

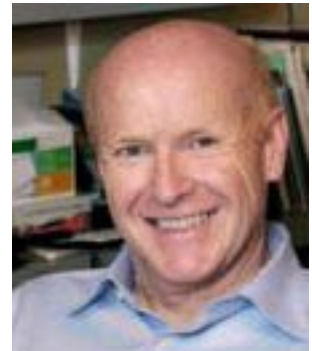
## Two Words that Get Prospects' Attention

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When approaching business owners, some advisors talk about taking a wealth management approach to provide integrated advice around their finances.

A couple of years back I chaired a conference at which one of the speakers was a woman who built her business around successful entrepreneurs. In this woman's view, that approach is too vague and generic.



### **Getting in the door with business owners**

Her experience is that to get busy business owners' attention, you have to focus on something that's specific and is causing concern and frustration – and so is a hot button for them.

She suggested saying something like:

*“A common concern for many of the successful business owners I work with is increasing the interest rate they get on cash balances in their company bank accounts.*

*Are you satisfied with the interest rate you're getting on your bank balances?”*

Almost always the answer is no. Sometimes it leads to a short meeting with the owner, on other occasions she gets passed off to their VP of finance or comptroller.

But the fact is that this increases her chances of getting in the door. And even if she initially meets with the comptroller, she inevitably gets in front of the owner.

### **Tapping into prospects' hot buttons**

The same principle applies to other types of prospects.

When approaching prospective clients, some advisors talk about their plan-based approach to hitting client objectives or their focus on building conservative portfolios that allow clients to sleep at night.



The problem with these approaches is that they're too generic.

Given today's level of investor anxiety, consider instead two words that will get through to many prospects.

Those two words – *Managing risk*

Start by saying something like:

*The major focus of the work I do is helping clients manage the risk in their portfolios*

Your goal with that initial statement is to get a prospective client's attention.

Next go on to say:

*That means first of all getting real clarity on each client's long-term objectives.*

*Once we've done that, we construct a portfolio to achieve those objectives with as little risk as possible – we focus on something called risk-adjusted returns, employing the same methods to optimize risk and return as the most sophisticated pensions.*

*In fact the academics who devised the principles we use to construct portfolios have won the Nobel Prize.*

Again, your goal is to get a prospect interested enough to want to hear more.

You could go on to say:

*In our process, we identify tradeoffs – in some cases we may have to revisit your objectives to keep risk to an acceptable level.*

*And then finally, we monitor risk in portfolios on an ongoing basis – and where necessary make adjustments as the environment changes.*

### **Other hot buttons**

To get a prospects attention today, you need to focus on their hot buttons – managing risk isn't the only one, but it's a big one.

Other hot buttons include saving taxes and protecting assets.

And sometimes you'll run into someone with a disabled grandchild or who is attached to a charity, so their big concern is how to take care of that grandchild or charity.



So the next time you're planning to talk to a prospect, consider taking two minutes beforehand to ask two questions:

First, how can I tailor my approach to this prospect's hot buttons?

And second, if I don't know his or her hot buttons, how can I find out?

Over time, those two minutes to focus on the issues that motivate each prospect could just be the most valuable time you'll spend over the course of your week.

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*Dan Richards conducts programs to help advisors gain and retain clients and is an award winning faculty member in the MBA program at the University of Toronto. To see more of his written and video commentaries and to reach him, go to [www.strategicimperatives.ca](http://www.strategicimperatives.ca).*

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