

Why Are You in Business?

You are at a cocktail party or at a networking function and someone will almost automatically ask the question: "What do you do?". If you are like most people you will respond with something like:

1. I repair automobiles
2. I own and manage a grocery store
3. I sell life insurance
4. I run my own HR / Learning consulting business

Looking at the first three answers, it would appear to be quite evident what the person does. Or so it seems to the individual receiving the information. This is because they have a visible product or clearly identified service they can relate to.

However, when you get to the fourth response, the understanding gets more than a little vague. For many people the only time they have heard the term Human Resources it involved hiring or firing of people. When they heard the term "learning" it was related to attending an academic institution, something they may have done only because it was expected of them. At this point, generally you get a smile and a polite "that's great". For all four responses, that is often the end of the conversation.

Let's take a look at some responses that might help you get better known and understood using the same four businesses:

1. I ensure that my customers have reliable transportation for themselves and their family
2. I provide a variety of food and other products that a family requires on a regular basis
3. I provide peace of mind for individuals
4. I help employees and employers get the most out of their association

The second responses will more often than not promote further discussion. These further discussions will allow you to explain in your own words why you are in business. Sure, each of us is in business to make money. That said, primarily we are in business because we want to do something for our clients.

The challenge for each of us is to first answer the question for ourselves "Why Am I in Business?" The answer to that question will both provide you with a clear way of answering the question "What do you do?" and will provide us with a clearer understanding of why we continue to work in our enterprise. For me it is to see the light come on for one person after a workshop. What is it for you?

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