



# **Business - Understanding Your Value and How to Market it - Adding Value**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drhindahancock.com](mailto:office@drhindahancock.com)

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Often clients will return to you over and over again while also referring your services to others because they believe they receive added value. Even sole professionals are able to provide this for clients through planning and automation. Following are a number of ways in which you can go "above and beyond" what other businesses are offering.

**1. Provide appropriate referrals** - When a client asks for a product or service that I do not provide, I ensure that they understand who does offer the service and give them the contact information for someone who would best meet their needs. There are many occasions when the client can access free or low-cost resources but did not know that until they talked with me. When regular clients require a referral letter to another professional, I prepare and send this without cost for them and usually provide a business card and brochure of the professional for them to read.

**2. Handouts** - Whenever I find that I am repeating myself over and over again, I prepare a handout with the information which I can give to the clients. "My Favourite Authors" lists experts in various specialities which I recommend. The handout allows me to circle the author which would be best suited for the client and space to write the name(s) of particular books that the client can access through a library or bookstore.

**3. Offer to have other family members attend sessions** - Sometimes a client is referred to me but is more comfortable having someone attend with them to answer questions, provide information and provide general support. Over the years, I have found that allowing this situation often helps with understanding and follow through.

**4. Respond to crisis calls quickly** - Your client's crisis must not be your crisis, however, a few minutes of conversation by telephone can usually help the person to relax and put things in perspective or set up some action steps that will help them to deal with the issue at hand. Showing that you are available to help them deal with problems helps to build trust.

**5. Providing small bonus items or services** - A bottle of cold water on a hot day, colourful stickers for children or calling a taxi can give comfort to the client.

Value-added means that you provide competent and quality goods and services as a standard or practice but then go a little further to provide extra. Some businesses have a popcorn machine in the waiting room as a gift for the clients. A dentist may offer the patient a new toothbrush after an appointment. You might help to educate the client with a brochure, audio product, handout or book.

Providing value-added service does not usually cost you more than time and creativity but it can make a big difference to your bottom line because the client will turn to you again and recommend that their friends and family also contact you. One of your goals is to help the client view the business relationship with you as a wonderful adventure.