



IDEAS

A TASTEFUL MARKETING STRATEGY

About a month before clients retire, send to their office an enormous gift basket chock-full of delicious treats, such as cookies or fruit. It's more than clients can eat, so they'll share with colleagues. The gift basket now becomes a conversation starter about who sent it (that's you, their financial planner!), wealth management and retirement planning. Depending on the number of clients retiring in a given year, this idea can generate 10-20 referrals a year.

—**Brad Myers**, Salt Lake City, Utah, 13-year member



FINANCIAL OXYGEN

I am often asked by prospective clients why they need basic insurance. Do they need insurance for themselves? For their families? To answer, I compare it to air travel.

I ask, "What is the safety announcement made when you're on a plane? In the event of an emergency, the oxygen mask drops. We're asked to put it over our mouth and nose, to breathe first before we can help others around us.

"Similarly," I say, "if you don't have the financial oxygen that is needed to keep your family going, how are you going to help them, including children, spouses or business partners? It's up to you to put the numbers in. I'm here to help you find that financial oxygen."

— **Alphonso B. Franco, RHU, RCIS**, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 21-year member



STANDARD OF LIVING

"Mr. Jones, I am sure you are providing a comfortable home for your family and that you are enjoying a satisfactory standard of living. I wish that you would take just a minute, however, to jot down one figure on this piece of paper. I am not going to look at it. I am not going to ask you what your income is or how much life insurance you now own. If you want to tell me those things, I am sure you will do so if we get into this matter further. But right now, will you please put down on that piece of paper the amount of life insurance you own?

"Now mark off the last two digits of that figure, and divide the remaining figure by two. That is the amount of monthly income your family would have each month from your life insurance if they invested it at 6 percent annual interest.

"Compare that figure with the amount it takes for them to live today. If that difference astonishes you, wouldn't it be wise to spend a few minutes talking about how your present life insurance could be arranged to give them an adequate income?"

— **Ronnie K. Muhl**, Simon's Town, South Africa, 25-year MDRT member

ILLNESS PROTECTION

Whenever I meet with prospective clients, the most important thing I offer them is a critical illness rider. I tell them, "Illnesses do not choose who they strike — you could be young or old, rich or poor, single or married, and it would hit you all the same. When this happens, you need funds for medical expenses. Why spend your own hard-earned money when you have already prepared an emergency fund for a situation like this?"

—**Katrina Louise L. Yap**, Cebu City, Philippines, 4-year member



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FAST AND GOOD



We should have a sense of self-value in what we do and pride that it is unique. We should present ourselves as specialists and experts, not salespeople. Therefore, our clients must appreciate that we are no different than anything else of top quality — you get what you pay for. I explain that we have three components to our service: we can be fast,

cheap and good. However, a client can only choose two out of the three. If they want it cheap and fast, it won't be good. If they want it cheap and good, it won't be fast. And, this is where we position ourselves, if they want it fast and good, it won't be cheap.

—**Bhupinder S. Anand, ACII, Dip PFS**, London, England, 19-year member



FILL UP THE TANK

For a 100-mile round trip in your car, would you fill your gas tank completely? Fill it halfway? Or pump \$20 and cross your fingers? In my car, I could do the round trip almost twice on a half-tank. With a full tank, I might be able to complete the trip four times. However, with \$20 of gas, one false move — construction, traffic, the GPS sending me in the wrong direction — and I've got a big problem. So which one would you choose? Audiences choose either a half-tank or a full tank every time.

Make the connection to life insurance:

- Full tank — whole life
- Half tank — universal life
- \$20 — term insurance

So, if you would either fill the tank or put in half, would it make sense to fund your life insurance using any other system?

—**David L. Alarid**, Newport Beach, California, 27-year member



FIND A CONNECTION

In starting and building relationships with clients, we know we need to connect on a more personal level. I usually meet with my clients and prospects in their office first. When I get in, I make sure to casually look around.

I'm looking so I can get to know the prospect a little better. First, I understand better what is important to them. For example, I'll see a picture of the family, so I know there are kids, dogs, etc. I can ask about them without the typical "Do you have kids?" It's better to go right to: "How old are your kids? When was this picture taken? Looks like you're on vacation — do you enjoy traveling? What are your favorite spots?"

From there I find out so much of what is important, and we can have a conversation that is less like a fact-finder and more like two friends.

I'm also looking at things like diplomas, sports memorabilia and awards to give me more things to talk about in our meeting, and plenty of "excuses" to email or call later.

—**Adam Steven Blumberg, CFP, CLU**, Houston, Texas, 5-year member

AUTO-RESPOND

During a day when you have numerous client meetings, turn on your email auto-respond to advise any clients/prospects of the following: "Thanks for your email. Due to my schedule today, I will be reviewing and answering emails between 1 and 2 p.m. and 4 and 5 p.m. If this matter is urgent, please contact the office immediately."

This is important for two reasons. 1) It lets our

prospects/clients know we are busy, and that's a good thing. 2) More importantly, it gives us permission to not respond right away — thus we can stay focused on our meetings and not become distracted by email developments that are certain to take us off track.

—**Gregory B. Gagne, ChFC**, Exeter, New Hampshire, 16-year member



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COLD CALLS

After four years in sales,

I realized I had no one left to sell to. I found out that no matter how much I tried, the number of people I could meet on a daily basis was limited, and I also had to manage

my clients, analyze stock portfolios and work on contracts. I tried cold-calling new prospects, but I found it took time away from my other responsibilities, and the high rate of rejection negatively affected my confidence. So I came up with this idea. I hired a full-time secretary to cold call for me. For the past year, I have not cold-called a single person. My secretary gives me a list of prospects who have shown interest to her, and then I talk to them. The whole process is now an efficient system. My secretary also manages my schedule from Monday to Sunday. If I tell her to give me three appointments a day, she will work out the schedule. It has freed me up to follow my own schedule and meet existing clients. If you let your secretary make cold calls for you, you can save your time for other things and keep your confidence level high.

—**Joon Hong Park**, Seoul, South Korea, 4-year member



HUMAN CAPITAL

Everyone is priceless, both to themselves and their families. When we look at a person's net worth, the most important asset on the balance sheet that's often overlooked is their human capital. It is based on how much the family would have to raise to assume the same standard of living in the absence of the breadwinner. That is the financial value to their family. It represents their lifetime earnings ability.

Insuring this value is the primary purpose of life insurance. It does not insure life; it insures income. It's what they are worth that should be replaced. When we talk about life, we talk about the value of their life to people who depend on them. Tell your prospect: "Transfer the risk of loss from your family, who cannot afford to take the impact, to a company who can."

—**Cristine T. Tan, RFC, LUTCF**, Quezon, Philippines, 3-year member

We tell people they should keep a minimum of five years' required income in cash or cash-like investments. Then, if the market suffers a correction, such as we experienced in the recession, they will not have to sell assets at an inappropriate time to fund living costs.

—**Matthew Charles Collins**, Monta Vale, New South Wales, Australia, 12-year member



THE NEW KIND

I like to ask people what kind of phone they have, a flip phone or a smartphone. Of course, they usually say a smartphone, to which I respond, "Oh, so you have the new kind! How about your life insurance, do you have the old kind or the new kind?" They usually ask what I mean, and I ask if they have the kind you have to die to use. Usually they are still unsure. Then I explain that, with the new kind, in many cases, you are able to access the benefits while you are living. I follow up by asking, "Why don't we get together to review?"

—**Brandon Green, CLTC, LUTCF**, Houston, Texas, 6-year member

