

Episode #218: 3 Simple Steps to Selling Student Services

Video Transcription

Welcome back to another episode of "Money Script Monday." My name is Gabe Lindemann, and I'll be your host today. Today, it's my pleasure to talk about something that's dear to my heart. Of course, it's about college planning and college funding. But more importantly, we're going to talk about three simple steps to selling student services.

As we're getting more involved in the front-end service, the college planning side of it, we partnered up with several service centers, and we have some partnerships with several college planners that offer those services. But the number one question I get from new agents trying to become college planners, how do I sell the front-end service center?

In my opinion, it's the most important part. Unless you get the families to buy into getting the kids to go to school, you don't ever transition over to college funding. I want to take a lot of time today to review the CliffsNotes version on how to do it.

The first part: relationship building. Too often, people do their appointment, they make it on the fly, they come in, and they know nothing about the family. If you're doing your marketing with us, most likely you got this family through Facebook, from a Facebook ad, or Instagram, or even some of the YouTube videos that we've been doing on the side. But the truth of the matter is, you have all their information.

If they're on Facebook, Google them, look them up, find out how many kids, any likes, or dislikes, and find out their kind of political affiliation. That's a huge one. When you're meeting with someone, you don't put your foot in your mouth and make an accident, but kind of tailor your message based on the family you want to work with, and tailor your message based on their likes and dislikes.

Second, most important: congratulate the family for being there. We learned this from Don Buddy. You have criteria for families that you want to work with, and if the family's taken the time to meet with you, obviously, they care about their son or daughter. They care about their children because they want them to go to school.

The most important thing is to congratulate them because, unfortunately, the truth be told, there's a lot of bad parents out there; a lot of bad parents that could care less about their kids or their future success. They're only worried about themselves. Take the time to acknowledge the families for being there, taking the first step to invest in their children's success.

Lastly, do you actually want to work with them? That's something that we need to look at as internal college planners. You don't really want to work with all families. For example, if during the appointment, the husband and wife are fighting, kids aren't interested, probably not in a good position. Or if they're being very difficult to work with or flat out nasty, can you imagine when it gets tougher during the student selection process, or, you know, the schools coming in.

It's going to get bad before it gets easy. If early on you're dealing with red flags, you don't need to work with them. That's the goal we have here in the college planning division. We want you to work with the families that have their most optimal priority to get into school, to have the highest opportunity for college funding, and lastly, and most importantly, that you enjoy working with them; they are very coachable.

I know that sounds like common sense, but you'd be surprised how many times people don't look up who the families are; but more importantly, don't even realize if they want to work with them or not.

Let's go to the next step. Explain what they get. You know, too often, people just think, "Oh, we want to do a funding plan." Well, that's important; but, again, if you don't help them pick the schools and how to get in there, you never transition over to the funding.

Tell them. Ask them what schools you are interested in. What school? If they tell you that they have a 2.2 GPA and they're looking at the top community college schools, probably not a good fit that you're going to be able to help them too much.

Now, if they say they have high threes, low fours, great scores, really wants to go to a top-tier private school, that's a good candidate you want to work with; those are the people we want to attract, and those are the people we want to get referrals to work with in the future.

How dedicated are the students? We've talked about this before. I've seen a lot of times in first appointments, the husband and the wife are in it, they love their kids, they want to give their kids the best foundation, but the kid could care less. They are interested in playing sports, or they just don't want to go to college. They haven't gotten to that point yet.

As much as the parents want them to, if the students aren't involved, that frankly just don't care, it'll never transition to college funding because the kids will never progress through picking the schools and getting into school.

You have to know that right away if the kids actually want to go to school — if they're in it to win it, or they're just there to make their families happy. You don't want to put yourself in a position where you're working twice as hard on a family or a student that doesn't even want to be there.

Factfinder. One of the things we don't do enough of is getting to know the students. We have some dedicated student factfinders, and the whole point really is to have a conversation with the students and figure out likes, dislikes, and if they want to be there — but work on referrals.

The student might have a boyfriend or girlfriend that they want to go to college together. Well, let's get them involved. Get them in. Get the other family involved. What happens if they have their best friends or

cousins or whatever that are all planning to go to the same school or working hard.

These are all referral opportunities where you can work together. The more you get a group of students together, the more likely they're going to hold each other accountable, which is going to make the system and the program that much better.

Success rate: we want to put our students in the best opportunities to get into school. Therefore, we help the families, and then we help the students, then we work on referrals. It's a very symbiotic relationship. The more we help the families get their confidence, the more we help the students do everything they need. It'll come back to us 1000%. It does every single time.

Lastly, payments. I've talked about this a lot. The Princeton Review did a study many years ago and said that for a non-college funding family that doesn't have any experience in the college admission process takes anywhere from 4 to 6 to 8 weeks for the families to even pick the schools, do all the paperwork, and then possible appeals and everything. That's not even the test prep and the other stuff that's super important.

Now, most families, they don't have eight weeks' vacation. I don't have eight weeks' vacation, but if I did, I wouldn't want to spend eight weeks' vacation on trying to figure out the system. I'd much rather pay a professional anywhere from \$2,000, \$3,000 to \$5,000, that they have a success rate of 92% or higher to get them into school.

That way, I know my son or daughter is going to get into one of the top three schools; but more importantly, I don't have to stress out over it. I'm paying the professional to do that. You got a family household income of over \$200,000; you know, eight weeks of vacation probably is going to cost a lot more than paying \$3,000 to almost guarantee their student to get into their top three schools of choice. Again, it's a no-brainer.

Lastly, the next step: sign them up. If you can, sign them up on the spot. Traditionally, you're going to sell your packages from \$2,000 to \$5,000. If they sign up on the spot, knock off a couple of hundred dollars. Ask for referrals. It's not the end of the world if you have to lose \$100 to get them in so that way you don't have to chase them.

We can help you. We have fact finders. We have these resources to help you get that first sale; but without that first sale, it never transitions over to the college funding.

My name is Gabriel Lindemann. It was my honor to be here today. Happy selling. Let us know what we can do to help. Thank you.