

The right strategies to address your challenges

The best strategies for your business development depend on the services you provide and on the mindset of your prospective clients. If most of your prospects know their need and are already looking for someone like you to address it, you'll need one set of strategies. If your prospects aren't looking already for what you offer, you'll need a different set of strategies.

When prospects are already looking for someone like you

Typically, prospects will be looking for you if you offer a well-known solution to an easily identified problem. For example, someone wanting to build a distinctive building would likely be searching for an architect. Or someone dealing with taxes as they expand overseas would be trying to find an accounting firm with capabilities in the countries they are going to.

When prospects are already looking for someone like you, you want them to be able to find you as easily (or more easily) than they can find anyone else. Some ways to make yourself easy to find include:

- Build an outstanding brand name, so anyone who thinks about your field will think about you
- Start and maintain relationships over a long period of time with prospective clients so you are top of mind to them
- Be a towering expert who will show up in any quick internet search of your field
- Invest in search engine optimization (and related tactics that make your website show up higher in searches), so anyone searching will find you in the first page of their web search. You want to be positioned well on both problem-focused keywords and solution-focused keywords.

If making yourself easy to find is important because prospects are already looking for someone like you, then pick 1-2 of these strategies that you can consistently execute.

Related but more challenging is when your prospects are typically aware of their pain, but not so clear on the solution. Then you will also want to help them (probably on your website) with tools and approaches to diagnose their situation. With these tools and approaches, you can begin to help them and be of value even when they are just getting to know you.

When prospects not looking for someone like you (yet)

If most of what you do is address opportunities (or pains that are lower in priority for prospects) prospects are not likely to be looking actively for solutions. In this situation, your challenge is gaining access to the problem-owner and convincing them that the opportunity is big enough to be worth addressing (even though they have fires to fight every day and already established priorities). You also need to show them that with your help they can successfully capture the opportunity; they may believe they lack the organizational capacity to execute, no matter how good or big the opportunity. For example, if capturing the opportunity requires changing the company's IT system they may simply have to wait several months or years. Or it might require help from other people in the organization who are busy doing something else.

If people are not actively looking for solutions, you need strategies to get in the door and to help them understand the potential your offering provides. Strategies might include:

- Providing directly applicable examples that apply your knowledge to their situation (or something very close to their situation) (See [Reaching new prospects with valuable \(for them\) ideas](#) for more information)
- Offering diagnostics or benchmarks that let you compare their performance with outstanding performance
- Getting referrals
- Taking advantage of appointment-setting services or other tools that let you reach out to many people without using your own time to do it.

Your approach also needs to help them with the challenge of inadequate organizational capacity. You can overcome low organizational capacity by packaging your service so that the prospect's organization can outsource all of it to you, with minimal involvement by people in the organization.

What to do this week

Take a look at your mix of client work. How much is of it is providing a well-known solution to a well-known problem? How much is helping people with new opportunities and/or lower priority issues that will require convincing them of importance and urgency of addressing the issue -- as well as convincing them to do it with you? Many professionals and firms have situations of both kinds, and the mix may change over time.

Then, decide if you have the right tools in place for the challenges you face. Which tools do you want to beef up, and which tools can you de-emphasize?

What are these tips?

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