

Thoughts on a Financial Services Career

“A Year of Inspiration”

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System & Support

Patty acknowledges two primary contributors to her success. An effective sales system and budget for an assistant. Both of these proved invaluable and allowed her to take her business to the next level.

Early in her career she had a sales program available to her, which allowed her to focus on her business and helped her to specialize in particular markets, which was very important. She experienced her production plummet when she moved to a different company that didn't offer a similar type of sales system. Since moving to Guardian she uses a sales system called *The Living Balance Sheet*®. Patty has found that she is much more productive and focused when she has a system in place. She uses this program as core in her practice.

Mentors Along the Way

Patty's father was very influential in her life. As she graduated college with a major in finance she started looking for a job. After talking to recruiters she felt very dejected. They refused to look at her credentials and accomplishments and told her to go back to her home town to try to start some kind of career. Her father had taken over the family's small life insurance agency around this time and it started thriving. At one time he had approximately 30 agents. Her dad offered her a position at his agency selling life insurance. She wasn't very excited about this option because she would not be making very much money. He told her, "If you listen to me and let me coach you, by the end of the year you will probably be able to double your salary". Even when the tough times hit around her second or third year in the business, her father was always there to lift her up. He made her work hard to obtain her own clients and made her responsible for them. When her business was suffering, he was always able to point her in the right direction and improve her attitude to continue to persist.

It's Not About You

One book that really turned Patty around when she was at a plateau was *“Twenty One Law's of Leadership”*, by J.C. Maxwell. She studied this book in a small group. Even though she felt it was geared towards men, it made her think of herself as an equal with so many men that were in the same business. Two additional books that have influenced her are *“The Seven Habits of Highly*

Effective People” which she still reviews to keep focused on good habits that are critical to success. *“The Purpose Driven Life”* by Rick Warren is spiritually based, but the whole theme of the book promotes helping others.

The first line in the book states, “It’s not about you.” When you go into this business and realize it’s not about you, but instead what other people need, it can turn your whole practice around. Patty says these days women are pulled in so many directions and this book can help keep things in perspective.

You Have to Get Those Referrals

One of the most destructive habits for Patty was not getting referrals from her clients. “Women don’t like to ask for help. We like people to depend on us, instead of us depending on them.” It took her years to get over this, but she has learned to prospect very well. She would have made her life and career so much easier if she had learned early on the art of getting referrals. She now talks about referrals during the first conversation she has with a client and takes a “pay it forward” type of attitude with her clients. If her clients like how she has helped them prepare, then she wants to do the same for the people they care about.

The other destructive habit Patty formed early was letting her clients dictate her calendar. Early in her business she was available out of being desperate, but over the years her clients came to expect it and as she became busier, it caused a lot of stress. She now utilizes her conference room and requests her clients come to her office to meet with her on her schedule and has found most clients are very respectful of her time.

Take Her Advice

“Work hard in the beginning. It’s easy to get off track, especially when you’re young. It’s easy to not spend your time like you should.” Be disciplined about your prospecting and time management. She suggests new agents learn good habits in these areas early on in their careers.

Another piece of advice Patty has for women is to just get in front of your clients and do the best you can. Women tend to want to know everything before they sit down in front of a client. We want to have every answer for every question. With tax laws and an economy that is always changing you will never have all the answers. Just get in front of the client and do the best you can. If you don’t have all the answers don’t hesitate to say, “I don’t know”, or “let me get back to you“. As long as you’re open, honest and caring, your clients will respect that.

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