

Building a Practice - The 2016 Way

Every time I work with managers, we discuss their challenges in coaching new advisors on prospecting and appointment setting. “They don’t have enough appointments” is the most common sentence I hear. But in asking a lot of questions, I narrow down the general problem to its core. And here it is:

Advisors don’t have enough new names on a continual basis.

A friend who recently retired from being an Agency Manager warned me about something when we first met. “Gail, don’t say the words ‘Lead Flow’ or my agents will throw tomatoes at you.” Apparently, he was constantly nagging, cajoling, begging and coaching them around more names -- all the time. Fifteen years ago, acquiring mailing lists or researching new mortgage names from the county clerk’s office were viable options. Even, heaven forbid me from saying it in print, buying cold lists made new agents feel like they had people to call.

All of these ideas don’t work as they used to. Here’s what I told a group of rookies: “Most advisors don’t spend enough time out of the office meeting new people. The key to this career, in our current phone environment, requires you to **get out there** and meet people face to face.” Later today, I got the wonderful newsletter from a professional friend, Kevin Knebl. He is a true LinkedIn genius and has coached me on using LinkedIn effectively. We share a philosophy around building a practice in today’s society and he talks about it eloquently. (Italics and red are his.)

Now, you may be thinking that I'm talking semantics. Or that this is just a clever use of words. Nope. This is major. Slow down and really get this. Thinking in singularity versus plurality is a major key to having a successful business, job, or career regardless of the industry you're in. It's always about just one person. The person you're communicating with whether online, offline, at a networking event, trade show, wherever. When you're really present and focused on serving the person in front of you the relationship shifts. People can feel when you're really taking a sincere interest in them. And they can definitely feel when you're not.

Too many advisors approach their practice with a “plurality” mindset. Since we can’t dial groups of people we don’t know anymore, you have to work your marketing plan around meeting people one-at-a-time! And then perhaps one of those people will get you in to a group (i.e. target market) you are drawn to.

Your calendar needs to have events, meetings, activities and people-oriented appointments that allow you to be with humans face-to-face. Getting introductions is great (that’s a different newsletter) but having a client bring you to an event and

introduce you to others IN PERSON is better. Following up with that person is easier since they now have a 'visual' of who you are. If you meet in person, you need to get your contact info into their phone and vice versa if it's appropriate.

Group thinking is the wrong way to approach building a practice. Getting to know one person at a time is a winning strategy if you do it enough.

Words Matter!

Gail

Electric communication will never be a substitute for the face of someone who, with their soul, encourages another person to be brave and true.

Charles Dickens