



Setting yourself apart

Whether you're interviewing for a job, selling a product, or building a professional relationship - it's all selling. This is the framework that will radically set you apart from anyone else they might be looking at because it shows your prospect that what you offer - can't be had anywhere else.

You effectively have no competition.

Imagine that you have someone right in front of you, raise your arm like you are trying to push them away. Really lock your arm with a stiff elbow.

Go ahead ... see what happens when you do that. Notice how it feels.

Now, keep your arm straight out, but soften your elbow about 2 inches.

THIS IS WHERE YOU WANT TO HOLD YOUR PROSPECTS.

You want to communicate "hold on, I'd like to ask a few questions to be sure this is a good fit." This posture is what sells the value.

Do experts interview for jobs? No, their expertise is already in demand. They might hold the interview but it's not to see if the company will hire them - it's to see if THEY want to work with the company.

Do people who offer a superior level of service ask you to let them work with you? No, they already have a high demand on their time. They might have a conversation with you, but it's to see if THEY want to work with you.

The opening

(adopted from the WEDGE conversation)

1) “it’s been my experience”

This is a general industry overview that reveals a little known problem:

- It’s been my experience that many first time authors find publishing a book to be the easy part, but are quickly surprised at how difficult it is to get readers for the book.
- It’s been my experience that many new Realtors choose a company to work for based on the commission split but are quickly surprised at how small a role in their success the commission split plays.

What are some common things that people interviewing or hiring for your position THINK is important and what are some frequently overlooked things that you think are MORE important?

“a lot of people think _____ is the key but it’s really about _____.”

“a lot of companies prioritize _____ when they should be looking at _____”

“most people are looking for _____ when what they really need is _____”

By starting with an industry overview it establishes YOU as the seasoned professional. By taking a stand, even a controversial stand, for something the people tend to undervalue the importance of - it establishes YOU as the expert. Successful books aren’t written on common knowledge, it’s the UNCOMMON knowledge that makes the fly off the shelves.

Your job is to bring up the uncommon solution in your opening sentence at an interview.

2) “for example”

This is a specific situation that highlights the importance of the little known issue you brought up in the first sentence. Your case study needs to touch on 4 things:

What they wanted

What they were afraid of

What innovation solution you provided
What the emotional benefit to them was

For example, I was working with an author last year who really wanted her writing to pay off. But she was worried that she was going to have to give up writing all together because it had been a full year with no pay! They simply couldn't stretch any further. What we were able to do was identify some little known marketing strategies that no one else in her market were using. As a result the radical turn around in sales boosted her confidence in what was possible with writing that she is now shopping her script around Hollywood.

What she wanted: to make money with writing
The negative emotion: that she was about to lose her dream
The innovative solution: untapped marketing channels
The benefit: enough confidence to take on Hollywood

Focus on the negative emotion because that's what your prospects heart will identify with. Then move to the innovative solution because that is what their mind will identify with.

For example, a friend of mine took a job with this fancy Real Estate company last year. The commission split was very attractive but she soon found herself completely isolated in the office. While the upside was huge, the odds of failure in that environment were also huge. She was afraid that she had invested so much getting to this point that if it didn't pay off she was going to lose her dream of working in Real Estate. What we were able to do was leverage a very small segment of the market that on one else in her office was willing to take seriously. Consequentially she became the regional expert for that segment in 30 days and completely dominated the market in 90 days. No one in her office could even come close to the success she was having. As a result, she now had the resources and confidence to open her own office, something she didn't even think possible before we worked together.

What she wanted: to work in Real Estate
Her fear: having her dream come crashing down
The innovative solution: leveraging an overlooked segment of the market
The benefit: enough resources and confidence to open her own office

3) “but tell me about your situation, what are you looking for?”

This lets them know that you care ABOUT THEM and aren't assuming that your innovative solutions are a good fit for them. Even though you've done your research before hand and are pretty sure your stories do strike a chord with them, they can't admit that at this point in the conversation. This question builds rapport because not only are you the expert but you are also willing to customize YOUR INSIGHTS to their situations.

The person asking the questions has control of the conversation. The more THEY are talking the more likely you are to close the deal.

The Opening Summary:

It's been my experience

include an industry overview (one sentence)

include a bigger issue that most people miss

For example I once had someone who ...

What they wanted was...

What they were afraid of was...

What we were able to do was...

As a result they...

But tell me about your situation?

The build up

Now that the formalities are taken care of and your unmatched expertise has been established, let's dive in to the part of the conversation that drives a HUGE wedge in between what you offer and what everyone else offers. Do this right and you'll be the only candidate for the job because you aren't competing over the same issues that everyone else is.

What you're going to do is frame three super successful outcomes for them while assuming they are already experiencing this kind of success with their last person. Paint a picture of amazing service and results in their mind that is SO good that you know they've never experienced it - and say the whole thing with a straight face like you just assume everyone provides this level of professionalism.

“you know how your manager normally makes it a point to have lunch with each person they oversee at least once a quarter? Does it bother you that they care about the well being of everyone on the team enough to spend their *personal time* investing in those relationships?”

The assumption here is that no manager works that hard to build superior moral in their unit - but you're saying it with a straight face like you just assume everyone provides the level of service you do.

“you know how your sales team makes it a point to check in with marketing every week to be sure the feedback they are getting on the street matches the numbers marketing is getting in the digital realm? Would you rather them check in on a quarterly basis instead?”

The assumption is that no sales department works that closely with any other department - but you're saying it with a straight face like you just assume everyone provides the same level of service that you do.

“you know how your publisher normally sends sample edits for you to approve? Do you wish they'd just keep their hands off your craft and let you create all the content yourself?”

The assumption here is that no publisher is going to do more work than they absolutely have to - but you're saying it like you just assume every publisher works just as hard as you for each authors success.

Your goal is to come up with 3 dream scenario levels of service that you can paint for them. If you've done your research then they will deny each one "oh, we've never had someone do that here." And with each denial you just sweep it under the rug like it's no big deal "well I'm sure it's not a problem you probably have some emergency funds in place to take care of any over runs."

The Buildup Summary

Paint three pictures in their mind of a level of service so amazing that it might as well include unicorns. If they come back with "we've never experienced that" sweep it under that rug like it's no big deal because you're going to use the information for the CLOSE.

The close

Ask what THEY want!

Remember the more they talk the better you are doing in the interview. A bad interview or sales call is where they say “so tell me about yourself, why should we be interested in you?” and you start talking. If you do that you’re just a commodity and they will quickly trade you for the next model that is smarter, better looking, or cheaper to hire.

The way you take yourself out of the commodity box is by taking them down the pain funnel. If you aren’t solving a pain point then you’re not bringing anything to the table of real value. The challenge is that to uncover what’s REALLY driving them you’ll have to flip the table and start asking the questions.

“in a situation like that what would you like to see happen?”

“what would success look like for you there?”

“how long has that been going on?”

“what do you reckon it’s costing your department to not resolve that?”

Tell them what they want!

Here is your 1st magic phrase: BASED ON WHAT I HEAR YOU SAYING

Based on what I hear you saying, you’d like a manager that is skilled in building high value relationships, able to open new accounts, and willing to have hard conversations.

Based on what I hear you saying, you’d like a publisher that knows how to market your book, knows how to increase your royalties, and knows how to save you time in the editing process.

Here is your 2nd magic phrase: THAT HAPPENS TO BE SOMETHING I DO VERY WELL.

Ask them when they want it!

If you are interviewing for a job or a big contract you say “who else should we include in this conversation.” This is an assumptive close and a very powerful rapport building phrase at the end of the conversation because by asking it - you are now on the same side of the table as them looking at the same issue. You are now both on the same team figuring out the next step together.

If you are doing more one on one work you can say:

“where would you like to go from here?”

“if we were to work together, would you like to start Tues or Weds?”

“if I was able to squeeze you in, what would you like to start on first?”

Always book the next meeting WHILE you are in the current meeting.

Setting yourself apart summary

Establish yourself as the expert

Based on my experience

For example

What they were afraid of

What we were able to do

As a result they

But tell me about your situation

Paint a dream level of service in their mind

3 TIMES: When your last (service provider) does (amazing level of service) would you rather them (lower level of service.)

Have them tell you what they want (make them write the order)

Regarding (issue important to them) what would you like to see happen?

Based on what I hear you saying, you'd like _____, _____, _____

That happens to be something I / we specialize in

Assumptive close:

Who else should we include in this conversation?

Where would you like to go from here?

If we were to work together would you rather start with _____ or _____?

Keeping your cool under pressure

A. I. R.

They might ask you questions you already know the answer to or they might ask you questions that catch you off guard - it doesn't matter. Your job is to get them to tell you what they really want to hear so you can actually give it to them. The way you do this is with the AIR conversation.

Acknowledge

The FIRST thing you do in response to their question is acknowledge the issue at hand.

“that’s a really important thing to know when you’re hiring someone.”
“I’m glad you’re asking about specific examples of where I’ve”
“that’s a bigger question than a lot of people give it credit for.”

Look for something about their question that you can acknowledge. Find a way to say “I value what you’re asking me.”

Inform

The SECOND thing you do in response to a question is to provide some background information. They don't know it's coming yet, but you want to let them know WHY you are about to make a request of THEM.

“I’ve got a lot of examples but I don’t want to waste your time with the wrong kind of information.”
“I’ve got a ton of stories about that, but I care about your values and want to be sure I’m getting you the right kind of takeaways.”

Any information will do, it is mostly just slowing the transaction down before we change gears.

Request

The THIRD thing you do in response to their question is request some specifics (if you're interviewing or prospecting.) If you aren't in a sales position but more of a run of the mill "hey can you give me a hand with this" situation, then your request is to find other ways to solve the problem.

"will you tell me a bit more about the kind of situations you find most helpful?"

"Will you tell me about the kind of past successes you're looking for?"

Or if it's in response to a day in day out question like "will you take out the trash" or will you stuff these envelopes" you would use:

"What is another way we can handle this?"

"Who else can we get to help with this?"

For example:

Tell us about a time you failed and what you learned from that experience.

"I really appreciate a question like that because it's one of the more important things you can know about a person. I've got piles of stories both from success and even a few failures mixed in, but I don't want to waste your time talking about things you might find unrelated. Would you give me a few examples of the kinds of insights you'd find most related to this job?"

or

"I'm glad you asked that, it's a very relevant question when making a decision like this. I've noticed in past situations that I've got so many examples that sometimes I accidentally pull one out that isn't what they were looking for at all, and I want to be sure I'm being a good steward of your time. Will you give me a few examples of the types of situations you'd like to know more about?"

Remember the golden formula:

Ask them what they want

Remind them what they just told you

Let them know you happen to specialize in that

Will you take care of these folders for the 2:00 meeting?

“That’s a really important meeting. The thing is right now I’m working on this report for Tim that is also due at 2:00 and I won’t be able to work on both of these. Who else could we get to help with this?”

Will you take out the trash?

“You know how much I hate a stinky house, taking out the trash is super important. Right now I’m busy giving the dog a belly rub and finishing my afternoon wine. I just can’t do both at the same time so, who else could we get to help with that?”