

Artistic Toy's CANDID INTERVIEW: Cliff Quicksell, Jr. MAS

Frequently Asked Questions

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

2:00pm – 3:30 pm EST

Please see Cliff's responses in **GREEN**:

1. Bettse Birnbaum: How important is a website to a distributor business and how much should we spend to keep it updated?

A website is as important as having a phone. The key though is to be unique and different. My website for instance cost me \$1400.00 and it has a "dashboard" on the back end where I control all of the content on the site. I spend around five hours a week updating, adding and deleting content to keep the content fresh and lively. If you are interested in my contact let me know I can forward his name.

2. Venkat Yalamoori: If you know the Company is using the promotional products and the cold calls are not helping what is the best way of getting this company to talk to you?

It is important to look at various methodologies in order to get to the client. I am a firm believer that tactical, focused direct marketing campaigns that are targeted directly to the recipient and hit a pain point are the very best methods in order to get to the client. See the marketing campaigns on my website for references:  
[www.cliffquicksell.net](http://www.cliffquicksell.net)

3. David Thompson: What is the number of prospects a distributor should have in the pipeline? and how often should we touch those prospects?

Great question; I believe unlimited amounts of potential prospects is necessary; you can never have too many, as long as you can manage them. I would recommend developing a strategic game plan as to what specific markets you want to attack. Do the needed homework of who you will work with specifically; size of company, number of employees, number of years in business etc...Then create a multiple touch plan to include: Direct marketing, direct mail, post cards, email, personal touch, sales calls, faxes...make sure it is strategic and not perceived as overbearing; but mixing up the touches makes all the difference.

4. Lee Kaplanian: What are the best resources to find those under the radar companies?

City Business Journals, Internet and [www.Hoovers.com](http://www.Hoovers.com)

5. Lee Kaplanian: To work with small companies, do you look at how much they make a year or is there something else that will help determine they will grow and spend more later?

Depending what you mean by small companies. There are many factors as you've mentioned, but size of company, number of employees, if the market is a heavy user (for instance Funeral Homes would not be a heavy user), need of the product, their current marketing strategy...all of these are key points.

6. David Thompson: How do I get a copy of Cliff's book?

The book is out of print... I am re-writing now and it will be available via audios and in print; in about 3 months.

7. Carl Deutsch: How do you determine how much you charge for consulting services?

Minimum \$100.00 per hour. But do the math...What was the profit you made last year, then divide that by the number of hours you worked and that is a good barometer; i.e.

You sell \$100,000.00 and you make 50% gross profit; \$50,000.00 after paying all of your expenses (say 50% or \$25,000) you have \$25,000.00 left; you work an average of 50 hours a week.  $50 \times 52 = 2,600$  hours per year. Divide 2,600 hours by \$25,000.00 gives you \$9.61 per hour...I pray this is not the case, but you get the idea. So you can see that if you're only selling 'stuff' then the picture could look dismal.

8. Beverly Padratzick: How did you first get a consulting fee from an existing customer....how did you price it?

I got tired of selling stuff and realized that if I wanted to move ahead I would need to drastically reinvent myself; I decided to look at what I did differently and realized that what I created was nothing different than an ad agency did, I just did it with collateral material, packaging and promotional products. I interviewed several agencies and then developed a fee structure with the baseline of \$75.00 per hour. That number built gradually as I grew, became more proficient and creative and had more deliverables to fall back on. I have reached a figure now of \$275.00 per hour for consulting outside of the industry.

9. Jean McGuire: I have trouble finishing trade shows, even the small ones, because I spend time with each supplier. How do you determine which suppliers to spend your time with?

Always see your preferred suppliers first, make contact, say thanks, look at what's new in their offering; then go to the other lines. Also do your research first, then print out the floor plan and create a strategy to attack the show. Limit your initial time with the preferred suppliers to 10 minutes per vendor – carry a digital micro tape recorder and notate important information. Also carry a digital camera and take shots when and where applicable ALWAYS ASK BEFORE TAKING PHOTOS AS A COURTESY, don't take offense if they say no. On your return, take the time to sift through the data and information and file accordingly – DO IT, do not shirk this, it is critical – it's all about time management.

10. Scott Gordon: If I am billing for my time - how do I differentiate from an ad agency, PR firm, event planner, etc.? They may find you to be a threat to their business.

They certainly will. But you can't charge just for the sake of charging...you must have some deliverable that could be genuinely perceived and unique and creative.

11. Zoe Ingersoll: Is there a better business model for selling products versus selling creative services. (i.e. Does it mean that it makes more sense for me to join one of those companies like Vernon in order to be able to better compete?)

One of the biggest reasons that you would join a company like Geiger, Vernon or an ipromoteU would be for funding (cash flow). Very few offer creative services but they do free up an enormous amount of time, whereby you can pursue those creative service selling.

12. Lee Kaplanian: Is there a standard or basic ROI and ROO measure or is it tailored to the client?

Each program would have it's own set of metrics...you can see some examples on my website: [www.cliffquicksell.net](http://www.cliffquicksell.net)

13. Susan C Baldwin: What is the best way to help a client find a good list of tradeshow attendees that are qualified to buy their product?

Show management would be the best; the key would be to market effectively to the attendee list; most do not.

14. David Thompson: CMO's are according to the CMO forum are having a very tough time determining either of ROI and ROO.. Do you have any available to us tools to help them?

This is a deep question. One that would take a long time...give me a call to discuss if you'd like 301-717-0615.

15. Bettse Birnbaum: What are the new titles of those people we should be contacting? (i.e. Business Development)

- CMO – Chief Marketing Officer
- CTO – Chief Technology Officer

Are the only ones that I am familiar with that are relatively new...

16. Deborah Wiese, CAS: How can I learn to measure ROO?

This is a deep question. One that would take a long time...give me a call to discuss if you'd like 301-717-0615.

17. Rich Bradley: Do you recommend "frequent buyer" type programs for customers? If so, are there any guidelines for this -- either in terms of order frequency or dollars purchased?

I don't like these (for myself), they take a lot of work and generally companies don't really involve themselves...that's not always true but generally speaking that's the case. These programs take a lot of work to manage properly.

18. Lee Kaplanian: How do you start the conversation with a prospect to steer them away from price in the beginning and help find what they need?

Don't bring it up in the first place. Deal with the real objective and if the comment does surface, redirect the question to gather more information; for instance, "...what is a client worth to them? What would they be willing to pay to get and maintain that account...?" The other thing is to stop leading with product sales are really focus on selling the solution which MAY or MAY NOT involve a promotional product.

19. Susan C Baldwin: When you were a distributor how did you find the decision maker?  
Any new ideas for this economy and gatekeepers

I would do research and interview the receptionist or look at their website to see what I could glean; the best way was asking questions...if you are working vertically or horizontally in the development of your client base then what is commonplace in one company will generally be the same in their competitors companies.

I would and will ALWAYS recommend that you develop "CREATIVE" marketing to set yourself apart from the competition.

20. Derek Miller: Cliff do you target consumer product companies differently than companies that sell B2B

Yes, in most cases.

21. Nicole Arriola: Where do you find the best list to send self promotional pieces to?

I would ALWAYS develop my own lists from research and from different list opportunities – if you use list brokers, make sure the list you purchase is a multiple use list, otherwise you will be billed each time you use the list.

22. Mack Bentley: Program selling/Creative thinking are the keys to being successful in our business. However it is very difficult to find and specific information from suppliers or other sources on how to set up successful programs. How do you suggest a small shop about educating themselves and implementing program selling into their system?

As mentioned on the webinar, I recommend you look into PPAI's resource called "The Idea Source", there you will find over 1,700 case histories on how many of your peers have successfully used in measured campaigns over the past 12 years or so.

23. Damola Akintonde: Can I/Should I charge a fee for the consultative process to my promotional product buyers?

If the final result is just a product, NO! If you bring creative to the table and you're bring more than just the product, then yes.

24. Derek Miller: I am doing a 4 touch campaign with a gambling theme and 3 other touches the last is a building block theme should I call in between touches or wait until all the touches have been completed one touch is a smashed t shirt.

I would probably take a portion of the targeted list and do the calls, then compare the end results to see what worked better.

25. Nicole Arriola: When calling these people to get in the door how do we explain our business and services without saying promotional product?

Each company will be different...I would first ask yourself; "What is it that I do EXACTLY?" Once you know that, you can then build the 20 second elevator speech to use when talking with prospects.

26. Brian Thomas: How did you handle your follow up to your Swiss Army direct mail piece? Did you identify yourself as a Marketing Agency or Consultant?

Marketing Consultant. The follow-up was done by me via the phone; it was a great ice breaker.

27. Lee Kaplanian: Are there resources and areas you can research to show where things are much more positive than the prevailing attitude?

I do not understand the question

28. Heidi Schulze: I understand what real 'consulting' is- as you described it. My question is, how do I actually get someone to agree to pay for my services? People don't want to commit until they hear what I can do. Do I present an invoice as a retainer up front? I know, it's kind of a dumb question, but customers are not open to paying for my time... I need to know how to present that charge for my time. (you're going to say I have to add value. I know, I know, but as soon as they hear the word 'promotion', they think 'product', whether I've said the word or not.

Hummm! People do need to see what you've done in the past, if you have not done anything then you should begin by doing something for yourself FIRST and collect the data and successes and continue to do that and share that data with a prospect/client. In addition, the Idea Source is another great tool whereby you can share past successes with the prospect of the REAL value of our medium...they are always inundated with product, product, product and rarely a real solution, so it makes sense that this is the way clients think.

29. Beverly Padratzik: some of the time consuming tasks that get business are looking for and finding the right products...how do you put that off onto someone else?

Well you need to find and train someone to do that research or join a company that does that research for you. I recommend you look beyond the product; product only equates to cheapest price!

30. John Wray: I heard you speak at that Motivation Show and since then I have spoken regularly at chamber and other events in South Wales extolling the virtues of ROI and ROO against purchasing of product. Whilst I get good comments at the meeting, I find it very difficult to convert that interest into firm business. Can you suggest ways I might break into these clients after the meetings?

John, I have found that when I share relevant success stories and show the end results gets clients excited beyond just saying, "that's good and be done with it" – prospects and clients needs to see results, if the client is not interested then they may not be a convert, but I can assure you that once you have a success with a client, rarely will they want anything but that level of marketing.

31. Raj Menon: Cliff, Are you basically suggesting we compete with all the marketing agencies out there?

Indeed!