

Are You Guilty of the “Father Knows Best” Syndrome?

“People don’t want what I have to offer!” lamented my client, Diane.

After a little bit of questioning I discovered that Diane was creating articles, products and programs based on what she knew (felt) her clients needed to hear. It wasn’t that the information she was offering was bad or wrong or even uncalled for. It just wasn’t what her clients –and potential clients- were looking for.

She was guilty of what I call the “Father Knows Best” syndrome.

That’s where you decide what programs and products to offer your clients without first asking them what they want. And I have to say, Diane is not alone in this tendency to offer broccoli when what the crowd is clamoring for is ice cream.

We’re often confident about the solutions our clients need to their challenges. And we’re often accurate in our assumptions. We have a storehouse of information and experience to offer, plus a unique perspective (standing outside the challenge they’re experiencing) and can see things that may not be obvious to them.

The problem with that is **people don’t typically take action based on what they need, they take action based on what they want** (and then convince themselves they need it).

So, back to Diane and her lament.

“Does this mean I have to totally revamp my services?” she asked a little fearfully.

No, in fact, it doesn’t. What it does mean for all of us caught in this situation is that we would do well to **ask our Core Audience what it is they want** and simply reframe what we are offering so it’s a match.

In Diane’s case, we were working on developing a client-capturing freebie information product for her website (what I call an “Irresistible Free Taste”). I coached her to shake up her thinking a little bit. Instead of creating a product based on what she felt was “good for them” (how to become self-actualized and step into their own power), I suggested she take the information she’d gathered through her surveys (they wanted to look good, get rid of stress at home and have more energy) and find the overlap.

She could help them see that when they’re operating in the world in an authentic, powerful way, it will reduce stress, get rid of worry lines and generate more energy. Because that’s what’s going to have meaning for her audience, and that’s what they’ll pay for.

Finding out what your Core Audience wants is as simple as asking them. You can do this with a fun program like Survey Monkey. Or you can do it the old-fashioned way and call them up. Whichever method you choose, you’re sure to get very useful, and enlightening, information about what they’re really wanting to hear from you.

[On a side note, whenever I do a survey I'm always amazed at how often the title I'm sure is fabulous is NOT the one my Core Audience likes best, or how often the topic that I think is so important ranks a solid third or fourth in their estimation.]

That insight into their preferences is vital to your success. I don't consider it pandering. I think it's really more about establishing rapport, and speaking their "language."

So the next time you're developing a program or writing an article or deciding on the topic for your info product, **ask the people who know best – your clients.**

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