



Get New Business Now!

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By Greg Schenk, SIOR, CNE

In today's uncertain economic climate companies are simply tired of being sold. Therefore, if you want to get new business, you may have to do a few things differently. I've highlighted the most important characteristics to adopt in order to be successful and generate business.

To begin, don't just be a salesperson, be an advisor, or consultant—someone your clients trust. Be a consultant first and a “resultant” second. This means finding out about their needs, short and long term goals, and exploring what their true priorities are for 2012. We use our client profile form that you can view at irephtenant.com (under "Getting Started"), which is a question and answer form to learn as much about them as possible. Most agents are just trying to sell someone something whether that means getting a listing or a tenant rep assignment. If you come across as a consultant thinking long term and looking at the bigger picture more prospects will become clients and consulting clients. Recently a client of ours did not know whether to lease or purchase a new facility and they had tried to make a smart decision on their own for two years. We came in and did a lease v.s. buy analysis for them, showed them options for both, and found them the perfect solution very quickly. We didn't try to sell them on one option or the other, we let the options and market speak for itself and only gave our opinion when asked or needed. This can be especially important when dealing with big ego CEOs and CFOs. Once we understand their true goals we can discuss expected results and then become a “resultant” by doing just that—whether that means doing a lease buyout, renewal, or relocation to lease or purchase.

In order to excel as a consultant you must work on your listening skills. I suggest you adopt the famous proverb, "God gave us two ears and only one mouth, that we should listen twice as much as we speak." If you are talking, then you aren't doing a good job listening, and you will never fully understand your client and what he or she needs. As your clients' advisor, you need to be their ultimate service provider. Seek first to understand, then be understood, meaning learn as much about the client as possible. Most agents are trying to sell themselves or their firm, and are not putting the focus on the client where it should be. Clients really don't care about your awards, company size, etc, they want to know that you understand the market, know the process and care about THEM! Once they believe this then you can tell them about yourself and your firm. I believe learning to excel in the skill of listening without the need to reply is one of the most important lessons I have learned throughout life and have helped me to succeed and reach my goals and dreams.

Live with an attitude of gratitude and get motivated. Most people take much of life for granted. In an instant things can change very quickly; a death, illness, divorce, or injury. I have been through them all and for a long time didn't live with this saying. I recently heard a great motivator, Dr. Kevin Elko (see www.drelko.com), who, during the dark gray days of winter, gave my attitude the nudge it needed. His words of encouragement to never quit, be open minded, and to keep your eye on the prize (goals), hit a nerve with me to continue to preserve no matter how hard the day or struggle. This helped me beyond belief! My biggest client transaction ever took me five years to get in the door, five years of being persistent, keeping up with various groups in one firm, until I finally got

assignment. It turned out to be a \$20 million lease and it enabled me to then start my own firm. So by living with this “attitude of gratitude, having that positive helpful attitude toward others and being persistent enough to keep my eye on the prize, I was able to reach my dreams and goals! You can too!

One of the most important things I teach is being both a “master of the market” and a “master of the process.” Being a master of the market means knowing your niche in the market better than anyone else. I specialize in office space tenant representation. I study each and every building and landlord in my market and insure I know it inside and out, forward and backward. Being a master of the process means knowing the process step-by-step, detail-by-detail of what you need to do for your client to make their experience with you pleasurable so you will have them, their company, and their contacts as clients for life! To do this, you need to ask the right questions and learn as much as you can about your clients and the market. Avoid the "Yes" or "No" responses and get the detail you need. Learn the skill of asking open-ended, leading questions such as: who, what, where, when, why and how.

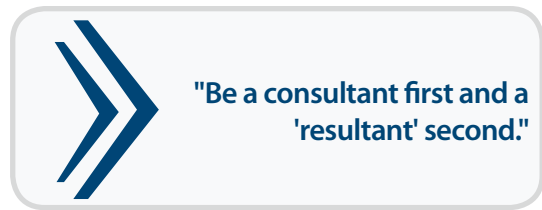
To be a “relationship oriented” consultant, it’s important to take a relationship approach to business, compared to the transaction approach that many agents have tried for years without much success. To do this you must:

Understand Your Prospective Clients’ Real Estate Needs

This takes time and due diligence, and the process should start immediately. Today, with Google, social networking, and your contacts there is no excuse to skip the research. Take the time to learn about your clients before you meet with them.

Get to Know Your Clients’ Trusted Advisors

After 25 years of assisting clients I have found that their most trusted advisers are typically their attorneys, accountants, bankers or spouses (for privately held firms). Get to know these people and your halfway there to long term success! There are many ways to getting to know these important “trusted advisors of potential clients.” I use three ways: writing articles, speaking and meeting with them. Each week my goal is to meet new trusted advisors in each category, write a new article, blog and speak to one of their offices or associations. Why is this important? Because these advisors are the ones that will introduce you to their clients and that introduction makes or breaks you for any new business!



Understand What is Important to Your Clients

Now that you understand the skills and characteristics to adopt when interacting with your clients, you must ensure that you gain the following information from each and every client in order to make the transaction a success:

Their short and long term strategic plans and goals, including:

- What product type they are interested in?
- What current needs or services they are interested in?
- The desired property location
- The size of the property needed
- What kind of personnel count do they have?
- Parking needs?
- Space usage?
- Location preference?
- How long do they want to lease?
- When is their desired occupation date?
- Are there any specific floor plan requirements? Warehouse space requirements?

Once you know all of this information and let the client know you want to become one of their trusted advisers, then their wall usually comes down. This doesn’t always happen right away, but if you put the client first, you will be well on your way to growing new business.

Most agents had a very tough past few years, yet our business has continued to thrive using this method without excessive marketing material, over-the-top offices, and huge advertising budgets. It has become clear to us that in times of economic uncertainty, our clients value trust over everything else.

For more information and to watch a brief video we did on office planning, please visit <http://www.ibswebsite.com/Commercial-Real-Estate.html> This video will help you understand how to best help your clients now to improve their bottom line. 