

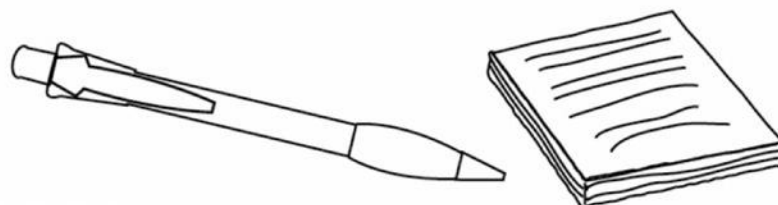
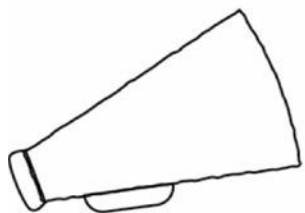


# Make Yourself Irreplaceable

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*In order to be  
irreplaceable,  
one must  
always be  
different.*

Coco Chanel



# The Tale of the Chili & Ice Cream Shop...

and my own reality check



*Write down what your  
clients value the most  
about you*



# Reality check!

Use conversations to discover what  
your clients actually

**NEED**

**VALUE**

**WILL PAY YOU FOR**



# Dig deeper to learn:

What they (believe they) **need** and **value**

You can't sell if you have to educate

What they will **pay you for**

Don't lower your price – raise your value!

Find clients with *your* size budget



# To become irreplaceable

Look for your **unknown unknowns**

Watch for **confirmation bias**

Past experience is **irrelevant**



# Whom to talk to

**Look for loose connections**

**People you volunteered with**

**Speakers you've heard**

**Leaders in your clients' assns**

**Make sure they resemble your  
(expected) client base**





# Whom to talk to

**NOT former employers/colleagues**

**Talk with your *best* clients, too!**



*Write down your three  
prospective interviewees*



# **THIS IS NOT A SALES CALL**

**Don't say "This isn't a sales call"**

**You don't know what you're selling yet!**

**You will NOT be following up with a  
brochure**



# Live, spontaneous conversation

Not email interview or survey

Don't send questions ahead of time

Ask follow-ups for underlying concerns – “And why do you think that is?”



# Zen mind, beginner's mind

**Make it conversational**

**Make it an exploration**

**Speak 25% of time; listen 75% of time**



# Irreplaceability

**You want to be a niche, not a commodity**

**A consultant, not a service provider**

**Listen for what needs aren't being addressed**



# Shepherding the conversation

**Guide the conversation; don't lead it**

**If it's going well, let them ramble on**

**If in the weeds, ask "That's interesting;  
and why did you decide...?"**

**Watch for confirmation bias!**



# Shepherding the conversation

**Watch for chances to be surprised**

**What am I missing?**

**Therapist pro tip: “Can you tell me more about that?”**





# Think SWOT

Find their pain points – their W and T

Find their unmet goals – their O

What's the payoff if problem is solved?

What happens if problem *isn't* fixed?



# Always bring up the budget

You have to ask about price

“So, roughly, what kind of budget would you throw at this?”

“How many zeros would a project like this usually have?”



# A few starter questions

**What has you most concerned these days?**

**What has surprised you most about the industry this year?**

**What's your biggest goal for this year?**

**What's the biggest obstacle to meeting that goal?**



# Starter questions for *existing* clients

How would you describe me to a colleague? [H/T Jan Davis]

“We use you because \_\_\_\_\_” [H/T Marcy Phelps]



*Write down your 2 open-ended starter questions*



# Your goals

To see the world through their eyes

To learn their price points

To become the **ONLY ONE** like you



# Your goals

Know what your clients

**NEED**

**VALUE**

**WILL PAY YOU FOR**



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