

## **Develop your Relationship with your Client beyond Their Wallet**

We all WANT advisors who are experts in their field, but we also want them to be someone with whom we are able to form a personal relationship. We want advisors to learn about our immediate needs and our desires for the future; we want them to make recommendations that give us the ability to achieve personal goals. We would like for them to know enough about us that their recommendations are specifically in our best interest – particularly when we don't know enough ourselves to make the best decision. We want this of our doctors, our lawyers, our accountants, and our financial advisors. To find these people, we typically ask friends for recommendations of the experts they trust. Building quality relationships will ensure your clients are recommending you as the financial advisor that they trust when these discussions take place.

In Lance Armstrong's book, *It's Not About the Bike*, he describes his cancer, his training, and the people that are part of his advisory team. He has doctors with whom he has built relationships that take his call in the middle of the night. His coaches do the same thing. He knows they want the best possible outcome for him and he acknowledges them as key contributors to every win. A financial advisor can be as instrumental to an individual's financial success as Lance Armstrong's doctors and coaches are to his many achievements.

Individual financial decisions are highly personal. A financial advisor often knows more about this area of their client's personality, goals, and fears than any other person in their life. This trust brings with it a unique responsibility to learn the driving forces behind your clients' desires and make recommendations that build toward successful wins.

So, what changes the dynamic in the minds of clients so they know that you want only the best for their unique mix of goals and challenges? How do you build trust in the relationship so they get the message? The **personal touch** is key to building relationships that have the level of trust necessary to achieve the results for your clients that lead to success.

Relationships are built on small acts of thoughtfulness. Think about the ways that you contact your clients and show your appreciation. Make your connection strategy include "non-business" touches. For example, make a phone call to discover personal challenges or celebrations that are happening; ask about their significant other, kids, grandkids, and hobbies and keep notes in your database of their points of interest. Listen carefully and follow up with a handwritten note to acknowledge what was said.

A highly effective tool to touch emotions and build relationships is the handwritten note. It can include an article of interest or simply show your appreciation. In our fast-paced world, a handwritten note has the ability to cut through the clutter of ordinary mail. With more than a 99% open rate, an odd sized envelope with a handwritten recipient name and address will be opened and read; this is a key way to make sure an important message gets seen by your client.

In their book, *Building Your Multi-Million Dollar Practice*, Peter and Katherine Vessenes, Minneapolis-based Registered Financial Consultants, strongly urge personal notes as the "*quick and easy way to forge a closer bond with your clients.*"

Authors Ron Carson (CFP®, CFS, ChFC) and Steve Danduski (MBA, CFP®) explore “Love-Affair Marketing” in their book, ***Tested in the Trenches: A 9-Step Plan for Building and Sustaining a Million-Dollar Financial Services Practice.*** Key to this philosophy is “*doing things so extraordinary, so unexpected, and so genuine, that your clients will become your evangelists and will send you referrals of people just like themselves.*” They go on to say, “*In the age of e-mail, the lost art of the handwritten note is more appreciated than ever. Get in the habit of sending your clients handwritten notes and thank you letters and they will be the ones thanking you.*”

The personal touch can make the difference when a potential client is comparing services with several firms and individual financial advisors. A key to building a successful practice as a financial advisor is to retain the clients that you already have while at the same time developing new ones. To build your business the quickest and easiest way, make sure your marketing budget includes the necessary investment of time and money to reach out to your existing clients. Multiple avenues of touch are important, but **the personal touch is crucial.**

As you plan for the new year, set your goal to **Develop the Relationship with your Client Beyond Their Wallet.** Incorporate the highly personal touch of handwritten notes to build each relationship with small acts of kindness and caring throughout the year. Make 2007 the best year yet!

*Vanessa Lowry is a connection expert and owner of Profits in Progress which helps businesses incorporate the dynamic tool of handwritten notes into their marketing and connections strategies to build relationships and make more money. Their unique Note-Working Success System<sup>™</sup> is designed to help you write 3 notes a day in less than 10 minutes. She can be contacted at [vlowry@profitsinprogress.com](mailto:vlowry@profitsinprogress.com) or 678-521-8820. Visit [www.ProfitsinProgress.com](http://www.ProfitsinProgress.com) for more information and be sure to tell them Paragon Resources referred you as they offer a 10% discount when you use promo code “Paragon.”*