

# Weakness Into Strength

Partnerships can fill in the gaps to bolster business success

STORY BY DAN STALP | PHOTO BY KENNY JOHNSON



**Q:** *I am an established agent with a national insurance company. I am very clear about my strengths and weaknesses. Any advice on how I can take my business to the next level by partnering with another agent? Also, any ideas how to efficiently find the right partner?* —Kathy Strickland, agent, New York Life Insurance Company

**A:** Congratulations on succeeding in a business where many more agents don't succeed than do. I can tell by your question you are open to challenge/growth/change and appear to be quite self-aware. Both are competencies leading to success in selling.

Typically, when we are working in our strengths, we receive energy from our work and are energized at day's end. When we are working in our weaknesses, we expend more energy than normal and are drained at day's end.

The key from a micro level is: What activities drain you in your current role? This will allow you to be very clear about what competencies you desire in that partnering agent. It might be someone who loves to prospect. Or maybe they are a great problem solver, have great attention to detail or enjoy paperwork. On a macro level, look at personality characteristics: You might want honesty, confidence or generosity.

For anyone considering a partnership, I ask: Would you rather have 100 percent of zero, or would you rather have 50 percent of something? Depending on your answer, you'll know your likelihood to be drawn

toward partnering with another agent or repelled by it.

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**Q:** *When I sell a large client, the focus is on the project and the client. But after the job is complete I find myself with little or no sales pipeline. Any suggestions?* —Scott Kelley, president, Earthway Enterprises

**A:** Your question could be deemed a good problem to have. Having said that, it is still a problem. I have a couple of ideas to level out the highs and lows in your business.

1. Determine how many new attempts to contact new business opportunities you need each working day.

2. Determine what constitutes an "A" client in your business, along with a "B" client and a "C" client.

## NEW ATTEMPTS

Sales can appear to be very random and unpredictable. As long as you believe that, you get to be right. One of our Sandler Rules is: Inspect what you expect. Which means: There is a specific formula to what works for you. But most people have no idea what that formula is.

By starting with the end in mind, you can back into what behaviors lead to the amount of revenue you want to produce. Those key performance indicators can be: average sale, number of sales, number of

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appointments, number of conversations with decision makers and attempts to reach a prospect.

So let's pretend you determine you need to attempt to reach three new prospects a day. Knowing this number and actually accomplishing it will reduce or eliminate not having a sales pipeline after your large client is done.

## "A," "B" AND "C" CLIENTS

You want approximately 35 percent of your revenue coming from A clients, 55 percent coming from B clients and 10 percent coming from C clients. By defining (revenue-wise) what constitutes an A, B or C client, you can now back into how many of those clients you need in each category.

Once you know these numbers, you can be more specific about what size clients you need to make your numbers work based on your current mix of clients. Any time you can give forethought to what you really want, you are more likely to get it.

So the moral of the story is: The little things do add up. Doing a little prospecting every day will allow you to have a fresh, clean sales pipeline. **KCB**

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