

8 Ways a Small Business Can Beat a Big One

By Andrea Novakowski

“Why should I do business with a small outfit like yours?”

It’s one of those questions that keeps you up at night. **“Why should prospective customers choose my small business over a larger firm?”**

My client Charlie, a marketing consultant, had just left a meeting with a new prospect and was feeling unsure of himself. He’d learned at the meeting that his competition was one of the big boys in his industry. What could his small business possibly offer that a larger company, with all its resources, couldn’t deliver more effectively?

At the start of our coaching session, Charlie listed for me all the reasons why the prospect shouldn’t do business with him. After a few minutes of listening to him beat himself up, I asked him to *please stop*. Next, I asked him to close his eyes, take some deep cleansing breaths, and ask himself whether he wanted to find another way to look at this.

As it turned out, he did. So we worked together using a reframing technique to help Charlie shift his thinking so he could recognize all the advantages a small business can have over larger firms.

Here’s the list Charlie created of the great things his small business can do for his prospects and clients. Feel free to use a few of these ideas in your next proposal!

- 1. I really listen to you and can help you uncover what you want and need.** A small business is less likely to try and sell its customers a canned product: Model #1ZQ75a. It has time to dig deeper and explore what would work best for you. At first you may think you need X, but after discussing your situation you may discover you need Y.
 - 2. I’m creative and I enjoy solving your problems.** A small business owner is in the industry because they love it, and they truly look forward to finding the products that best meet their clients’ needs.
 - 3. My reputation is on the line.** If a small company doesn’t do a good job for you, you’ll tell your friends. In a smaller market, this has the potential to affect the livelihood of the owner and the employees.
 - 4. When you call my company, you talk to a real person.** Maybe even the owner! You’re less likely to be routed to a call center and have to execute 15 phone prompts to get through.
 - 5. It’s better to be a big fish in a small pond.** When you work with a small business, you represent a proportionately larger part of its customer base than if you were just another client of a larger firm. This often results in getting more attention and personalized service.
 - 6. We’re more agile.** If you need a last-minute change or have a special request, you’ll often get a quicker response from a small company because there aren’t layers and layers to go through. A small business has an easier time changing direction to accommodate the needs of the marketplace, their clients, and their prospects.
 - 7. We make personal connections.** Employees of small businesses recognize the importance of each and every customer. They’re more likely to get to know you and work hard to keep you happy.
 - 8. I’m grateful for your business.** Each new customer helps a small business owner grow, learn, and stretch. Just as important, each client helps provide both owner and employees with a good living.
- Making this list helped Charlie see that bigger isn’t necessarily better. He left our session with a more positive mindset about what his business could bring to the table, ready to work on his proposal with new found energy.