

CPA Australia Podcast

Transcript – Episode 37

- Announcer: Hello and welcome to the CPA Australia Podcast, your source for business, leadership, and public practise accounting information.
- Jillian Bowen: Hello everyone, and welcome to another episode of the CPA Australia Podcast. I'm your host, Jillian Bowen, and I head up the content and social media team here at CPA Australia. In today's episode, I'm talking with Jason Cunningham about customers, which is part 3 in our series, "The Seven Key Ingredients of Business Success", based on Jason's book, "Have Your Cake and Sell It Too."
- Jason is a founder and director of the practise in Melbourne. He's a CPA, and one of Australia's leading business growth experts. He's also an author, entrepreneur, industry commentator, and engaging keynote speaker who has inspired thousands of business owners to build a better business, make money, and achieve the lifestyle they aspire to. Jason's also a presenter on Channel 10's "The Living Room", and SEN's "The Run Home".
- He loves nothing more than sharing his business success insights with a full house of other owners, managers, or dreamers, which is exactly why he's here with us today. Jason, thanks for joining us again on the CPA Australia Podcast.
- Jason Cunningham: Thanks for having me, Jill. I'm excited about today's topic actually.
- Jillian Bowen: It is an exciting topic. We have talked about strategy.
- Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jillian Bowen: We've talked about understanding your business.
- Jason Cunningham: Yes.
- Jillian Bowen: So that was two of our Seven Key Ingredients for Business Success. Just a reminder, if you have missed those episodes, you can find them on iTunes or Stitcher, or you can visit cpaaustralia.com.au/podcast. Today we're talking about the third ingredient, we're getting close to the halfway point, and it's a big one. I think it's a make or break one, customers. It's just one word, but it really can make a difference to your business. Now you feel really strongly about the customer experience, don't you?
- Jason Cunningham: Yeah, absolutely. If you don't mind, I'll tell you a little story about an experience I had with a business owner. So it was about, let me get this into context, so it was probably about seven or eight years ago. It was just after I'd written my first book, "Where's my money?" I was at an event, somewhere at a conference, and I was maybe a little bit bored, potentially, and so I left to get a coffee.

I'm in a tourist destination in Victoria. I'm not gonna say where it is, and I don't wanna give away or embarrass this business owner. But it was in the middle of winter. It was cold; I may or many not have been slightly hung over. Let's go with the may. So I grab myself a coffee, and I'm walking along, and I come across a book shop, and I thought, "You know what? I might have a little peak in here, and see if my book's in there." Right?

It was a bit of an ego test, right, but as I approached the book shop, on the front window were two signs. Now the first sign had a- a big picture of a coffee cup with a red cross through it. And the second sign, said, had writing on it, no food or drink allowed in our store. Kids leave your school bags at the front. Tie your pets at the front. Mom and Dad keep an eye on your kids, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Ostensibly, please don't come in here. And I thought to myself, how's this guy here?

Retail is the toughest gig I reckon is retail. And in retail, what you need to do is get the customer, him or her, into your store. Now we've just come out of the J of C; Borders have gone out of business. Angus and Robinson gone out of business and this brain surgeon has developed the strategy to take on Amazon. Please don't come in here.

We are in a tourist destination, massive tourist destination. It's the middle of freaking Winter; every second man and his dog is drinking a cup of coffee and this NASA employee is saying "Please don't come in here." Now if I was that guy or girl, who owned that business in Winter, I'd rip the signs down. And in Winter, I would have "Come in. Free coffee for all our customers" and in Summer, it would say "Air con on; Free ice cream for every kid."

Because too often, business owners look at their business through their eyes. You need to look at your business, my experience tells me, you need to look at your business through the eyes of your customer. Because it is her, it's him that's gonna pay your mortgage for you. Alright? And so too often we get caught up looking at our business as an accountant or as book shop owner. So this guy, someone has spilled a coffee once or twice. And what's he's done, he's cut off his nose, you know, to spite his face. He's not looking at the bigger picture. The bigger picture says get as many people through those doors as you possibly can 'cause the more in there, the more that are gonna have the propensity to buy something.

Jillian Bowen: So through your customer's eyes, thinking what do they want. What is gonna make them happy?

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative) 'Cause after all, that's who we serve. Remember in our first podcast, we.. Sorry, in our second podcast, we spoke about the importance of your purpose, your mission statement. Who do you serve and How do you serve them? You've gotta see things through their eyes, not your eyes.

Jillian Bowen: Well if you want people to give you money

Jason Cunningham: I would have thought so. Yeah.

Jillian Bowen: You need to make them want to do that.

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jillian Bowen: Because you are giving something they need.

Jason Cunningham: Absolutely

Jillian Bowen: It seems logical to me but I do get it.

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jillian Bowen: It's, you know, we live in a world where it is really easy to put up the blinkers over things like this and to forget those sorts of things.

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jillian Bowen: And not only is it easy, later in business,

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jillian Bowen: and that sounds like, as you said, someone that's possibly had a bad experience.

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jillian Bowen: Shut down a bit. But when you are starting out in businesses, some of our listeners are at that point,

Jason Cunningham: Yeah

Jillian Bowen: where they are a little bit more in the entrepreneurial phase.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah, yeah

Jillian Bowen: Whichever point you're at, I think it's really great to talk about this. So looking back to your beginning point, how did you attract customers?

Jason Cunningham: Yeah, really hard absolutely. There is two points that you raise and I want to answer that question in 15 seconds, if that's okay. The first thing is, as accountants, as CPAs, we are the custodians of so much financial data. We are the last trusted advisor. And those of us that are advising other business owners, tell Judy to talk to them about more than just the financials. And I think we need to understand that our financials are an outcome, not a driver. And

that's why I offer this, this book and this content to a lot of our listeners who are in that position.

The second talks about the smaller business owner. So, you know, it's easy to say, "Okay Jason, you've been in the industry for 20 years. You've got a bit of a profile, a bit of a reputation", so getting new customers is a bit easier for me, than when it was 20 years ago. So let's go back to 20 years ago. And what...

Jillian Bowen: Young Jason

Jason Cunningham: Young Jason

Jillian Bowen: I'm a little scared to see Young Jason

Jason Cunningham: Yeah

Jillian Bowen: 'cause I kinda imagine he had less energy.

Jason Cunningham: No, no he was, he was off his head. He had more hair and he was younger, but he was, he was a bit mad, and... but I'm a Father now.

Jillian Bowen: I'm so surprised.

Jason Cunningham: (laughs) So back then, there was only one way we could win business so I argued in professional services. In most professional businesses, there's really only three ways you can win business. The first is that people will do business with you because they like you. And so when we started off our journey 20 years on Union Road, Ascot Vale and we had no clients. What we did, we spoke to people and we talked to them and we walked up and down Union Road. We would go into Cafes. I even went and got, in a beauty shop, and got my legs waxed. Right? And I got her as a client. Ascot Vale Beauty Clinic.

Jillian Bowen: That that that would be a too much information.(laughs)

Jason Cunningham: Oh sorry, do we should we gonna edit that?

Jillian Bowen: No, no we are gonna keep it in there.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah

Jillian Bowen: Because that's what's keeping us real on this podcast.

Jason Cunningham: (laughs) So

Jillian Bowen: Still a client?

Jason Cunningham: Yeah absolutely. So we...

Jillian Bowen: So what was her name again, sorry?

Jason Cunningham: Mary Ann (laughs)

Jillian Bowen: Mary Ann from?

Jason Cunningham: Ascot Vale Beauty Clinic. Anyway, so yes, we would go into businesses. There was another guy had a had like a little gift shop winning and spoke to them and bought presents and we just continually communicated. Well the good thing is, well not good, we didn't have any work to do 'cause we didn't have any clients. And so what we did was we kept communicating, communicating. And some people that would meet me, would say "Oh you are a bit different" "You've got a bit of a sense of humour." "You're a bit mad; I like that. Gee you must be a good accountant." Now I don't know how there is a link between telling a funny story.

Jillian Bowen: I am actually struggling a little bit to follow that one.

Jason Cunningham: There is no link. But do you know what it is? I was different and we focused on our point of difference. And I think if you focus on your point of difference, and you go deep in that niche, not not try to be all things to all people. We just, what we did was to set ourselves apart from our competitors. Our competitors, we were 24, our competitors were 44, 54, 64. They had more grey hair than us and had more experience than us. But also they were busier than us, so we had more time. So then we thought, you know what, we are gonna put our customer at the front of everything that we did and we rang them.

So, if we got a client, we did everything and then some for you. And you're you're previous accountant didn't do any of that. And so, we just spent time engaging, going to their business, being at their workshops, they're all, wow these guys are amazing. Because ostensibly, we had so much time on our hands that we just spent our time at our client's offices. It was great fun.

Jillian Bowen: (laughs) Well that's the thing that I find interesting because you know, it's not that an accountant can't be funny. But the thing that you are saying here is you stood out.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah, absolutely, and I think that -

Jillian Bowen: Not that you had a sense of humour. You stood out.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And whether you're funny or not, who cares about that. It's a what do you stand for and what different about you and I think, for us, yeah sure, I tell a funny story or whatever but it's not that. It's the fact that we legitimately cared, and we were proactive with our approach.

Jillian Bowen: 'Cause I think, you know, you've obviously got a fairly big personality

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jillian Bowen: and you're pretty comfortable around new people and new situations.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah

Jillian Bowen: Some people would describe themselves as not comfortable in that way.

Jason Cunningham: Most of us are.

Jillian Bowen: Introverts.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah.

Jillian Bowen: Probably is the general term for it.

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jillian Bowen: So they would find that idea of canvassing for business down the street, a lot more challenging.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah, absolutely. You're not gonna believe this, right? But I, I tell you authentically and sincerely, you can ask my Mother. When I was young, I was a very, very, very, shy boy. My Aunties would say that I was painfully shy. And, you know what? To tell you truthfully, being open and energetic, energetic is one thing but being open and energetic, that's not my natural stance. I actually feel quite comfortable on my own. And I actually long for time on my own. It was more, it was a requirement. Jill, we weren't earning any money. We didn't have any clients so I could have starved. Now let me tell you, oh rewind. I could have failed, because when I went into business, everyone told me "It's not going to work." "You're only 24." "Who are you?" "What do you know?" My father told me it's not going to work. My mentors told me it's not going to work. Rob, his boss, told him it's not going to work. Everyone said it's never going to work.

So for me, I had two options, succeed or fail and I wasn't interested in failing. So I did whatever I had to do to be successful. And, you know what, I'm not saying I was an introvert but I was a shy person. A lot shy person than I am today. But from the necessity of having to eat, I went out there.

So I'll go back to what I said. I originally said that there were three ways that we win workers that are professional, or in the professional services space. The first is that people do business with you because they like you. The second is that people do business with you because they've been referred to you by a trusted source. And the third reason I believe people do business with you is because you are seen as an expert in your industry, a thought leader or a key person of influence.

So the first one we spoke about was walking up and down Union Road. It was meeting people in the gym. It was guys I played footy with, it was just sort of the people that I knew and it was like "Hey, hey, hey come across and do business with us."

The second thing referred to us by a trusted source. There's a couple of ways you can do that in business. Now the first, is the simplest way, and that is do a really good job. But, it's not enough to do a good job Jill. You've gotta ask, you've gotta prod, you've got to give your customer, or we call them your client, you've got to give your client a reason to refer your work.

So we've put it as part of our processes. So most public practitioners, most people in business, actually deter their clients from referring more clients.

Jillian Bowen: How's that?

Jason Cunningham: And, and, okay. So when I say, "How's business Jill?" Jill says "Gee, I'm busy. So much on. So busy." So this whole concept, this notion of "I'm busy" You are sending out signals. I'm too busy for more work. Right?

Jillian Bowen: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jason Cunningham: So first it's the language that you use. "How's business Jill?" "Man, it is awesome, I could always do with some more." Secondly, ask for referrals. There are people that think I don't want to ask for a referral. I feel like a peasant; I feel like I'm not successful. You know what? There's nothing wrong with that. If you feel uncomfortable about asking for a referral, put it on a form.

So we have a form; I speak about this in my book, called a Commitment Statement. So as a CPA, okay, one of the things we need to do with our clients, is we have an Engagement Letter. Okay with our clients. It's one of the things we do as a CPA; it's part of the bylaws of CPA.

We do an Engagement Letter with all of our customers. The second thing is we go "This is what we are required to do an accountants and CPAs." As business owners, we do one step further and we have a Commitment Statement. And on the left hand side, it talks to everything that we are gonna commit to you, about being open, honest, upright with integrity. You will know your bills upfront; you will do this, this and this. We will do awesome work and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And on the right side is what we ask from you, Jill, as a customer of ours. Give me all the information to do the work that I can. Tell me honestly if there's, you got an issue with us, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And right down the bottom, is this last one Jill, it's a bit of a cheeky one. And it's not me, it's just part of the process

Jillian Bowen: Part of the process. It's not you.

Jason Cunningham: It's the system; I wrote the freaking process

Jillian Bowen: (laughs)

Jason Cunningham: But if you know of somebody, that would benefit from having a relationship with our firm, I ask you to consider us and here's my business card. You don't need my business card because you already contacted me. Right? This is for your friend, that you know, that would benefit from having a relationship. Now, I'll tell you

Jillian Bowen: I don't think it's cheeky.

Jason Cunningham: No

Jillian Bowen: I'm just gonna put my hand up there and say I think it's great.

Jason Cunningham: Look, it's generated at least 400 new clients for our business, right?

Jillian Bowen: Yeah, yeah, well then

Jason Cunningham: okay

Jillian Bowen: The numbers speak for themselves.

Jason Cunningham: Absolutely. And you know what, it takes that hard conversation away from one on one to it's in writing. That's why when our wives or husbands are upset with us, they send us a text. They don't tell us personally 'cause it's easier to do it in writing. Right?

Jillian Bowen: (laughs)

Jason Cunningham: So it's like (laughs) ...I'm breaking up with you.

Jillian Bowen: Well, please do not break up with them via text. That is not a nice thing to do.

Jason Cunningham: No but the second thing is how do I win you in business? It's by asking for a referral. People do business with us because they've been referred to us by a trusted source. And as I've mentioned, at least 400 clients have been referred to us before I've even done work for that new customer. So you've walked out of the meeting, Hey, what did you do today Jill? I met this lunatic accountant who, can you believe it, he asked me for a referral. You should go see him. (laughs). That's crazy.

And the third, is that you are seen as an extrovert in your industry. A key person of influence, a thought leader if you like. Now, we operate in all three spheres in

our business. Twenty years ago, I wasn't a key person of anything. I was key person of garbage town. Right? I wasn't a thought leader. I was 24 and just learned how to shave, right? So I had to operate in spheres one and two. You fast forward to today and I've got a bit of experience. I don't know, you know a lot of our listeners would have been in business for 10 years, 15 years, 5 years, 20's, whatever it is. Work out what your niche is. I'm not saying that everyone has to do what I did. And, you know, I've written a couple of books; I work on radio. I work on television. I'm a public speaker.

Jillian Bowen: Channel 10 Friday nights

Jason Cunningham: (laughs)

Jillian Bowen: The Living Room. (laughs)

Jason Cunningham: Absolutely, and those of you in Melbourne SEN.

Jillian Bowen: Thought I'd save you that moment.(laughs)

Jason Cunningham: SEN 1116 on the dial; 5:30 till 6:00 on a Tuesday night. No, only joking. Not really it's awesome radio (laughs) So not everyone has to do that right? Writing a book is hard work. Being a public speaker is hard work. But you don't have to go to that degree. I'm saying work out what your area of expertise is. And let's say, for the sake of the argument, let's have a play here. Let's say it's asset protection.

No, it's structuring. Let's say it's structuring. Work out what that area of expertise is. Think of it as an accountant. Write it down and leave it on a piece of paper for a week. Go back in a week's time and read it like you were one of your clients. And take all the accounting garbage, and language that you've used, because they don't care about that language. And read it through the eyes of the customer. And rather than call it structuring, call it asset protection, whatever, call it in a language that the business owner loves.

Then get a writer, a journalist, someone that can write better than you, and that's everybody if you are an accountant. Alright? Engage a journalist and it may cost you the enormous sum of \$500 or maybe \$1000 for someone to re-write it in a language that makes sense. Get it all prettied up and you can get it on Airtasker for \$100. And bang, you've got a pdf; you've got a book. An e-book, a document, something you can give away. Then all of a sudden you become the expert.

And so when you are meeting with people, you don't even have to try and win them off as clients and all that. You could say "Here, give me your email address and get a free copy of my blah, blah, blah on how to be a guru."

Jillian Bowen: We like to call it a content upgrade.

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative) I like that, sounds a lot better than lingo, the some bit of garbage

Jillian Bowen: Right

Jason Cunningham: that I said.

Jillian Bowen: (laughs) Right. Interesting because that does push us toward the topic of Marketing. I'm not going to go there quite yet, because I do want to explore one more thing.

Jason Cunningham: Yep

Jillian Bowen: Something I found really interesting. I actually used to run my own business and I did extremely well in that business.

Jason Cunningham: Oh what was it?

Jillian Bowen: I was very fortunate. I was working in a variety of areas, production, marketing.

Jason Cunningham: Awesome

Jillian Bowen: All sorts of great things. I would be a writer for someone. I would work on a film, all sorts of different areas.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah

Jillian Bowen: The reason I stress that all sorts of different areas, is I probably made the number one mistake that's out there. I didn't want to say no to work. And I would never look at the balance of work I was getting. So at times, I would be working on things like Moonlight Cinema, that I would work on every Summer. Fantastic

Jason Cunningham: Does it pay that well?

Jillian Bowen: It doesn't pay that well.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah.

Jillian Bowen: But nothing in the entertainment industry really does.

Jason Cunningham: No.

Jillian Bowen: I was working with actors on various things, and at the end of the day though, I would take on a lot of work. But some would pay better than others; I wouldn't always have the income at the right times.

Jason Cunningham: Yep.

Jillian Bowen: And you made me think about this 'cause I was looking at your book and you were talking about getting the customer mix right. And I was thinking, that's a really interesting point, because probably I could have actually been a lot more balanced in my business. When I was running one, if I had actually thought about alright, how many of these clients do I need for cash flow.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah ...

Jillian Bowen: How many of these clients do I need for happiness

Jason Cunningham: You did read the book ...

Jillian Bowen: ... because I enjoy the work? I did read the book. So I've asked a very long question there, but contextually it was a topic I found really interesting.

Jason Cunningham: Mm-hmm (affirmative) mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes, if you rewind back to 20 years ago, we'd do anything for anybody at any price. Okay, I remember the first bit of work that I use to work on, I use to charge 27 dollars 50 an hour and that was for that work we did for the accounting firm. I use to think "oh I can't wait till I make 10 times that". You know, 275 an hour then I know I've made it. What a crock that was too. So early rates and all that we'll talk about that another time. We're not interest in early rates, but customer mix is interesting.

There is a saying that says "do the type of work you want with the type of people you want to work with". That's cool, but you've gotta be careful of who those people are and who can actually do it. I think a good customer mix, and you sort of alluded to it yourself when I think you may have quoted a bit from the book there, about getting those type of ...

Jillian Bowen:

Jason Cunningham: ... type of repeat customers that are gonna help you pay the rent and pay the wages. Some of the sexy work that you wanna dip your toe into that's gonna keep you entertained and keep you engaged. Because for a lot of us, the reason that we went into business was for a lifestyle choice. It's because we wanted to be the boss. We wanted to enjoy ourselves. I mean I think it's really important to have a mix of work where you can go in and have fun. Have fun doesn't just translate to drinking beers on a Friday, enjoying yourself, challenging yourself, putting yourself out of your comfort zone and providing your customer with the rewards. I think a good healthy client mix, not having all your eggs in one basket, not having the majority of your income with one person could be dangerous.

Jillian Bowen: So obviously from getting your customer mix right, you also need to be looking at marketing. There's a lot of positive and negative opinions about marketing. It

seems a bit hard for people to get their heads around at times. What do you think?

Jason Cunningham: So, I'm often ask a question, Jason how often should I be marketing? The answer's pretty simple. You are always marketing, always. Always, always, always. There's a distinct difference between marketing and selling. You only ever sell in the office. Marketing is done everywhere. When I talk to marketing, I talk about how are you representing your brand. Not just your personal brand, but business' brand.

For mine, I'm always talking about our business. I'm always representing our business. I'm always representing my personal brand. Therefore, I think marketing is very important and that I'm always doing it. So, what is marketing? What's the difference between marketing and selling? Well, for mine, as I mentioned earlier, selling is done at the office or at the client's office. That's when you close the sale.

Marketing talks to creating the awareness of what it is that you do in your organisation, but more importantly why you do what it is that you do.

Jillian Bowen: ...where back to why ...

Jason Cunningham: So it's all about creating that awareness about your business and about your brand. But, more than that, it's understanding who your customer is and what she or he is after. The most important words in the English language are "Jill Bowen", it's someones name. It's more about ... it's there ...

Jillian Bowen: He didn't need to really add in someones name I was really happy at the moment he used mine ...

Jason Cunningham: It's not the only two words in the English language ...

Jillian Bowen: Okay ...

Jason Cunningham: It's really about creating or understanding what your needs and goals and objectives are. Then working out whether or not you and your business can help them.

Jillian Bowen: But you did exactly that. You made me feel for about one second, before you add some extra words, like the most important person in the world.

Jason Cunningham: Absolutely. Absolutely. There's a saying ... let's see ... it goes something along the lines of this "the most powerful person in any discussion is the one who's asking the questions". What we think as advisors, or accountants, CPAs, whatever you want to call us, but what most of us think is "I need to have all the answers".

The cold hard facts are that we don't have all the answers. Especially if I've met you Jill. You have the answers. You just don't know that you've got them. So really, marketing is about, understanding somebody else, and working out her needs or his needs are. What their goals and objectives are. Working out whether or not you have a solution for them.

Sometimes we don't. One of the awesome things that you can do is say "I'm not the right person for you, but this guy is or this girl is". There is so much power in saying "I can't help you". There's some amazing power in that. You know working on radio, I work on live radio for 10 years. Talk back radio. I'll bet I'm only for 25 minutes week. I'm not John Laws here, I'm just a guy, an accountant having a go on radio.

I use to get so nervous about the caller ringing in. Going "what if I get it wrong"? Who cares? I know this sounds mad. Often, I'll say on radio "That's a really good question and I don't have the answer to you, I wish I did, but I don't. Why don't you leave your details and I'll get back to you". Guess what? I get them as a client. It's amazing. Marketing, I think, and creating the awareness, I think, is mission critical. How you present yourself. How you dress everyday. Whether you wear a tie or not, what your stance is on that., for you to work out with your firm. So people out there are big tie wearers, some aren't. But, really getting a position and stance on that. How you carry yourself moving forward.

You'll never see me with my ass hanging out of my pants. That's disrespectful to me and to our brand. Then you step over the line, the selling is when you have created that awareness and the mystique and all that sort of stuff. Look this is what we're gonna do for you. The key to selling, I believe, is working out what your goals are, what you need, putting together our solution to that, and letting you know the price straight away.

The key is if you don't see the value that you wanted Jill, if what we're offering, do not pay us. Money back guarantee. I think is important. It's scary. It takes a pair to do it. You're only gonna make a mistake once, but I'm telling you where is the resistance if I said to you "I will liberate your lifestyle" you told me Jay "my goals are this, this and this, a new house, change my business, increase the profitability five fold". Bang, bang, bang, I said "I can do that for you. This is the programme it's gonna take. It's gonna take 12 months. It's gonna cost you 18,000 dollars, if you don't get to where you want to get to and what we agreed to at the end of the 12 months, I'll give you 18 grand back"

Tell me where the risk is for you.

Jillian Bowen:

Well there isn't one.

Jason Cunningham:

Exactly. So I think, it's not about being arrogant. It's not about being cocky. It's about being true to your customer. It's about being true to yourself. Who wants to rip someone off?

Jillian Bowen: Yeah.

Jason Cunningham: No one does. This ... our industry, being a CPA, you're proud of it. You're proud of the work that you do. If you have a customer that legitimately does not see the value that you've given them, you don't want their money. Keep your money. I don't want it to poison my business. Get away from me. I'm getting a bit off in a tangent there, but that's why yeah ... I'm pretty passionate about it.

Jillian Bowen: That's the passion. That's one of the values coming through. I feel like we're slowing down as we're getting towards the end of the podcast. We actually need to be speeding up, because we're at the business end.

Jason Cunningham: Okay.

Jillian Bowen: On customers, selling ...

Jason Cunningham: Yes.

Jillian Bowen: Oh, everyone's scare of that word.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah aren't we.

Jillian Bowen: Why do you think its got such negative connotations?

Jason Cunningham: Because most people think about used car salesman, real estate agents, and this whole I'll selling, I'll sell ice to the Eskimos. I'll sell my grandmothers house ... all this sort of stuff. I reckon lets remove that. We're all in the business of sales. For me, selling is a natural transference. I've enthusiasm. If you believe in what it is that you do ... so this natural transference of passion and enthusiasm ... if you believe in what it is that you do and you can convey that message in a language that your customer understands, you're nine tenths of the way there.

The final tenth is give them a money back guarantee. What's scary about that? Well, I'm not good enough. Well then don't take the customer on. Don't do the work. If you do things for money, it all turns to garbage. If you go back to what we spoke about earlier on around our customer, around understanding yourself, and who is it you serve and how do you serve them. If, you have a potential customer in our industry we call them clients.

If you have a client, who you believe has got some needs that you could help them meet and achieve their goals and objectives, then why wouldn't you? So therefore there's no need for selling to ... where selling is dirty and is a bit yucky and a bit stinky is when you sell at the wrong place.

Think about this Jill. You and I are at the gym. You're on this treadmill. I'm on that treadmill. We're running away. You say "oh look my business is struggling, I've got this, I've got that. I've got cash flow issues. I've gotta get my bank

statements done" and I try to sell you then and there at the gym, that is the wrong place for me to sell you.

I should spend my time ... and so if I started to come across and go "hey, have I got a deal for you. Money back guarantee". You're gonna go "who is this sleaz bag?" If, I said "oh that's interesting, tell me more about it". You go "well when I first went into business my right hand man he left me and he took off the business started falling away and we lost customer, a few customers" How did that make you feel?

"Well it put a strain on my husband because he had to leave work and blah blah blah and blah blah blah and it was somewhat challenging". I go "Right, Well I've seen that happen before". "Oh really what is it that you do"? "Well, I'm an accountant". "Oh I been looking for a good accountant". "Let me tell you about our business we do ... I don't want to boar you with that, lets find out more about you Jill". "Oh thank you Jason, wow you've got an interest in me".

We talk more about Jill, and Jill, and Jill, and Jill and Jill. At the end of the workout "So hey Jill, if you are interested, why don't we come into my office, why don't I come to your business and lets have a conversation about it".

Jillian Bowen: Is this the two stages of the sales process?

Jason Cunningham: Correct. Stage one is lets wet your appetite and lets talk about Jill Bowen.

Jillian Bowen: So it's all about me, me, me, me ...

Jason Cunningham: ...all about you. Then once you've told me about you what ... there's a technique called LNP, which we got go into, but the technique is let me repeat back what you said to me to make sure that I'm clear I heard you correctly. So I just tell you everything that you just told me, but in my language. You're like wow this guy a rocket scientist.

Really what I'm doing is, we're connecting. It's all about ... sales is that natural transference of enthusiasm. It's about the connection. It's about our relationship. If you think that I get you and I understand you, then all of a sudden guess what? You begin to trust me. If you trust me, I'm not a dirty salesman.

Do you understand what I'm saying. I just taught you my trick. Remember what your mother said to you Jill, "never trust a boy that says trust me".

Jillian Bowen: Never trust a dirty salesman. I think she told me too.

Jason Cunningham: Yeah. Exactly, but it's about creating that environment then coming back to your place or my place to close the sale.

Jillian Bowen: Nice. Look we are out of time, because that's actually gone longer than most of our podcasts ...

Jason Cunningham: Oh ...

Jillian Bowen: ...We were going right into it on customers

Jason Cunningham: Sorry about that.

Jillian Bowen: Well no, it's a fantastic topic. You are, as always, incredibly insightful. Thank you very much for joining us today Jason Cunningham. I am looking forward to next month though, because we're gonna start talking about money.

Jason Cunningham: Ka-ching.

Jillian Bowen: Now you took the words right out of my mouth. That's what you call it in the book, but you're gonna have to wait until the next episode of the podcast. In the meantime, if you'd like to find out more about Jason and get his book you can. Visit www.jasoncunningham.com.au, Jason thank you so much again for your time today.

Jason Cunningham: Thank you Jill.

Jillian Bowen: If you'd like to download the transcript for this episode and access further resources, go to www.cpaaustralia.com.au/podcast. Make sure you never miss an episode of the CPA Australia Podcast by subscribing on iTunes or Stitcher. Until, next time thanks for turning in.

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