

## **The Best Marketing Ideas for Now**

### **Part Four - Getting in to Large Companies**

I've had several interesting conversations with advisors and managers around getting in to the large corporations in their cities. There are lots of ideas about how to do this, but it's important to recognize that things that worked years ago don't work today.

For example, I was recently asked how I feel about direct mail. My answer depends on who is doing the asking, since I have an honest, blunt answer and I have a more measured answer. Simply put, direct mail is not a good option. It used to be a GREAT marketing idea and decades ago advisors were sending out letters about disability insurance and getting several responses a week. Phone calls to these people resulted in initial appointments as well.

We live in a different world now. Many people don't go to their mail boxes every day and when they go, there's tons of 'junk' mail amidst the two or three items they want to read. Important letters are sent via email or Fed Ex. And, doing direct mail is much more expensive than it used to be, with much lower results.

Another question I get asked when advisors want to get in to big companies is "Should I just cold call?" Simple answer again: No. There are tons of people cold calling the same inside people you are calling - mostly the HR department, the CFO or whoever is in charge of the benefits or pension program. I get asked to edit scripts around pensions all the time. I can do that, but I question the time spent reaching the person with the fiduciary responsibility, who doesn't know you. People who have kept their dialing numbers on pension cold calling tell me they spent hundreds of hours to get 2 clients in a year. Do you want to spend that many hours trying to create one client? Those hours could have created dozens of clients.

Here's how to get in to a large local company: Everyone in the agency goes through their book of business and looks for a client who works there. Or they identify someone they know who works there. You contact that person and take them for lunch so you can pick their brain. Here's suggested language for that call:

***Hi, Gail, it's John. I'm calling for two reasons (Ask a personal question about their life and let that conversation go about 1-2 minutes). The other reason for my call is that I need your help. I wanted to pick your brain around something related to my practice and for that privilege I'd like to take you to lunch. When are you available in the next two weeks?***

When you're at lunch, you can ask them whatever you need to about their company and who is the right person to get introduced to. Having an entrée into a corporation

through an employee - especially a high level one -- is the best way to get to the person you want to meet.

The other obvious idea, but it's much slower, is to be involved in your business community groups. Maybe it's your Chamber, or another business group that attracts the corporate people you want to meet. That's the most natural way to create relationships with people that work at the companies you want to have as clients. It may take longer, but now the person who you wanted to be introduced to knows you *personally*. That always works the best.

The challenge we have in 2017 is to move from thinking in pluralities to thinking about singular prospects. "I want to work with big companies" is not a helpful marketing goal. If you tell me the name of a company you want entrée into, and someone who you know there, then I can help you.

Otherwise, you are going to get frustrated--and thwarted -- trying to get an appointment in a huge company.

*Words Matter!*

*Gail*

I thought these Shocking Statistics were important enough to replace my usual quotes. Look for these every month in my 2017 newsletters.

**80% of calls go to voicemail, and 90% of first time voicemails are never returned. (RingLead)**