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I am Jim Natichioni of RightLivelihood.com and I have written the inspirational book: **Finding Your Path, Tales of Right Livelihood.** This excerpt is from Chapter Eight: “Sales and Marketing Strategies” and relates to passion for sales and entrepreneurship. To read more please visit RightLivelihood.com.

Finding your path and right livelihood: There is nothing ‘right’ about a business that flops, and rest assured your business will fail without a constant stream of clients. Failure is when the push forward of our wants doesn’t overcome the push back of our fears. The thought of marketing turns a lot of people off because of the stigma attached to advertising. There is a reason for that stigma but there is also a reason not to buy into it. Every successful person in this book, from the monks to the executives, is in his or her own way proficient at marketing. We will explore both appropriate and inappropriate approaches and motives. To help you determine if you fit in the competitive world of entrepreneurship this chapter starts off with a sales aptitude test. You can’t fight who you are; if you don’t believe in the process, the value of your service and the indispensability of the profession then you probably don’t fit. If you do believe then get out there and sell yourself. The rest of the chapter has fun with a subject that most people find boring but that I find most intriguing.

The do’s and don’ts of selling:

Not everyone is cut out to sell or to motivate the public to buy. A great deal of disappointment might be avoided if some kind of board required all aspiring entrepreneurs to take a simple interview before they began their enterprise. Not one of those tests that tell applicants what ‘type’ or ‘character’ they match, what their ‘sales IQ’ amounts to, the composition of their predispositions, or what occupation fits them. Either the tester or the tested can easily manipulate such measurements. How do you definitively measure something as amorphous as character or aptitude, traits that only real-life conditions can truly measure?

The business of lead generation (finding clients) is the business of entrepreneurs. Of course, as the boss you can hire sales people to work for you. But the best owners have the skills to sell snowshoes to Islanders. Every calling comes with a constellation of associated tasks. In this imaginary interview by a board, each major task would be defined, each sales strength and weakness of the entrepreneur dissected. Please keep in mind as you read along that the thread that links the amateur entrepreneur and the ill-suited salesperson is me. It is one thing to know the principals of sales and another to integrate them.

The mock interview that forecasts your sales aptitude:

Let’s start with the questions. Are you willing and able to: sit at a desk most of the day; make daily prospecting calls to friends and strangers; learn systems and models

thoroughly and practice them until you master each; operate within the structure of these tried, tested systems instead of from your own idealized version of entrepreneurship; join clubs, socialize until you drop and network as a way of life? Are you willing to introduce everyone to the ‘opportunity’, and pop into all manner of places to enlighten those who have not yet had the good fortune to meet you? Sales and marketing, in order to work, require disciplined people willing to ingrain a myriad of bold habits into their identity. They may do this with ‘the big picture’ in mind. Successful entrepreneurs do not simply sell to a client; they build a long-term relationship between their customer and their company.

Within any company, an expansive view of the marketplace must begin at the top and trickle all the way down to the salesman in the field. Many years ago, Royal Dutch Shell conducted a study on why some companies last for centuries and others go out of business quickly. They concluded that those that endure have a charismatic leader who establishes a guiding ethic for those who will follow. The long-lasting businesses survived the upheavals of the market place because they did not merely *achieve* their goals they *became* their goals. Successful businesses focused on interacting with the world, not merely on providing one specific commodity. These companies always had a purpose and an agenda to guide them.

The wherewithal to look at the big picture:

According to marketing aficionado Jay Abraham, most sales people focus on the generic commodity value they sell instead of on the more encompassing contribution they make to their clients’ lives. The moment a salesperson alters their thinking from say, being a shoe salesperson to being a *trusted provider* for their friends’ and family’s total foot-care needs, their business will change for the better. When you change your perspective of your self-worth, you look at your clients as valued friends who depend on you to continue providing your product or service.

You would not want a friend to make a poorly informed, costly mistake on a purchase would you? Abraham recommends a formal, ongoing client-referral system, as referrals by nature are self-perpetuating. This system can be started by simply asking for referrals every day, to every prospect or client you communicate with. Webster defines a customer as a person who purchases a commodity or service while a client is a person who is under the protection of another. Abraham’s law is that regardless of what you call them, *think* of them as clients, and think *about* them often.

Are you the type of person that others frequently call, or who calls people frequently? Before you make a cold call do you think: “I don’t want to annoy them”, or, “maybe I’ll lose their respect”, or, “they probably don’t need my services anyway”? How do you feel about life insurance, widgets, automobiles, etc.? Do you tend to force the issue, or do you interact patiently with prospects? When you do meet people, do you