

OfflineBiz.com

The Power of Good Questions

You can also access this list for easy copy/paste/editing here:

<http://www.OfflineBiz.com/JimsList.txt>

Use the questions on this handout to land clients by making them think you are amazing. Most business owners have never sat through an interview session anything like this. Your tips and insights along the way will BLOW their MIND!

Before arranging the meeting ensure all decision makers will be present. Tell them that you'll be asking questions that will require the input of just about everyone that has anything to do with sales and marketing of the business.

Tell them you expect the questions to go about 60-80 minutes if you keep it moving. This keeps you in charge of the meeting. If all goes well it could and probably will go FAR longer.

Restrain yourself from making suggestions or offering up ideas during the interview. Just take tons of notes. Record the meeting if possible. If you do make a comment keep it VERY short.

Only ask RELEVANT questions of course and adapt these questions to your scenario.

Tell them that you got these questions from an online organization of professional Internet Marketers and that the answers can be used to evaluate and advise business clients of many high ROI (return on investment) marketing opportunities and “profit leaks” that they are likely unaware of.

GENERAL:

Give me an overview of the business.

What is the biggest struggle your business is facing?

What is the brightest point of your business (what's going well)?

If you don't mind me asking...What is your “exit strategy” for this business (only ask business owner this in private)? How long until then?

How do you plan to make it more valuable in the near and long term future?

Have you done a SWOT analysis lately? (Strength, weakness, opportunity, threats)

CUSTOMERS:

Describe your perfect customer.

What type of customer do you NOT want?

Do you ever fire customers?

Do you currently get too many “bad” customers?

Do you have a special way to recognize your top customers?

What would your top customers say about you? Have you asked?

Who talks to your customers the most frequently?

Who else from your company deals directly with the end customers and prospects?

PRODUCTS OFFERED:

What does your average customer spend with you and what is the profit margin.
Are any of your products 'repeat purchase' type products?
What are your most profitable products?
Do you ever close business over the Internet?
What products are sold online vs. offline?
What percentage of each would you estimate?

MARKETING/ADVERTISING:

What types of advertising are you currently using?
How do you feel about each of the approaches you've taken?
What is the ROI of your current advertising efforts? (*they won't know – ask them to estimate*)
What was the ROI in the past as compared to now?
What are you spending on your yellow page advertising?
What was the biggest waste of advertising dollars that you ever did? (*tells you a lot about them*)
What are your most successful marketing and advertising efforts?
How do you use testimonials in marketing currently?
Do you have a referral program that rewards customers for sending you business? If so, explain how it works and how well it has worked in the past.

WEBSITE:

What do you love about your current website?
What do you hate about it?
How do you feel overall about your current website?
Who designed your website?
Do you have a good relationship with them (*still want to use them?*)
Who is in charge of website maintenance?
How much traffic does your site get (*they'll say “not much”*)
Why do you think that is?
Do you track that in any way?
What have others told you about generating leads and traffic on the Internet?
Have you ever paid anyone to market your site for you?
How did that go?

ONLINE MARKETING

Have you done any social marketing (Facebook, twitter, youtube etc.)?
Have you ever used article marketing or press releases online?
Have you ever had a newsletter for your customers?
Do you currently get any business from your website or online marketing?
What do customers see when they Google or Yahoo or MSN search your business? (*show them – have it printed out just in case you need it*)
Are you using e-mail marketing in any way in your business?

LEADS & LEAD MANAGEMENT

What is the top source currently of your best leads?
Have you ever done a joint venture with a business that shares your same customer base?
Do you have a sales funnel for business? (low price products that lead to larger priced products for the higher end more loyal/interested customers)
What is the standard telephone greeting when a prospect or customer calls?

How do you manage Prospect follow-up?

Who talks to your prospects most frequently?

Are you using email to follow up with prospects?

What are the top questions you get in your sales process?

What are the top questions you'd like to get in your sales process?

Are you paying for leads from any other sources? What do you pay? What is the ROI?

COMPETITION:

Be prepared to show them what competitors are doing things better than they are from an Internet Marketing perspective. Take along proof (search engine rankings, youtube video screen shots, facebook account data etc.)

In what areas are you better than your competition?

In what ways are you weaker?

What is your market share?

What is your perceived "rank" among your competition.

BUDGET:

(Move to this section of the talk ONLY IF or WHENEVER you are starting to get momentum. If you feel like they are really starting to "see the light" move to this section and then move back to the other questions. If the questions aren't generating some flashes of awe in their eyes you may never get to this section.)

What is your current marketing and advertising budget?

Are you open to a profit sharing type of arrangement if I'm able to offer one? If so, would you be willing to share your accountant prepared tax documents with me so we can track growth? ***(Don't discuss details now – just get the answer so you can make up your mind later)***

Are you open to paying 50% up front for my services if we make that arrangement?

Are you open to bartering for services?