

Marketing is personal

How do you respond when someone asks you for a favor?

Ideally, when someone asks you for a favor (some information, a quote, some advice) you respond nicely. Sometimes you may not be able or willing to grant the favor, and in this case, you still should be nice. Why? because people do business with people they like. And being not nice makes people not like you.

Sample negative conversation

Me: Hi, I am looking for a web designer for my client, and I am wondering if I could get a quote from you.

Graphic designer (sounding grouchy): (Big sigh) well, I don't know. What kind of website?

Me: Mostly static, about 10 pages or so, and with some room to make changes, like on the staffing page.

GD (mumbling and sounding pissed): Hmm, well, we work with CMS, and it's hard to just give you a quote, but you know websites start around \$20,000.

Me: Well, it sounds like we aren't a good fit for each other. Thanks.

GD (sounds relieved to not have to deal with me): OK.

This graphic designer, whom I had found listed through the AIGA (contact me if you want her name), was downright nasty. I have made many of these calls, and for the most part, the designers I have spoken to have been helpful. They ask questions, and they say they will get back to me with an estimate. Even if the estimate is not in my ballpark, I now have a graphic designer contact. You never know what can come up.

What would have made this conversation go better.

If she had said something like: “Thanks for your call. I am happy to do an estimate for you, but you should know our website designs start at \$20,000. Is that within your budget?”

Marketing is personal because it is people who make decisions, and personal biases affect decisions. Like I said before, we'd rather do business with people we like (or at least respect). Sometimes it is not your credentials, or your abilities, or your writing skill or your design skill, it is your likeability. Being polite and being nice can go a long way to getting you business, and conversely, being rude and being nasty can almost assure you of losing business.

