



Remove Your Invisible Barrier to Attract More Clients

When visiting my parents one bright sunny weekend, I noticed that my mother had a beautiful plant with purple flowers resting on her window sill. As I was admiring her plant, a hummingbird approached the window desperately trying to reach these flowers. He must have tried three or four times each time banging his beak against the window. I thought he must have learned his lesson when he flew away to pause on a nearby wire. As he darted his head back and forth, he shook off his frustration but looked completely confused as to what just happened. Instead of flying away, the tenacious little hummingbird flew in again, banging his beak against the window, in a frantic attempt to break through and reach the flowers.

It got me thinking about the concept of invisible constraints or barriers many small business owners experience in today's marketplace. It's kind of like the hummingbird who tried the same approach over and over expecting different results. It also reminded me of the elephants at the circus that are tied down to a small stake. It seems almost silly to believe anyone would think this would actually prevent an elephant from breaking free, but the conditioning comes years earlier when they are young and their feet are secured with a chain. Their attempts to free themselves are so painful, and, as they get older, they never try again. That experience imprinted this invisible constraint.

The hummingbird and elephant parallel the marketing problems of small business owners who limit themselves by what they have done in the past instead of looking at a new way of connecting with their ideal clients. Just like the hummingbird who tries the same approach or the elephant that remains apathetic, you may be affected by invisible constraints that you are unable to see, but are acting as a window blocking you from reaching your goals.

When I first meet with my clients, one of the things we review is their tactics for attracting clients. I hear the usual responses, including advertising, marketing, networking, and contacting their existing clients. When they mention that they are always busy, but they are not seeing the results, we dig a little deeper. While we drill down to specifics like marketing frequency, business systems, marketing systems, stay-in-touch systems and sales funnels, we start to chip away at how connected, streamlined, and effective these tactics are for them. As they review these tactics, I usually hear how this or that won't work and other limitations. Once they hear themselves aloud, they start to realize that they are like that hummingbird hitting that invisible window. When they let go of the self-limiting mindset, emotional barriers, apathy, ego, or bad habits that are getting in the way of a new or different approach, they create innovative ideas and solutions.



After working together, they almost always realize the very first step to breaking through their invisible barrier is when they became self aware. Creating awareness of the basic infrastructure where you think and act in the world is especially important. When you create that kind of awareness about how you're naturally hardwired and the way you think about things, there is a fundamental internal shift in your ability to think and act beyond existing limits or views. You begin to open up to a different way of problem solving.

When one of my clients had a mental block on where to look for a specialized resource for one of her projects, she used a coaching question I often used with her, which is "where in your life could you find the answer right now?" The question is based on the premise that everything you need is in your life right now. As she thought more about it, she realized that her resource was right in front of her the entire time. She found the person in a volunteer group she belonged to. She was trying to look everywhere other than the existing resources that were in her life at the moment. She also realized that she tried to do everything herself (a throwback from times where she couldn't ask for help because she felt she had to do it all alone). With this new found awareness, she began to also think about other aspects of her life and business breaking through some of her self-imposed limitations.

Often times, if you are unaware of your framework that you base your thinking and decision making, you overlook that which is right in front of you. Once you become aware of that framework, it's almost as if an invisible window is lifted and the solution appears. A mindset shift can be one of the most powerful marketing strategies to attracting more clients with less effort.