

## Accomplished saleswoman makes her own way with training firm

By: Nicole Sheldon August 23, 2019

Cindi Crowley was as surprised as the person on the other end of the phone when she declined a lucrative offer. The price was right, she got along well with management and it was a sensible move in her career. But her gut said it wasn't right.



Cindi Crowley

The woman told her to think about it and call her back. So, Crowley hung up the phone, shed a few tears, put on a dress and drove to a RocGrowth meeting for networking. During her drive over, she massaged a brand new elevator pitch, and that marked the beginning of her entrepreneurial journey.

Crowley founded Sales360Plus in 2016. She provides sales techniques to individuals and executives through speaking engagements—both small and large—classroom facilitation and one-on-one coaching.

"I grew up in sales," says Crowley. "I carried a bag for the first 10 years. I was an account executive and then sales director (in the telecommunications industry) and then went over to be a sales trainer at Windstream (Holdings Inc.)."

When a friend suggested she try out sales training, Crowley was hesitant. But she gave it a go, and fell in love with it on day one. She spent three years at Windstream before leaving the corporate world to be a sales training consultant.

"I knew I could get closer to my clients with my own business than the corporate world would allow," she says. "In the corporate world you have different values. I was so worried about what management thought that I forgot about me. After a while, I would say something and wonder if it was really me that just said that. I lost myself in the world. This business allows me to be me."

Though Crowley doesn't have to appease management now that she's her own boss, it's been a challenge adjusting to not receiving regular feedback or criticism. She has become increasingly self-reliant, capitalizing on her strengths to take her business to the next level.

Just as she recognizes and highlights her own assets as a business owner and salesperson, that is her goal with her clients.

"One of the main things that I do differently than most other coaches is that I coach to peoples' strengths," she explains. "Focusing on strengths as the potential for the growth rather than focusing on overcoming deficiencies has been the most successful. I have a customized performance assessment that helps me see what my client's strengths are, and we prioritize the gaps we see and work on those strengths."

Crowley operates the business mostly on her own, but she has a part-time assistant to aid in marketing and administrative efforts. She also has two industry partners who she can count on for advisory and content facilitation.

"It's important to me to have organic, original content," she says. "For example, a client wanted me to do a training on body language. I hadn't done that before, so I created a presentation and with new content and I looked to my partners for feedback and to fill in what I'm missing."

Three years in, Crowley just signed her 40th client. Her trick? She uses the same sales process she teaches others which revolves around a lot of prospecting, networking and closing.

Crowley, a Buffalo native turned Webster resident, is goal oriented, and by the end of 2020 she plans to add two more staff to her team and hike up her revenue by 15 percent.

"You have to take a risk and hire," she avows. "I was so afraid to do it. But once you do it, you're forced to make money because you have to pay your employees."

She doesn't target a specific industry or company size; rather, her demographic is individuals and executives who are driven to make a cultural transformation. Her local clients include AXA Advisors, Webster Chamber of Commerce and Rochester Professional Consultants Network. Crowley is open to working with professionals outside of Rochester, and even has a client in Toronto.

Crowley lives by three pillars: Family, volunteering and business. She and her husband of 30 years have instilled in their three children a love for volunteering and being an active member of the community.

Outside of running Sales360Plus, Crowley is currently a board member for TechRochester, a member of the finance committee for Rochester Women's Network, a trustee for the Awesome Foundation, a staff member for CASH (Caring, Assets, Savings and Hope) and is heavily involved in the American Red Cross Sound the Alarm in Volunteering is a way of life for her.

Through her volunteer efforts and building her business, Crowley has come to realize that, like her, people are searching for their purpose in life. She helps her clients uncover their purpose and unlock their potential. The last three years haven't been a breeze, but Crowley insists on enjoying the journey.

"Always remember to laugh," she says, "and don't take yourself too seriously."

*Nsheldon@bridgetowermedia.com / (585) 363-7031*