

Coach? So What?

By Charlie Lang, Executive Coach & Trainer @ Progress-U Ltd.

THE SUCCESSFUL NETWORKER...



Coach? So What?

You are a life coach, an executive coach, a corporate coach, a fitness coach, a personal coach, a financial coach, an image coach...

Sorry, if I forgot to mention the specific type of coach you are.

Whether you have just completed your coaching education or are already a seasoned coach, it doesn't really matter. Just imagine that you meet someone who doesn't know you. Let's call that person Susan.

Susan asks you, "So, what is it you do for a living?"

What would be your natural answer?

I used to say, "I am an executive coach and trainer."

The typical response I would get would be "Hm, hm, interesting." The conversation would then go on to something else.

Or Susan would inquire: "Coach? Trainer? Oh, which kind of sport? Tennis?"

And I would respond: "No, no, I coach executives."

Susan: "Oh, o.k."

And in most cases that would be about it.

Perhaps you're starting to see where I'm taking you.

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When we developed our Stop Selling! program to help sales people accelerate their business, we decided to use cold calls for practicing new ways of communicating with potential clients. Since making cold calls is perhaps the most challenging way of acquiring new business, we thought that once we master cold calls, it would be a piece of cake to make warm calls or to meet with new people, for example, in a networking event.

What are the most critical points in a cold call?

- a) To be 100 percent respectful to the persons we call (which also means respecting their decision if they say they don't have time to talk)
- b) To be able to create rapport instantly
- c) To make the call as relevant as possible for the people we call

When you make a cold call, the receiver wants to know immediately if the call is relevant or not to him. In fact, the critical questions are: What are you doing? Why are you calling me? And especially, Why should I talk to you?

Can you see that the questions in the title of this article in most cases actually mean all these three questions?

In a cold call, you usually get very little time to answer these three questions. So you'd better have a crisp statement to cover all of them. It is also called the "elevator speech," which should last not more than 20 to 30 seconds.

In order to develop a powerful elevator speech, you should first determine what people are generally interested in. Are they really interested in what you are doing? Unless they care about you in some way, the answer is "No!" Instead, people are interested in their own issues, their own problems, and their own benefits.

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Consequently, an elevator speech should not explain what you are doing but what your clients are getting, i.e. what kind of benefits you provide, which issues and problems you can help solve, etc.

For example, instead of saying, "Hi, I am Charlie. I am an Executive Coach and Trainer," it is much more meaningful to say, "Hi, my name is Charlie Lang and I work with senior executives who feel they haven't reached their full potential yet or who want to improve the engagement and morale in their team."

You see, I hardly talk about what I do. Rather, I try to talk as much as possible about my clients so that Susan, in our example, would be able to ask herself, "Is this something that I am also concerned with?" If yes, then Susan would certainly get quite interested in how I do this. That would then lead to a longer discussion. If Susan can't relate to this herself, perhaps she knows someone else who does.

I recommend that you develop your own elevator speech, write it down, fine-tune it, test it and then practice it whenever you have the opportunity. It will help you identify more business opportunities.

Most people don't care if you are a coach, but they might care about how you help others and if you could help them, too. So talk about that instead.

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Charlie Lang is an Executive Coach and Trainer who founded Progress-U Limited in 2002. His mission is to develop his clients to become First-Class Leaders. He is a passionate and professional Executive Coach, Mentor Coach, Trainer, Public Speaker and Author of articles related to leadership, change management and innovative sales.

In 2004, he initiated the Master Coach Alliance (see <http://www.master-coach-alliance.com>)in Hong Kong, a network of professional Life, Business and Corporate Coaches. End of 2004, he started authoring the book "The Groupness Factor" (see <http://www.progressu.com.hk/Groupness-book.htm>) which is being published in mid-August 2005. He also wrote numerous articles for magazines and newspapers like CareerTimes, Human Resources, Banking Today, Asiapreneur, etc.

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