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## PRIORITIZING YOUR FOCUS

The question that most of our clients have is “what do I do and in what order”? If I had only five minutes with you I would say two things: 1) Go to the top, and 2) Focus on value.

By “go to the top”, I mean go to the top decision maker that you can talk with in every organization that makes contact with you or that you are trying to attract. This means that when a teacher or corporate coordinator contacts you, send them information right away and schedule the program if that is what you normally do. Then afterwards follow-up with a letter, a note, or a customer satisfaction survey to both the teacher/coordinator of the group and to their supervisor.

In the letter simply let them know that it was nice working with their group (be specific about which group you worked with) and that you are hoping to talk with them about a school-wide or organization-wide approach. You might suggest that a more comprehensive and on-going relationship between your organization and theirs would benefit a greater number of students or employees. Include specific highlights from their program, observations, or a list of key lessons that were identified during your final debrief. Consider sending a photograph of the group as well. It is also critical that you call to check in and see if they had any feedback about the program. If you send a follow up letter to every client and to the next higher level decision maker, you will improve your chances of working with entire school systems or multiple groups within an organization. So, go to the top.

If each time you do a program and follow-up using the “Go to the top” process, eventually you will end up with the Principle, the head of recreation for a university, the Director for training, or the president of the company that you just worked with. These are the only people that can make decisions about next year’s budget and about programs for very large numbers of attendees. Thanks to this kind of thinking, one of my clients now serves over 1,000 employees each year from just one organization and that same client is now working on agreements with entire school systems. If you want to grow and you want to take one step at a time, then go to the top every time. Once you’re at the top, it is time to practice the second rule which is value.

By focusing on value I mean the values of the decision makers with which you work. Never forget that decision makers choose to do a program with you based on your ability to communicate value. Not price, but **value**. In order to communicate the highest level of value, you need to first listen to their needs, their challenges, and their dreams. Ask them what they really need to see happen with the group.

When asked by a prospective group to describe what you do, give a response (“we help groups achieve new standards for teamwork, trust, and communication and we do that through incredible experiences that are professionally facilitated”) but then move quickly into talking about their group(s). Find out what they need to have happen as a result of the program. Ask them to describe the group so that you have all the ages, gender, and physical



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characteristics of the group. Then focus on the function that the group needs to perform. If they are a school group, the function they perform together is learning. If they are a corporate group, the function that is most critical is supporting the corporation's objectives. You need to make clear connections between what you do and the function of the group that you are going to serve. For example, to a teacher there is real value in your ability to help that teacher create a more cohesive classroom where behaviors support the learning process. For a corporate decision maker, value lies in dynamics like employee retention, improved efficiency, and higher productivity.

When you focus on value, the price for your programs becomes less important to the client. If you can communicate enough value, your rates can increase. I am not suggesting that you should try to get the highest price for the lowest value but I am saying that you should focus on providing the highest possible value and then your services will naturally be worth more to your clients.

The Challenge Course Advisory (CCA) is a marketing and business development firm that works with experiential educators to assist them in achieving their potential for service & revenue. To find out more about CCA call (727) 938-3292 or visit us on the web at [www.challenge-advisory.com](http://www.challenge-advisory.com)

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