

Why Should I Do Business With You?

Step seven helps you articulate real value—and establish clients for a lifetime.

By Leo Pusateri

Understanding the concept of real value is a great way to end the climb up the Value Ladder. Our seventh and final question, “Why Should I Do Business With You?” will help you understand the real value you provide to clients.

Let’s begin with the question, how is value, as used in your UVP, different from values as discussed in our previous column [May 2003] on differentiation? First, here are some simple definitions:

Value—The key word in the middle of your Unique Value Proposition (UVP) is defined as how well your solutions allow you to achieve your clients’ goals. Remember, it’s the proposition of what you do uniquely well. In essence, real value tells someone, “Here’s what I could do for you.” Real value implies a professional attitude, and that, yes, you are unique.

Values—Values are qualitative, emotional connectors. They are your standards, your code of ethics. Values are what people should expect when working with you.

Value Vs. “Real” Value

Why do we put the word “real” in front of the word value? Because it makes it come alive, that’s why. The word “real” implies deep meaning. It is complete totality. Here’s a simple, generic example:

Take a look at a felt-tip marker. Remove the cap. The cap is a feature. The benefit is that the cap helps keep the marker from drying out. What’s the “real” value, though? Well, if it doesn’t dry up, then it lasts longer and you won’t have to buy another one so quickly. It will keep your costs down and save you money. Immediately, the benefit extends into something significant to you. The deeper you can extend the benefit, the greater the value, which then becomes real value.

There is a subtle difference between the words value and real value, but the difference is extremely significant. Again, the real value is the actual application

to the real world. It’s not your claim of value or something implied. Real value is the benefit your unique value could provide to the prospect with whom you are talking. Ask your prospect, “How will you measure my success?” Their response will say a lot about their thought process. You need to know their answers to assess the ways in which they judge you. How can you exceed the prospect’s expectations if

you don’t know what they are?

Ask yourself these questions:

- What is the real value they are seeking?
- What is it about my UVP that caught their attention?
- How can I make my value come alive to them so they become one of my passionate advocates?

Are You Consultative?

Our business culture today is bottom-line sensitive. Everybody wants to know what they will receive in return for what they are paying. When it comes to making a

decision based on your value, your prospects probably are thinking about these questions as well:

- How much money do you want me to invest?
- What type of return will I get on this investment?
- What type of results can I expect?
- You want me to pay you a fee—for what? A plan? Advice?
- What is the totality of your value package?
- How will these services align with my goals?
- What’s the real value?
- Why should I do business with you?

These questions illustrate why you need to be truly consultative. Strategic questioning and dialogue are required. You’ve got to feel as though you are playing chess with your prospect. I coach a lot of advisors who enjoy chess. In the game, you need to think like a chess grandmaster, ten to 20 moves ahead. You should have that “sense,” like Bobby Fischer or Boris Spassky had in their heyday, strategically moving your



pawns, rooks, bishops, knights, queen and king.

A good chess move is like consulting at its best. You're listening and processing your client's answers respectfully. You see where the meeting needs to go. Your vernacular is smooth. Questions are flying. Your prospect wants more information on your background. Here is where the dialogue about your process is critical.

Client success is crucial at this point, so you confidently open your "umbrella" of differentiation (where each spoke is a unique ability of yours), and you begin to see this issue of real value entering the dialogue. The relationship-building process has been long and strategic. And just when you think you've been successful at maintaining rapport, the prospect looks at you and says in a nice, but challenging, way, "Why should I do business with you?"

When you hear those words, what are you thinking? How do you feel? More often than not, the nature of the question is challenging, even if a challenging tone is not used. This is a good time to reinforce everything you've been sharing with the prospect throughout the Value Ladder process. Do you feel you are ready to sum up everything now, and to be confident in your delivery?

Quantitative Versus Qualitative

Remember, business is first a meeting of the hearts, and then it becomes a meeting of the minds. When you have emotionally and logically connected with your prospects, you have achieved the ultimate alignment of your value to theirs. It's important to understand that real value is achieved by qualitative means, and measured by quantitative means.

Qualitative value means helping someone find peace of mind. Maybe you're in an estate planning dialogue with prospects and you're discussing their legacy. Maybe they have specific charitable goals, a desire to support the community more, or other personal plans for using their wealth. Perhaps they want to improve the quality of their life, or find an easier way to run a business that may have become too burdensome.

Quantitative value means making a logical connection. Mind-to-mind. For example, your prospect wants an increase in his assets—he gives you a half-million dollars and wants it to grow to one million dollars. You develop an investment policy statement, allocate assets, monitor the managers and evaluate the performance—and, let's say, you achieve his goal. That's quantitative value.

Many times, the achievement of quantitative value may lead to the achievement of what is in an individual's heart as well as in his or her dreams. You might have dialogues with prospects on qualitative issues first (heart-to-heart) then map out a plan to achieve the quantitative—or logical issues (head-to-head).

Maybe you've helped an organization increase its revenues. Perhaps the money manager you are working with was able to help your prospect's endowment or corporate retirement plan. If you help an institution reduce its fiduciary liability, well, that's a huge value for an ERISA plan.

Take a look at the chart below of real value qualitative and quantitative examples. It will help give you ideas as to where you might provide more real value to your prospects and clients.

Net It All Out: What's The Bottom Line?

Once you've walked through your first six Value Ladder answers, prospects will want you to relate your unique value to them. They want a concise reason why they should do business with you. This is your chance to connect your Value Ladder back to their specific needs, based on what they have shared with you. The specific examples of successes you've had with other clients help you here. This, added to what you have learned from

them, should tell them how you can help achieve their goals. A dialogue around real value may sound like this:

Prospect: "You've presented a compelling case for consideration. One final question, why should we do business with you?"

(Honestly, did you begin to have some thoughts about winging it? The new and improved advisor's response might sound like this:)

You: "Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, I appreciate your interest as well as the possibility to partner with you. It would be a privilege to have you as clients, and I truly value the opportunity." (Now there's an emotional connector.) "We've discussed your key long-term wealth management goals. You have major issues to contend with in the broad areas of estate planning, retirement and income protection. You also have key issues regarding your children and your parents."

You continue, "I presented my UVP earlier to you, my proposal of value. As my UVP stated, my practice is solely focused on what you are seeking. You should have a sense of my business beliefs and, most important, the process I employ going forward to meet your goals. I've also shared client experiences that are similar to your goals and how I've helped them to achieve theirs. Hopefully you are comfortable with how I've differentiated my solutions.

"The real value will be in the results I will be able to produce for you. Similar to the results I've achieved for others, I believe I can save you money and put this plan into action to help you increase the certainty of achieving your total wealth management goals. A number of my clients have commented that putting a plan

in place has reduced their stress levels and has liberated them to spend less time managing investments. As I mentioned, I value the opportunity to strategically partner with you. May I begin that opportunity now?"

Steps Out Of Sequence?

Are you wondering if this question, "Why Should I Do Business With You?" will come up

You Should Do Business with Me: I Can Help You Achieve This Type of Real Value	
Qualitative	Quantitative
Peace of mind Achieving a legacy Community support Charitable endeavors Quality of life Demonstrate ease of doing business Confidence Loyalty	Increase assets Increase revenues Increase assets under mgmt. Certainty of ROI Accelerate cash flow Reduce risk Reduce costs Reduce fiduciary liability

early in the dialogue before you've been able to answer the other six critical questions? My experience shows that it usually does not. Think about this: Why should a prospect ask why he or she should do business with you, if they never got around to first asking what you do?

If it does come up early in the dialogue, you might say something like, "Well, there are many reasons why I believe you should hire me, but I'm not yet sure if we're the right fit for each other. It's important to me that I have a good understanding of what you are looking for, and what you value, and that what I am capable of providing is in line with what you are looking for in a strategic partner."

Answering this question prematurely would be like a doctor prescribing a medication for an illness before he or she even runs tests and determines a diagnosis. This would be the equivalent of financial malpractice.

Strategic Questions to Consider:

- How do you usually respond to the seventh Value Ladder question, "Why Should I Do Business with You?"
- How does your (partner, team) respond to this same question?
- How do you define the real value you provide to your clients?
- Have you ever asked what your real value has been to them?
- How would your clients define the real value you provide to them?
- Do you consistently ask your clients how they will measure your success?
- Are you currently measuring the real value you offer?
- Are you documenting the real value, and how?

Understanding your real value is critical. This is an important concept for you to master. It requires continued introspection, quality dialogue with your existing clients, and asking for honest feedback on the value you've provided.

By improving your questioning to

your existing clients, it gives you greater clarity. You'll learn about areas in which you can continue to improve on the way to providing real value. If you are providing real value, you increase the certainty of establishing a client for a lifetime. These are clients who you covet, clients whose values and appreciation and acceptance of your real value is understood and shared with future prospects. Isn't that what we all want?

Beginning with the next issue, we will show you the many applications for the Value Ladder. In the meantime, congratulations for reaching the top of the Ladder; I hope you enjoyed the journey. Remember what Albert Einstein said, "Try not to become a man of success, but, rather, a man of value." ©

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