

Interview with Doug Fletcher—How to Win Client Business

The audio and transcript have been edited for brevity and clarity.

[00:00:00] **Dave Bayless:** Doug, you already had a successful book on business development for consulting firms. Why did you write a new one, and who's it for?

[00:00:10] **Doug Fletcher:** I think one of the things that made the first book unique was that it was not just another book on selling services. We really tried to get inside the consumer behavior of a prospective client and trying to understand the decision-making journey. The lens was focused on, you know, the client and their thought process and their decision-making journey. My new book takes what we learned from that process, and it focuses the attention on the professional that's seeking to win that client business.

In all the professional services, you have to demonstrate the ability to win client business in order to progress your career. So, the target audience is really any professional that is on the cusp of needing to demonstrate their ability to drive revenue.

If you're going out on your own, and you wish to establish your own practice, you're going to need to be able to win client business, or you won't be around for very long. Most of these people have never had to win client business before. Those are the people I wrote for and hope it's been modestly helpful in some way.

[00:01:20] **Dave Bayless:** When you think about the purpose of the book and what you'd want people to do after reading it, what constitutes a win from an author's perspective?

[00:01:31] **Doug Fletcher:** From being, say, a leader of people to a rainmaker, there is a huge attrition rate for a variety of reasons. One of which is many people self-select out. The thought for many people is I don't want to be a salesperson. We think of the guy at the used car lot with a plaid jacket or the person selling condos or Tupperware or something like that. And we just go, no, that's not us. I hope that the book will help them understand that to be successful at winning client business, you don't have to be a salesperson, at least not in a way that most of us think of a salesperson. It's really all about building relationships with the people that you hope to serve and demonstrating your ability to help them and to earn their respect and then to build trust.

[00:02:22] **Dave Bayless:** Under what circumstances would you advise another consultant that writing a book is a good idea?

[00:02:31] **Doug Fletcher:** In the professional services there is this thing referred to in academia as information asymmetry. If you are a tax attorney and I need sophisticated tax help, I don't know the right questions I should even ask. There's this huge gap between the knowledge of the doer and the prospective client. I think in many ways, writing helps demonstrate your expertise in a way that removes that uneasy feeling in a prospective client's gut about is this person really good at what they do, because I don't know tax law, but I need to know that Dave is a tax law expert.

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There are many ways you can demonstrate your expertise. Writing is one of them. In my book, I outline a dozen other ways in which you can demonstrate your expertise. If you enjoy writing, even if it's email newsletters or blogs, the transition from writing a blog or an email newsletter to writing a book is a natural progression. If you are not a person that enjoys the process of writing, don't feel compelled to write because there's many other ways in which we can demonstrate our expertise.

For example, speaking at conferences: there are many talented, wonderful speakers that demonstrate their expertise to a public audience. Another is serving on professional boards and councils. If you don't like writing, don't panic. There are many other ways you can accomplish the same objectives without having to write a book.