

[Why You Are Uncomfortable Selling](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on June 6th, 2013

This week I have focused on “selling” legal services. As you know I hate a sentence that includes “selling” clients. But, as lawyers we are subtly selling ourselves in every encounter we have.

You know exactly why you are uncomfortable selling. Each time the thought crosses your mind, you immediately think of your worst experience when someone was trying to sell you something. The image that may come to mind may be something like the guy in the photo below.

What did you think about the person trying to sell you? You NEVER want a client, potential client or referral source to look at you in that way.



Let me tell you a story. There is a financial advisor in town I will call Jim. Years ago his secretary called me to see if I could play golf with Jim on Saturday. I wondered why Jim himself had not called me and politely told his secretary I was busy.

Fast forward, Jim finally corners me (that is how I felt and you never want a client to feel that way) and invites me to eat lunch in his office. I did not want to be rude, so I said yes.

When his secretary sent me the menu, I decided to order the most expensive thing on the menu because I knew Jim would be pushing me to use him. I did, however, expect to witness a smooth “sales pitch.”

When I joined him for lunch, Jim started by telling me the history of his company. Never once in our conversation did Jim ask anything about my business. I could not tell whether Jim even knew I had left my law practice to work with lawyers and law firms.

Near the end of the lunch Jim asked:

Cordell, how would you like to be able to put more money away tax-free than you can with your 401K?

I assumed correctly that Jim was talking about a Defined Benefit Plan. Interestingly, Jim had never asked me questions to determine whether I made enough money for a defined benefit plan to make sense. He also never asked the questions that would lead to what I would have to do for my other employees.

I told Jim that MY financial advisor was exploring that option for me.

When I got home, I told Nancy I was sure Jim would send the follow-up email within 24 hours. Sure enough, he sent it and ended with:

Please let me know when you are ready to set up the defined benefit plan we discussed.

I bet you have experienced someone like Jim trying to sell you the way he tried to sell me. That is a good reason you are uncomfortable trying to “sell” your friends who work for companies you would like to hire you.

Clients do not want to hire lawyers who are “needy or greedy.” Essentially if you take an approach that is opposite of what Jim did, you will feel better about your relationship.

What do you think Jim should have done differently? Please share your ideas with me and readers. At the very least, I believe he should have:

1. Called me himself to invite me to play golf. If I accepted the four-hour golf round, our conversation should have been about golf not trying to sell me his services.
2. Before our meeting he should have done substantial research about me and my current business.
3. He might have asked if I preferred to go out to lunch or have lunch in his office.
4. During lunch he could have asked me questions about my business and demonstrate through some of his questions that he had done homework before.
5. He might have asked: “As you look ahead with your client development coaching, what are you most excited about? (I got this idea from [Andrew Sobel](#): See: [Strong–And Weak–Questions To Win The Sale](#))
6. He might have asked if I thought it would be valuable to defer more income or he might have asked that I share with him what my retirement goals are.
7. Then he might have shared with me something his company had written about defined benefit plans.

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