

## Reaching new prospects with valuable (for them) ideas

To reach prospective clients, you can demonstrate to a targeted group how using your method and specific knowledge will benefit them. At a minimum, this strategy starts good relationships with prospective clients. It can also lead directly and quickly to new projects for new clients.

Here's what one firm did. In half a day, a few people applied its methods to generate hypotheses about the prospect's product. Next, it called a few customers and non-customers of the prospect to ask a couple of questions suggested by the thinking. And then the firm emailed the head of the prospect company, saying:

"We have applied a very simple version of our methodology to your situation. By doing so, we have developed some insights and some ideas you might find interesting. You may not have asked the questions that we do, and it could be valuable for you to hear what your customers were telling us. Would you like to meet to talk about it?"

The answer was almost always "yes," and a fruitful dialogue and work often followed.

### Preparing your material

Your demonstration, in whatever format you use, includes:

1. An idea about a problem they likely have - "our perspective on X"
2. What to do about it -- how a company in the target industry (or a specific company) could take advantage of the idea
3. What "trying it out" yields and an estimate of the potential value to be gained from a more thorough effort.

You probably have ideas and methodology. The new steps are:

- Being creative about finding an easy way to approximate your work and
- Being bold enough to invest in applying it to a prospect you don't know

### Using what you have created

Use the fruits of your demonstration to reach out to people. If the demonstration is company-specific,

you call them or email them. You will be asking for a discussion if they'd like to see your results and if the described payoff seems big to them.

If your demonstration is industry-specific, you can create or buy a list of people in the industry to contact. As in any campaign, it's wise to think of each contact as a step in a process. The first step might be an email, with a plan to follow up with phone calls or other emails.

If you are sending something or presenting something, it's worth making what you share look good too, so it represents the quality of work that you do.

### **The payoff for you**

The biggest payoff would be work from prospects who are impressed with you and your thinking. But other benefits accrue too. Doing this kind of preparation and campaign:

- Stimulates you to broaden and organize your thinking
- Gets you to think about quantifying payoff
- Gets you talking to new people. It provides a reason and a calling card for talking to people you don't know. You can build your network with people who you could help. Even if they don't bite now (and most won't), they are still exposed to you and your thinking in a provocative and useful way.

### **Don't you do this already?**

This may not be that different from what you do when presented with a prospective client who you know is looking to hire someone -- you learn about their business and apply your approach to them. The difference is that you are doing this for a prospect in whom you are interested who has not expressed a need.

### **What to do this week**

This isn't a one-week project -- but you can still start now. Identify how you could apply some version of your methodology to a prospect. Would you be better off:

- Applying the methodology to specific prospects - and going after them one-by-one, or
- Applying the methodology within an industry, so that what you present is more like a "case study" that is highly relevant to the prospects, rather than something specifically about their company?

An "industry" approach is usually less work for you and also less compelling.

Also begin to think about which prospects might be interesting targets for this approach.

### **What are these tips?**

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