identifies with) what I've said, I continue my follow-up with a short outline of my solution to my clients' problems. (This is also a great time to introduce my job title.)

"Well, I'm a marketing coach. Through personal coaching or classes, I help my clients identify and leverage their natural strengths so that they can market their businesses comfortably and with integrity, and get all the clients they want more quickly and easily than before."

At this point, either the person I'm talking to has questions or wants to tell me about her situation, so the conversation proceeds naturally from there.

Using the Formula

Here's a tool that you can use to apply your solution to your prospects' problems:

1. The client description: _____

Example: *Small businesses*

2. The situation: _____

Example: *More passion around service than confidence around marketing*

3. The barrier: _____

Example: *Fear, dislike or ignorance of how to market easily and effectively*

4. The problem: _____

Example: *Not enough clients*

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5. The solution addresses all four previous elements: _____

Example: "I help my clients identify and leverage their natural strengths so that they can market their businesses comfortably and with integrity, and get all the clients they want more quickly and easily than before."

Three Common Mistakes

Although this looks like a very simple formula, it can be messed up very easily. Here's how:

1. Not including the problem that you solve, like "You know how new entrepreneurs don't like to market their businesses?" I can't make people LIKE to market, but I can reframe how they see and do their marketing, so this question isn't going to get me anywhere.
2. Using too vague of a sample scenario, like "You know how people have to market their businesses?" Of course everyone needs to market, but so what? Without identifying the pain of the process (be it marketing or whatever), there's no problem to solve.
3. Speaking in one long sentence, without waiting for any sign of recognition. If you don't wait for the response, you aren't allowing them the time to identify with your scenario. And if they're not identifying or understanding it, they won't see value in your service for themselves or anyone they might know.

This article was written by Veronika (Ronnie) Noize, the Marketing Coach. Ronnie's web site is a comprehensive marketing resource for small office/home office business professionals. For free marketing resources including articles and valuable marketing tools, visit her web site at www.VeronikaNoize.com, or email her at Ronnie@VeronikaNoize.com.

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