

Interview with Barry Danko

1. What helped you (or your team) succeed in 2020, which was a challenging year?

BD: It was the easiest year we ever had. We were able to do more social media and over the phone business. We were built for COVID. We had already been doing a lot electronically, so it was an easy transition. We had no push back on not doing in-person appointments. Simply because the environment around us changed did not mean that we would adjust our goals.

2. What actions did you (or your team) take during 2020 that specifically helped you to gain trust, appointments, and new business?

BD: Trust was built over years. Being active in communities helped. This business changes slowly. COVID was a swift changer, and you have to do appointments remotely. We mailed out introduction packets to all clients and had conversations over the phone. We built up trust with customers over years and decades. Much of our 2020 business was a result of efforts from 2019 and sometimes earlier.

3. Did you conduct business primarily via phone and webinar, or did you meet while socially distancing?

BD: We mainly conducted business over the phone, but some reps did some webinars. We did not meet in person. We established how we would conduct business early on, and our clients got used to conducting business remotely. It was on mutual terms, and I have been preaching this for years. Don't try to push sales. Come with a recommendation. People anticipated calls, and the rep and SM would be on the phone with the client.

4. Did you have any challenges, and if yes, how did you overcome that challenge?

BD: No, all of us knew this is our career, and we had to find a way to get the job done. It was the least challenging over the years, but effective.

5. Did any of your challenges turn into a positive?

BD: National concerns over the pandemic's health and financial impact resulted in customers being more open to conversations. Our referral business spiked in 2020 since we demonstrated to clients that we had an easy approach to conducting business.

6. Can you share any words of inspiration?

BD: I encourage you to learn how to conduct business remotely. Going through COVID was a good start to get you on your way.