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Solo Flyer
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Solo Flyer is the e-zine for those "flying solo" in their own business - Solopreneurs. Whether you've been in business for several years or haven't yet taken the plunge, you will find resources, strategies, new ideas, support, and ways to connect in every issue.

Fly solo, but don't go it alone!

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1. ASK THE EXPERTS: ESTABLISHING YOUR OWN CLIENT R & D TEAM

What Do Your Clients Want?

What attracts clients to your business? Which of your products and/or services are most appealing to them? Are your fees too high, too low or just right? What new product or service should you roll out next? How many clients will likely buy your newest product or service? Are you spending your time on the things that are most important to your clients?

If you are like many business owners, you may be fuzzy on the answers to questions like these. Often, when we are uncertain, we'll try harder or work harder hoping that we'll figure it out. But trying harder only results in two things: limiting yourself to your own vantage point, and an unnecessary headache.

Are You a Lone Ranger?

Most of us think we have to figure everything out ourselves - it is *our* business isn't it? If we don't know what our clients want and need, maybe we shouldn't be in business! So we wrack our brains, guess, make mistakes, struggle...and struggle some more. We say things to ourselves like, "I wonder if anyone will be interested in the topic for this workshop?", or "I wonder if more clients would attend this workshop if it were during the day or evening?" Often we'll spend far too much time wracking our brain on something that only our clients could answer - and answer easily.

While you may be "it" when it comes to your business, that doesn't mean you can't get feedback from the outside world. In fact, if you operate in a vacuum, you will miss some great business opportunities.

When in Doubt, Ask!

When you find yourself wondering what your clients might want from your business, stop! Instead, go directly to the source: ask the experts - your clients (target market). Run your idea by them and ask for feedback. Don't forget to ask them what else they might be interested in. In fact, if you aren't coming up

with any product or service ideas on your own, ask your clients for their ideas. Everyone likes to express their opinion. And everyone has one, so ask away!

Another thing happens when you ask for feedback: you create buy-in with your clients. They've helped create your products and services, so they have an interest in seeing them succeed. You also create "raving fans" because you've created programs just for them. Another added bonus: your R & D members will want to refer others to you because they played a part in your success.

Happy clients, happy you!

Can it Really be That Simple?

Yep!

Pushing the Ball Uphill is Only Good for Your Physical Health

I'm all for trial and error as a great business lesson. Goodness knows I've trialed and erred many times! But often the learning curve is too steep, and too expensive! I once released a program that I thought would be a smash hit and no one signed up! The next time I released a program, I made sure my target market was involved in helping create it (and, yes, it was full two weeks before the start date). Asking my clients for their input "pulled" me toward success instead of me trying to "push" it.

If it Seems Too Good to be True, it May be That Good!

We've long been told to be wary of things that are too simple. We are cautioned not to take the "easy" way out. I have found the opposite to be true: if it seems effortless, you are probably on the right track.

Most of my successes came when I wasn't "efforting". Asking my clients what they'd like from me is effortless: I ask, they tell. That's my policy, and I'm sticking to it!

What Would Your R & D Team Look Like?

By now, you've probably figured out that this article is more about asking your clients for their input rather than about the intricacies of creating a formal R & D team.

Your R & D Team could take a variety of forms. You could:

- send an occasional survey via email
- make informal phone calls to certain clients now and then
- select a handful of clients you can run things by
- host a group call several times a year to touch base with clients as a group
- have a formal R & D team with regular ongoing communication and even "membership" benefits such as free/inexpensive participation in pilot programs and/or discounts on your products and services.

Put Out the Invitation!

So, are you ready to begin asking the experts?

Make sure you share why you are asking for feedback, what you will use it for and how your program will work. Be specific about what you are looking for and what the commitment will be for participants.

Go ahead and put out the invitation!

Join My R & D Team

Now that I've warmed you up to the idea of an R & D Team, I'd like to invite you to join mine!

Members of my R & D Team receive discounts and special invitations to pilot offerings of new programs and products.

See section 3 for more details about being part of my team.

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Know someone who might enjoy this newsletter? Please pass it along! Anyone can subscribe to this free monthly ezine by sending a blank email to: SoloFlyer@dawnnichol.com

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2. PUTTING THIS IDEA TO USE! (and win free coaching!)

I'd love to hear how you've applied this idea to your business. If reading this article got you thinking about your business differently or has inspired you to create your own R & D team (of any size), I want to know!

Simply send me a quick email by April 25 and tell me how you are going to put this idea to use (just a few sentences will do). Your name will then be entered in a drawing and one name will be drawn on April 26 to receive a free 30-minute Business Strategy Session with me!

How's that for a reason to put a little thought into this concept?!

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3. JOIN MY R & D TEAM!

I'm in the process of expanding and evolving my services for Solopreneurs and I'd love your input. Over the next several months, I'll be releasing a new website (The Solopreneur Zone), developing an extensive resource center, forming a directory of solopreneurs to connect with, creating dozens of inexpensive business-building tools & programs, and more!

But I need your help! You know what challenges you are facing as you build your business and what resources you haven't been able to find.

Benefits

Members of my R & D Team receive regular discounts and special invitations to pilot offerings of new programs and products.

What Would You be Committing to?

I know your time is very valuable. Members will receive one survey per month via email which will take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete. You may also receive an occasional email that does not require a response. You may join or leave the team at any time.

To Join

To join the team, send an email to Team@dawnnichol.com. You will receive an email reply with more details about the team. I look forward to working with you!

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4. COACHING

SOLOPRENEUR SUCCESS! Group Coaching

This is not your ordinary coaching group! Members are Solopreneurs who want a group that both supports them and challenges them to grow their business effectively. We'll discuss marketing, business

plans, keeping motivated, and more, but with a twist: members will be involved in determining what we talk about each week and will share their individual expertise to benefit the group.

We'll get down to the nitty-gritty of business-building and making your services stand out from the crowd. Expect to work strategically (smarter, not harder) and bring more of who you are to your business.

Cost: \$125 for 3 one-hour sessions per month.

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JUST-IN-TIME COACHING: Have a quick business issue you want to discuss? I offer on-the-spot sessions for individuals who want coaching on an as-needed basis. The cost is \$2.50 per minute, payable by credit card.

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