

Rejection Reality Check

By David C. Miller FSA, MAAA

One of the biggest obstacles for consultants when it comes to developing business and getting clients is the **fear of rejection**. What does fear of rejection cause you to do?

For one thing, it causes you to avoid the things you need to do to succeed. It will prevent you from getting out of your comfort zone and taking the necessary risk to offer your services with confidence.

If you fear rejection, you're not going to pick up the phone and call on prospects. If you fear rejection, you may speak to prospects but not call them to action. If you fear rejection, you'll have a selling conversation without inviting the person to participate in what you have to offer them. If you fear rejection, self-protection becomes more important than the needs of the prospect. In short – fear of rejection stops forward progress.

The irony is that if you're not experiencing ANY rejection, then you're not playing a big enough game. You're not really going for it and you're probably missing out on a lot of success!

I remember several years ago when I realized I needed to deal with my fear of rejection. What I realized was that the only way not to get rejected was to be invisible. I certainly didn't want that – I wanted to make a difference – one that my clients would be sure to notice. So I decided that if I wanted to make an impact on the world, then I needed to be OK with being rejected.

Selling your services WILL involve rejection – it's not optional. **To say, "I want to get clients but I don't want to get rejected" is like saying, "I want to be a swimmer but I don't want to get wet" – it's impossible.** So if you want success, you need to make friends with rejection.

What are ways to make friends with rejection? Here are a few principles that have helped me which I call the Rejection Reality Check:

Reality Check #1: My consulting services are not for everyone.

The key here is to develop a realistic expectation about close ratios. If I believe that my solutions are for everyone, then I set myself up to feel really bad when someone doesn't want it. I mean the kind of bad that feels like an electric shock or getting punched in the gut! Then I'll avoid offering my services to the next prospect, because my last experience was so painful.

I just returned from a conference for professional speakers where I met some of the most successful professionals when it comes to selling from the platform. Do you know what their expectation is? They're thrilled when they close 10% of the room (that's a 90% rejection rate)!

We know we have a winning direct mail campaign if we have a 2% response rate (that's being rejected 98% of the time). If I fail 7 out of 10 times in baseball, I'm considered an excellent hitter.

Not everybody will want what you're selling. **But it's critical to know that for the right prospect, you have the right answer!** Changing this mindset will make it so you're not trying to sell everything to everybody. Rather you're selling something to somebody. So if your expectations about closing are realistic, then you can take the "no's" in stride and move confidently to the next prospect.

Reality Check #2: There are always people out there ready to say "yes" to your offer.

This is the "there's plenty of fish in the sea" principle. Ponder this: "if you have ANY clients, then you have a reference that there are probably more out there." Why would you think that you've found the only one or two people (or companies) in the world who would want your services? Why wouldn't you think there are more? If you've done your homework and found that there's a need in the marketplace, then go forward and market yourself with confidence.

Reality Check #3: Rejection is not personal.

When it comes to going out on the limb and marketing ourselves, it becomes personal and any rejection really hurts. So we need to change our mindset about rejection.

You must not take rejection personally. Why? Because usually it's not! We tend to take rejection personally because we invest so much time and effort into our product or service – so it's understandable. **The truth is that we would care a lot less what other people think if we really knew how little they think about us!**

When someone doesn't want to use your services, it's usually not about you. Most of the time the prospect's reasons for saying "no" have nothing to do with you: it's not the right time, it's not a great fit, they're not ready yet or maybe they have trouble making decisions. So you need to move on. Yes, keep in touch with them but move on.

Finally, ask yourself this question: "If I didn't fear rejection, how successful would I be in marketing and selling my services?"

Take yourself through this reality check list and learn to make friends with rejection. Then go out and take action!

David C. Miller FSA, MAAA is a Professional Business Coach who works with consultants and sales professionals who are struggling to attract enough clients. He conducts seminars and one-on-one coaching in business development, influence, leadership and career enhancement. He can be reached at dave@translifecoach.com or 215-968-2483 or for tips, tools and strategies about how to grow your business, go to www.BusinessGrowthNow.com.