

FINDING YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

By understanding your *unconscious competence*, you can take your business to the next level.

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Can you think of a time when you received a genuine and heartfelt compliment or a rave review from a happy client that made you scratch your head and wonder why someone would be pointing out what seems to you to be obvious and just old-fashioned ‘good business?’ Perhaps you’ve caught yourself laughing off or minimizing a compliment by thinking or saying something like “Oh, people tell me that all the time. It’s no big deal, really, it’s just what I do.”

Stop. Hold the presses. Rewind.

Read back through that statement: People tell you that all the time? When you’re receiving a compliment or a review that your clients go out of their way to share – and what they’re praising doesn’t feel remotely exciting or abnormal to you – that is a clear indicator that you are standing stolidly in an area that I call unconscious competence.

Unconscious competence is the thing that we are best at that is so much a part of who we are, how we interact with the world and what we bring to the table that we hardly even notice it. It’s almost as though it’s built into our DNA and feels completely natural – like no big deal at all.

The thing is, when we have multiple different people telling us – in different situations, with different words, for different reasons – that a certain trait or quality or thing that we do is unique and valuable to them, we should listen. It means that what feels completely natural to you is not something that comes naturally – or even at all – to others. It is the sharpest side of your competitive edge.

You might be wondering what all this has to do with running your Home Professionals business and with being able to attract and to retain clients. Let me tell you the story of one of my clients, Jami. Jami owns a window coverings business. She has been in business for 15 years and always felt very pressured by pricing

conversations. After working more closely with me, Jami began to see how her own unconscious competencies trickled into her business. Jami likes to make life easy for her clients. She’s always delighted when she is able to exceed their expectations, especially if any issues arise with the product in the long-term. Problem solving and finding over-and-above solutions for clients is just what she does. She thought it was normal, that everyone did it and she would hardly mention it to new leads at all. She glazed over it with the generic label of ‘excellent service.’

The thing about excellent service is that almost any business that is trying to do their best can say that about itself. It’s so common. It’s so common, in fact, that it’s nearly meaningless and carries very little impact. Jami’s commitment to service, however, was truly extraordinary.

After 15 years of building her business in one fairly small geographic area, Jami’s family relocated to a big city 15 hours away from her base of business. One day she got a call from one of her longest-standing clients saying a shade she had installed stopped working. But the shade was way out of warranty and would need to be returned to the factory for a repair. Jami walked her client through uninstalling the shade, shipped her a custom box, with the shipping labels and fully completed return authorization paperwork inside, and arranged for UPS pick up the package at her door. When the shade came back to the client, in full working order, Jami sent



her installer back out to the home to reinstall the product. That is a commitment to service way over and above what is usual.

It was something that her clients noticed and praised but that Jami took simply for granted. "I take good care of my clients. It makes me happy and that's just what I do," she said. The truth is, she did so much more. When she began to realize that her level of service in the face of issues exceeded even top expectations, she began to feature that as part of her value proposition. She began to lead with the fact that, even 15 years later, she would make any issues as easy and hassle free as possible. Being a problem-solver and a facilitator were her unique areas of unconscious competence and, when she was able to identify them, she could draw the conscious parallel for her clients.

When you understand, from the perspective your clients, what is so unique and valuable about interacting with the business that you have built, you begin to speak their language more, to highlight what is important to them and to attract more and more of your Ideal Clients.

You can create a story – a compelling story – to support why you are different and how working with you will provide to your ideal client exactly what it is that they need, want and value the most.

Understanding your unconscious competence at a profound level allows you to be a beacon that attracts the people for whom those traits and qualities will most resonate – and will most quickly translate into their best service experience.

Think about it this way. Let's imagine your ideal client is retired Baby Boomer who has many good years ahead, but wants to know that things will always be handled well and easily. He's handy but doesn't really want to spend his time tinkering around the house any more. He'd rather spend his time golfing, knowing that everything at home is taken care of. If your company, like Jami's, is all about being there for the long term and making things easier for your clients, then telling that story will attract your ideal client because what you're offering is going to resonate and they will want to hire you.

On the other hand, a woman in her late-20s who is living somewhere for a relatively brief period of time and who simply wants a quick, inexpensive solution may not resonate with your long term relationship-building approach. She may be placing higher value on other elements. That is not to say that you could not sell your product to her and end up with a happy client, but knowing who is going to value and benefit most from what comes most naturally to you will help you hone your marketing, highlight your product and service offerings, and attract more of

your ideal clients – who will provide you with more of the projects you love to do.

When you are unaware of, or do not take advantage of your greatest gifts – as seen through the eyes of your happy clients – you will find yourself attracting fewer clients who fit your ideal profile.

When you have not taken the time to understand the core values and the unconscious competence of your business, or to clearly articulate the traits and qualities of your ideal client, you are shooting at a target blindfolded. Take off the blindfold. Look at yourself. Think back to the most common compliments you get and you'll see how your greatest strengths (and your unconscious competence) show up in your business.

Think back to the client who you most loved working with. Develop that person into your ideal picture of a client. Spend time thinking about life through their lens. Think about how what you have to offer fits into what they're looking for, what they're thinking about, what they're concerned with, and what they are afraid of. Answer their questions before they even ask them!

When you do those simple steps and work on your business in this way, you'll be able to speak the language of your ideal client in a whole new manner – a manner that attracts more of them to you more often.

