

Sales Solutions

Establish credibility at the outset of a new career

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - January 27, 2006

by [Andrea Sittig-Rolf](#)

Question: I've been in sales for 10 years and am thinking of starting my own consulting firm. How do I establish credibility with potential clients when in the beginning I'll have no work history as a company?

Answer: Congratulations on your decision to enter the exciting world of entrepreneurialism! Being self-employed can be very challenging and rewarding at the same time. In order to get started as a new company, there are a number of things you can do to establish credibility with potential clients before you even open your doors.

Although you don't yet have a proven track record as a consulting firm, you do have a proven track record of 10 years worth of work experience, and you can use that to your advantage when starting your new company.

First, solicit testimonials from your top 10 contacts, including colleagues, networking partners and customers. Ask them about their experience in working with you. Ask for both general feedback that speaks to your character such as your work ethic, follow-up, organization, attention to detail, and professionalism. Also ask for feedback regarding specific projects you've worked on with each of your contacts.

All of this information will help you create the initial content for your marketing material and Web site. As a single-person consulting firm what you are selling first is you, before you will have a chance to sell your services.

When writing the content for your marketing materials and Web site about the consulting services you will offer, include the general character feedback you've received from your contacts as testimonials highlighted in your materials. What others say about you is extremely powerful, so use the positive feedback you receive from your contacts as a sales and marketing tool to establish credibility.

Next, using the feedback you receive about specific projects you've worked on with your contacts, create case studies that show the ultimate results of the projects you discuss in your marketing materials. Items to include in your case studies should look something like this:

- Name of project
- Challenge to be solved
- Solution you provided
- Result of your solution
- Testimonial from contact who you worked with on the project

The projects you choose to highlight as case studies in your marketing materials should be relevant to the consulting services you will offer in your new business. So, for instance, if you're going to offer sales training, choose a project to use as a case study that speaks to your ability and experience as a sales trainer. If you're going to help businesses create new revenue streams, highlight a project you've done that showcases your ability in that area. Or, if you're going to offer one-on-one sales coaching, choose a project to highlight as a case study to show the results you've created in that area, and so on.

You don't have to have history as a "company," if you have successful work history as a salesperson, to establish credibility with new prospects and customers as you start your new business. Potential customers want to know what positive results you've created for others that you will create for them, regardless of your being a "company" or a salesperson at the time you created the positive results.

ANDREA SITTIG-ROLF is a public speaker, author, and president of Sittig Inc., a sales training and consulting firm. Her new book, "Business-to-Business Prospecting: Innovative Techniques to Get Your Foot in the Door with Any Prospect" (Aspatore Books) is available on Amazon.com. Reach her at 206-769-4886 or www.sittiginc.com, and send your "Sales Solutions" questions to info@sittiginc.com.