



THE 9X YES! FORMULA: HOW MY CLIENT MADE A \$198,500 OFFER INSTEAD OF \$22K - AND GOT A YES!

"You want \$22,000 ... for doing what?"

That's what a potential client said to Dani, an experienced professional in the world of corporate people issues, right before showing her the door.

Disheartened by that incident, she wanted to check with me before taking a similar offer to a potential new client.

Like many of my clients, Dani had left corporate just over a year before and emerged from there fairly burned out. Despite years of trying, she hadn't found her company receptive to her new ideas; instead, they seemed threatened by them. In the high-pressure environment of office politics, she was rarely able to let her guard down and be herself.

Dani wanted to pursue her dream of serving employed people by working with companies that were actually open to her ideas and new ways of doing things. She wanted to bring her true self to her work.

And although she had a lot going for her, Dani's business had been stuck at an earnings plateau. She did well attracting a handful of small clients but found it hard to land the bigger fish with her offers.

And just now I had seen why.

It was right there in her proposal, undermining her credibility. **Dani thought what you may be thinking - that a low price would ensure acceptance of her offer.**

OFFERS DON'T GET REJECTED BECAUSE OF PRICE

There are numerous disadvantages that come from pricing offers low:

- **Clients may think it's a reflection of low value.** I once won a project against a firm that had priced their offer one-fourth of what I did. The client later said to me, "We could tell from your offer that the other guys had not understood the project." Wow!
- **Future projects will be benchmarked at that level.** Those who price low to win the business often find the clients unwilling to accept higher prices on other work down the road. You lock

yourself into rates that don't bring out your best. Do you really want to be the Low Price Leader? Speaking of which...

- **Low fees don't allow you to do your best work.** So the client says yes – hurray! – and the work begins. The problem is, these time-based (hourly, daily) rates constrain rather than inspire. They don't allow you to explore or innovate. And what about solutions that come to you while on a hike or at 3 a.m.? How do you bill for those? And lastly, since you're being paid by the day you're not incentivized to get results fast which is in everyone's best interest.

I call it A Small Habit: working with too-small clients who didn't really *get* her value, cramming her work into a small box of low fees, trying to do less and less so she could get in the door. It was in no one's best interest – not Dani's, not the clients, not the employees whose lives she wanted to improve.

In addition to making herself small, Dani - like many consultants, experts and executive coaches - was trapped in daily rates, one of the "traditions" of her profession.

OFFERS DON'T GET REJECTED BECAUSE THEY BREAK WITH TRADITION

She figured the CEOs to whom she was presenting her services would expect a daily rate. What else could she do? All her peers priced their services this way. Back at corporate she herself had hired consultants and experts, and they all charged daily rates.

"That's just how it's done," she said to me. "*Isn't it?*"

"Maybe that's how *most* consultants do it," I replied. "But let me tell you about a way that will work better for you, for the client and everyone else involved."

Dani's visit to me was prompted by the appearance of a potential client that, compared to the small guys, was HUGE (~\$30M and rapidly growing)! Her impact was going to be as well. I wanted her to be compensated accordingly. *Fairly*.

I helped Dani increase the price on the offer she made to the new prospect. A LOT. And I also helped her to ensure it got accepted.

Before I go into how I helped her, I want to review the mistakes Dani made previously when presenting her offers that had caused her other prospects to choke on the price.

MISTAKE #1 (THE MOST COMMON): TOO MUCH FOCUS ON PROCESS

The bulk of Dani's presentation to the last guy was an explanation of the process she would use – training days, titles of trainings, descriptions of those trainings. She went on and on, outlining how everything would work. Just one thing was missing:

What would it DO for the client?

I imagined the CEO thinking to himself, “OK, but how will this help us?” I’m sure there was a sense of, “So what? What if we *did* do all this for \$22,000? What would we *get*?”

I bet you’re wondering how we got the new client to pay \$198,500 for Dani’s help. ;)

As I mentioned before, price is not the issue. Discussions – and resistance – may seem to be about price, but the real issue with the offer lies deeper ... in something the client DOESN’T see.

The *real* reason you get haggled with, delayed or outright rejected is this:

◆ THE CLIENT DOESN’T “GET” THE VALUE OF THE OFFER ◆

They don’t realize the value, because *they don’t know what they’re getting for their money*. So what are we really talking about?

VALUE = WHAT I’M GETTING FOR MY MONEY

Dani is a smart, skillful professional who THOUGHT she’d explained the value she brought in her offers. After all, she wrote about her clients’ goals and the way she would help them achieve them: training days, training curricula, skills measurement.

But it’s not enough to describe the project that way.

Dani stopped me, adding, “That’s not all! There will be phone interviews and assessments and” Yes, there were pretty much all the things that fire up experts but bore or confuse clients. 😊

We tend to make assumptions when presenting offers, to connect the dots in our head. We know how training will teach skills, and how those skills turn into new behaviors and how the behaviors translate into business results.

But most clients will not automatically make the connection between your training and their business results.

And the interesting thing is that they don’t know what they don’t know. Since it isn’t obvious to them, they won’t *ask* Dani to connect the dots. Instead, they often simply say, “It’s too much.”

Not because it’s too expensive for what Dani is going to do for them. **It’s too expensive because they don’t understand why they need to do these activities to get the results they desire.**

And another thing ...

MISTAKE #2: THE “CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE” TRAP

The worst thing you can do when creating and presenting your offer is what I call “**Choose Your Own Adventure**” options. You know those children’s books that have multiple variations in the story based upon what the reader chooses?

Well, in these offers the potential client is given the chance to choose – from Option A in which the consultant will do these kinds of things, or Option B in which they do more of this and less of that. Believe it or not, I’ve seen as many as *seven* different options offered!

Who is doing the advising here if the one brought in to *lead* is saying, “Hey, YOU decide!”?

In that situation human nature often wins. The maximalists will want the biggest, the frugal will take the smallest and those who don’t like decisions will choose the middle one. However, “a confused mind never buys,” so many will simply choose “None of the above.”

What I recommend doing – and what I do in my OWN proposals – is **advise the client what to do next**. If you choose to offer options, keep them to a few (ideally, two) and be open with the client about how choosing each one will impact the outcomes.

No matter how you structure your offer, be sure that their desired outcomes, not your process, are the basis for your client’s decision.

MISTAKE #3: NO “MUST-DO-NOW” URGENCY

Dani was clear that when presenting her offer, she should talk less about process and more about outcomes. But she was confused.

Throughout her negotiations with this new \$30M prospect, **Dani had been talking about outcomes.**

“Develop better leaders.”

“Leverage your employees’ strengths.”

Everyone she met with on their team was using this language, and it seemed to resonate with all of them.

Who *doesn’t* want to have better leaders? What’s not great about leveraging your employees’ strengths?

The problem is that those both of those are aspirational nice-to-haves. They are not hair-on-fire urgent, “mission-critical” or top priority. “Someday we’ll do those things,” thinks the CEO, but that’s not what kept him up last night. *His insomnia* is where Dani needed to focus.

When you focus on problems – what is NOT working – you find pain that clients will *pay* to solve.

For example, Dani's potential client was growing so rapidly (their goal was to add \$25M, nearly doubling their size in the next year), they couldn't fill sales positions fast enough. Dealing with not-yet-qualified sales teams was frustrating for talented sales managers who'd been promoted to leadership roles for which they themselves weren't yet ready.

Drilling down into this level of detail hit on problems that were putting the young company's goals at risk – to the tune of \$25M. (Boom!) The possibility of solving them got the client energized.

Dani was thrilled, too, because she finally had a client that could *receive* the FULL genius she could bring to them. She *knew* she could help alleviate the frustrations of those sales leaders AND help the company close the gap between current sales and their potential.

When Dani confidently described how much *more the sales teams could earn* after she worked with them, the client forgot all about her fees and just wanted his expensive problem solved!

FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES SHOWS CLIENTS THE REAL VALUE

Suddenly \$198,500 started to look *really small* in comparison to a problem that could ensure their goal of \$25M in the next year!

That's how Dani's offer for 9 TIMES (9X!) her original fee was accepted by her client.

If it looks like a magic trick just happened, and you're not sure how, let me explain what we did.

Dani stopped talking about boring process and focused on the value the client wanted. She removed the options and *advised* the client what they should do (based on her expertise and experience) and how each thing she did was going to help them solve their growing pains and achieve their goals.

If helping the sales team seems a lot like "developing better leaders" and "leveraging employees' strengths," you're right. But by phrasing it in terms of specific, measurable outcomes, instead of aspirations, Dani's client knew exactly what they were investing in and what they were going to get.

A FEW IMPORTANT NOTES

Like all my clients, Dani was motivated by the chance to serve authentically, not by the money. And that can be hard to believe when we're talking about a \$200K project. The truth is, we almost always get the best results from clients when they make big investments. It's about commitment, not the money.

Before I blew up Dani's offer I warned her this would only work for someone who gets stellar results when working with clients. (Yes, Dani nodded.) I reminded her she must have boundaries of steel to work this way. (Again, yes. Dani brought decades of people management skills to her work.)

And, finally: "Your proposal may get rejected." Yes, doing it a new way had an upside: The client was going to take more responsibility, get better results and "own" the project. Dani was going to work very differently, earn a lot more and enter a new level of elite consultants who call their own shots.

But the downside is your client may die of sticker shock and never recover. If that happens, your proposal may get rejected.

We sat with this one awhile. Dani was at a turning point. She could continue to work as she had been, only harder, to push her business beyond the ceiling she'd hit. Or, she could try something new with this one and change her business forever.

She decided to trust her intuition (and the Universe) and go for it.

A few weeks later Dani and I celebrated wildly when her proposal for 9 TIMES her usual price was *accepted* by her client. Sure, the work had just begun. But being fairly compensated, Dani was more motivated than ever to get spectacular results – as well as testimonials and referrals.

ARE YOU READY TO 9X YOUR OFFERS?

It's probably unrealistic to expect to 9X the fee on *every* offer you make. But you've now seen what's possible with Dani – and she's just one of *many* of my clients I helped package and price their services as transformational, value-based offers and add hundreds of thousands in new revenues. If you're ready to break OUT of the Small Habit and 9X *your* offers, here are 3 questions to ask yourself:

1. Are you working with perfect clients?

Perfect clients are those for whom exactly what you do is exactly what they need. Many of the initial clients Dani had worked with (or offered her services to) were too small to truly benefit from her skills. When she finally found one that was a perfect fit for her, their pains and opportunities were right in the center of her gifts. Are the clients you're currently attracting a perfect fit?

2. Do your offers deliver valuable outcomes?

Time-based pricing and process-driven offers (like training, coaching and strategic plans) are *commodities*. You will be stuck as a commodity unless you deliver *results!* To multiply your current prices, your offer should clearly outline the results or outcomes the client gets and their benefits.

3. Are you confident in your ability to *sell* your high ticket offer?

Many consultants dread selling when they're making relatively *low* priced offers. The idea of making a BIG promise and naming a BIG price is even scarier and riskier! The fact is, the very actions that will lead a prospective client to trusting you enough to purchase are the same ones that help you build authority, leadership and confidence. Are you there yet?

Had Dani taken her usual proposal in, she'd have left \$176,500 on the table. Don't make that mistake by continuing to operate as you always have. It's time to charge an amount that is aligned with the results you can achieve.

IF YOU'RE WONDERING HOW THIS WOULD WORK IN YOUR BUSINESS, LET'S TALK

The approach I used with Dani can help you attract right-fit, perfect clients, increase your chances of closing more clients AND add zeros and commas to your prices.

But to be honest, not everyone can pull it off. Nor can they do so on the first attempt. If you'd like my support and guidance to land \$100K+ clients, schedule a complimentary consultation with me here: <http://talkwithsamantha.com>

Last thing ...

I've been a consultant for 18 years and have created dozens of high-end, value-based offers. While some of them fell through, the great majority I wrote for my clients and my business were high 5- and 6-figure proposals that ended in handshakes, checks and happy clients. Let's do the same for you.

To your abundant success,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S'.

Samantha Hartley is Founder & President of Enlightened Marketing.

Enlightened Marketing offers effective marketing techniques to increase sales and attract perfect clients without selling out on your values.

WHO IS SAMANTHA HARTLEY?

I'm Samantha Hartley of Enlightened Marketing. I work with overwhelmed women consultants and experts who are too busy to grow; spending too much time with clients and under-earning relative to their value.

I help them double (and sometimes quintuple) their businesses without exhaustion by attracting perfect clients and making \$100K+ offers. As a result, they become more joyful business owners.

Before starting this business, I worked in international marketing for The Coca-Cola Company in Russia and its Atlanta headquarters. I live on Martha's Vineyard with my husband, cat and our two big dogs.

