

The **ALT**Accountant workshop on positioning, pricing, and innovation

Hector Garcia, CPA





CPE Process



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- Be sure to sign in or scan your badge for this session
- You must stay in the session for the duration of the training
- This session is eligible for 2 hours of CPE
- CPE certificates are emailed directly to you within 4 weeks of the conference date to the same email address you used to register



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Today's speaker



Hector Garcia, CPA
CEO of Garcia & Company, PA
@QBKaccounting



Agenda

- 1. The four legs of stool: Quality, pricing, positioning, and innovation (5 mins)
- 2. Typical accountant stereotypes vs. The ALTAccountant (10 mins)
- 3. Workshop: Create Unique Positioning (30 mins)
- 4. Workshop: Price on Purpose (30 mins)
- 5. Homework Innovation workshops (10 mins)
- 6. Q&A (10 Minutes)
- 7. Final words (5 Minutes)



Introduction

From quality, positioning, pricing, and innovation to advisory

Accounting is about measuring the past



From "Art of Advisory" to The ALTAccountant

The Four Legs of the Stool for a successful "alternative" practice





Why focus on positioning, pricing, and innovation

Unique Positioning will help you stand out from the everyone else and make you incomparable; which will de-commoditize your services

When you learn to **Price on Purpose**, you focus on what the customer values... which more often than not, it is not the actual accounting or bookkeeping work

When you practice **Disruptive Innovation**, you will challenge your self to think about new problems to solve in unique ways. Create a *monopoly* in your market



Why focus on positioning, pricing, innovation

Quality of work is a given, your customers need to always assume that you will deliver accurate accounting work

Advisory: this is the ultimate service you can perform for your customer; help them make better decisions to grow their business. Help them become better business owners and leaders. Help them **own their future**.



The ALTtidote to accountant stereotypes



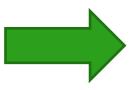
Boring / dull / technical

Generalist

Cheap / frugal

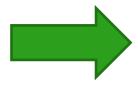
ALT tidote to accountant stereotypes

Boring/Dull/Technical



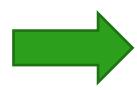
Use laymen terms, terms the customer will understand based on their industry, and talk about **their needs**, NOT accounting concepts

Generalist



Specialize, go deep in a narrow skillset, become authority on something very specific. Be known as an "expert"

Cheap/Frugal



Spend time with your customers. Be "generous" with your time and knowledge, free resources

14



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Typical accountant stereotypes

In an accountant's brain: debits always equals credits

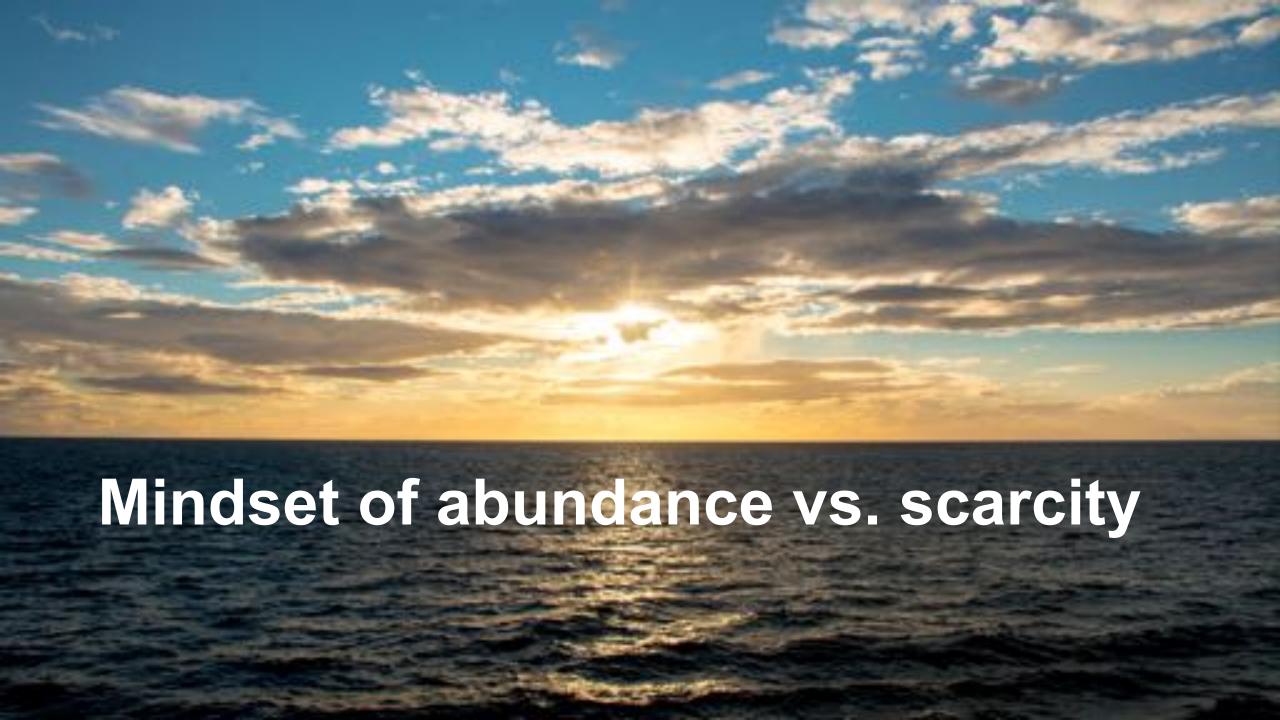
Debits and Credits is a zero-sum game

"In the real world debits do not equal credits"

- Ron Baker, Co-Host of the The Soul of Enterprise Podcast

Entrepreneurs (our customers) <u>do not</u> have the spirit of zero-sum, they usually work (or feel that) much harder than what they get in return. And yet, they get up every morning to do it again.





From a scarcity to abundance mindset

Positioning, focus, specialization

"Less total number of potential customers for me"



"More services I can perform for my niche customer base"

Abundant mindset

Pricing your services

"I better charge for my hard work and clients are too cheap"



"I will charge a fraction for the value I create, my clients will pay for more value"

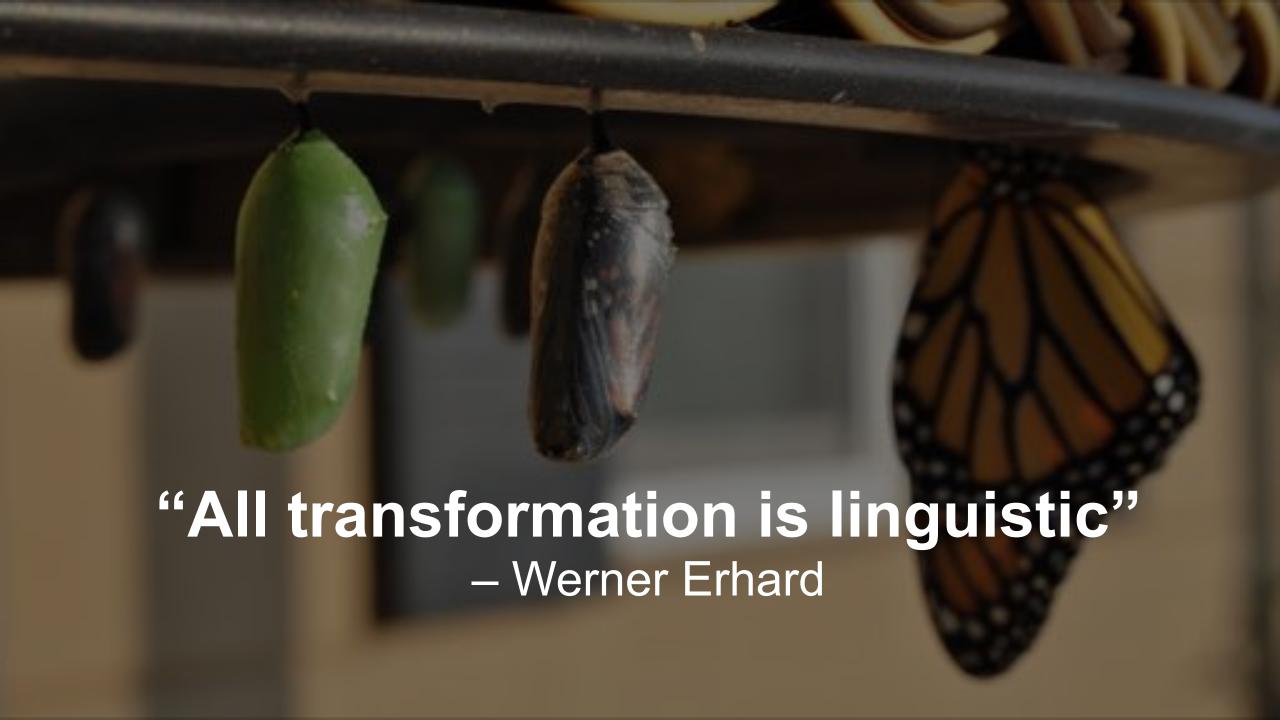
Disruptive Innovation

"Why change something that works and take unnecessary risks?"



"A new product/service will provide my customers choices and open new opportunities"





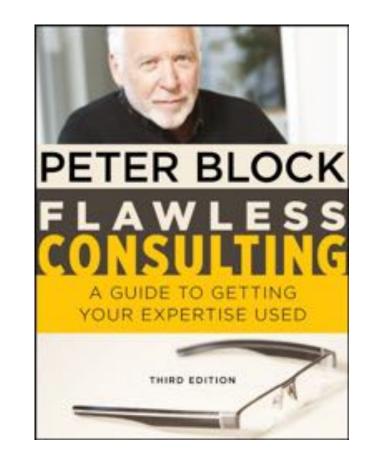
The ALTAccountant checklist

- ✓ Is hyper focused on becoming best in class in a narrow category, becomes an authority in area of specialization, leverages knowledge
- ✓ Markets to a niche group
- ✓ Is hired as "the subject-matter expert"
- ✓ Is focused in creating value, and charges as faction of the value created.
- ✓ Takes risks alongside their customers
- ✓ Constantly innovates with new products, services, and processes
- ✓ Uses language/communications to drive change
- ✓ Designs their present and owns their future



What role do you play?

- Pair of hands: The pair of hands mindlessly follows the client's instructions regardless of whether they actually make sense -> gets paid for effort
- Collaborator: The collaborator partners with the client to define the problem and create and implement the solution.
- **Expert:** The expert swoops in, solves a problem for the client, and then leaves them to move forward on their own –> *gets paid for results*





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Workshop: Unique positioning



What is positioning?

Your positioning strategy is best described as what you do not do

The customers you don't take say a lot more about your firm that then customers you do take

Positioning is about building expertise and being well known as a master of your craft



What is positioning?

Positioning is the space you occupy in your customer's mind

Positioning is how your brand goes from being "different" to being unique



Types of positioning

Vertical: industry, size, entity type, partnership composition.

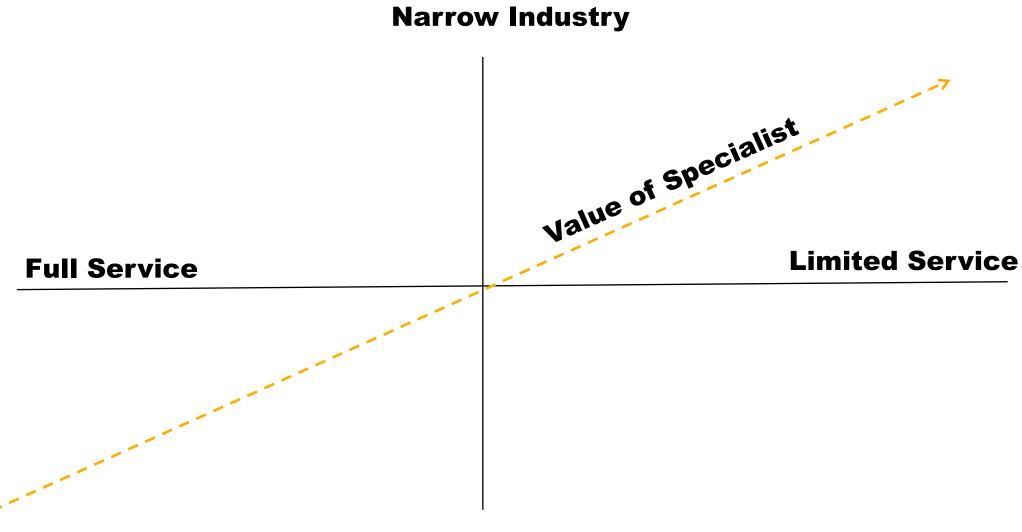
Horizontal: type of problem, current unwanted state, future desired state. Specialized or Unique Skill: speed, finding errors, adjusting inventory, presentation/reporting

Vertex: where you well known for your expertise or specialized skill focused on the vertex of the vertical and horizontal

(AKA: The expensive problem)



Type of positioning



All Businesses & Non Profits



"I am an accountant for manufacturing companies"



"I am an inventory accountant for manufacturers"



"I am an accountant that specializes in inventory workflow management for manufacturers"



"I specialize in inventory accounting workflow for manufacturers needing to better understand their margins"



"I specialize in accounting for Wholesale and Manufacturing businesses"



My current in-person positioning statement

"I help the owners of busy manufacturing businesses take more vacations..."

"...by implementing effective inventory workflows that the entire organization follows in real time and produce reports that the business owners can trust"



Components of a positioning statement

"I help the owners of busy manufacturing businesses take more vacations..."

Vertical Focus

Desired Future State

"...by implementing effective inventory workflows that the entire organization follows in real time and produce reports that the business owners can trust"

Undesired Current State

My story behind my positioning statement

But why "take more vacations"?

"When my practice started to get busy, the hardest thing for me was to take a vacation, so I implemented an internal accounting workflow that allowed me to delegate and leverage my team to get more work done without me managing every aspect of the operation...

... and manufacturers, like accountants, are in the transformation business – so I naturally, love them"



My current social media UPS

"I am a QuickBooks Consultant for Manufacturers with messy Inventory"



My current social media UPS

Undesired Current State

Horizontal Focus "I am a QuickBooks Consultant for Manufacturers with messy Inventory" **Vertical Focus**



Composition of a unique positioning statement

Target customer (vertical)

Specific problems (horizontal)

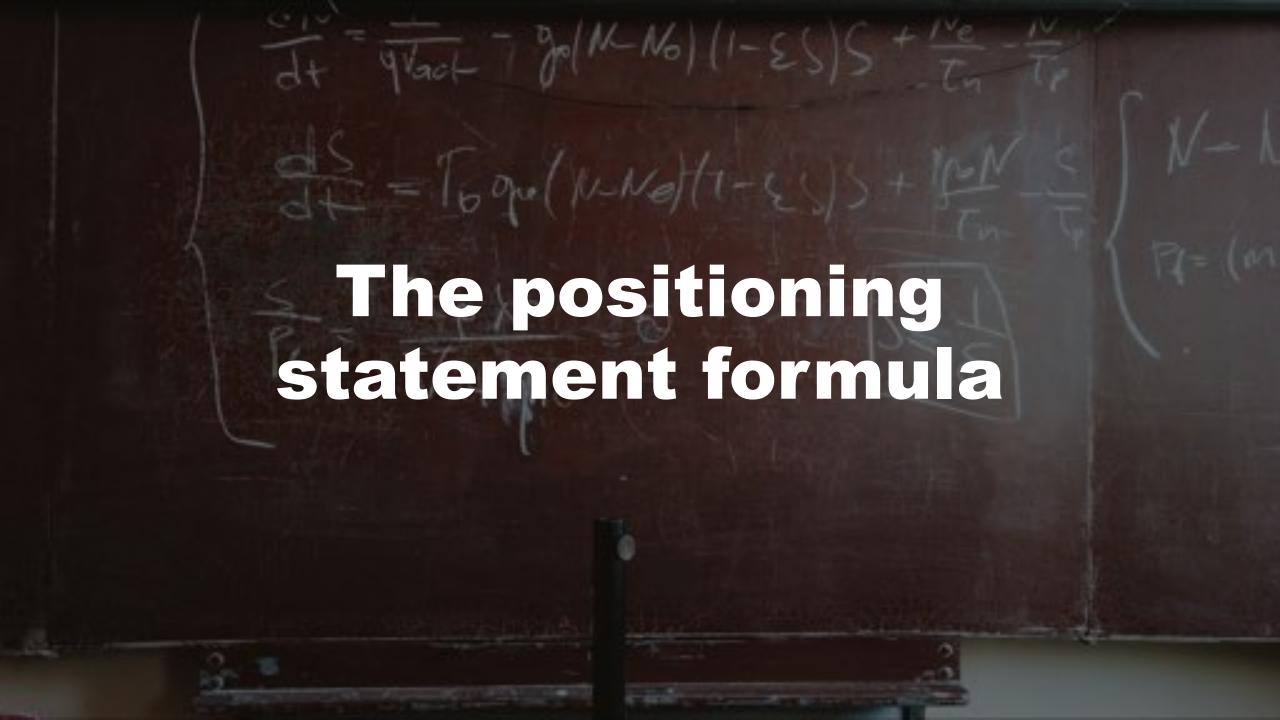
Current undesired state or pain point

Desired Future State or outcome

Specialized skill (or quick "how")



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I am the X for Y

X = Your role or specialty

Y = Your target customer (vertical)

I am the cloud accountant for dentists



I am the X for H Y

X = Your role or specialty

H = Current problem or structure/status

Y = Your target customer (vertical)

I am the cloud accountant for fast growing multi-location dental practices



I am the X for Y that wants Z

X = Your role or specialty

Y = Your target customer (vertical and/or horizontal)

Z = Desired Future State

I am the cloud accountant for dentists that are looking to expand to multiple locations



I am the HX for Y with U

HX = Horizontal problem you solve as a specialist

Y = Your target customer (vertical)

U = Undesired Current State

I am the cash-flow advisor for dentists with messy books



I solve U for Y as their X by doing H

U = Undesired Current State

Y = Your target customer (vertical)

X = Your role or specialty

H = Specialty/problem to solve

I solve cash flow issues for dentists as their Virtual CFO that provides realtime reports



I bring Z to U Y through H

Z = Desired Future State

U = Undesired Current State

Y = Your target customer (vertical)

H = Current problem/status (horizontal)

I bring order & clarity to multi-location dental practices with real-time accounting reports



I help **U Y** with **H** so they can **Z**

U = Undesired Current State

Y = Your target customer (vertical)

H = Current problem/status (horizontal)

Z = Desired Future State

I help fast growing dental practices with their real-time accounting reports so they can focus on making their patients smile



Unique positioning statement tips

Your customer is the hero and you are their guide

Tell the journey of transformation

Your belief system and brand must be felt

Your expertise should be obvious

You love what you do, so it should come from a place of passion

Your customer's needs are most important to you

Desired outcomes should be understood

Must stand for something of high value for you and your customer -> FOCUS

ON THE EXPENSIVE PROBLEMS



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Unique positioning statement formula legend

H = Current problem to solve or structure/status

X = Your role or specialty

Y = Your target customer (vertical)

U = Undesired Current State

Z = Desired Future State



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Workshop 30 mins

- 1. Draft your own UPS, try 2-3 different options
- 2. Get together in group of 3 people and practice it
- 3. Give each other feedback





Workshop: Price on purpose



Keys to pricing

Confidence in your own abilities

Reputation and brand

Understanding the source of value with the Value Conversation

Price as fraction of the value you can create

Offer a guaranteed outcome





Value conversation

Asking the initial key WHY's:

Why Me?

Why Now?

Why This?

Why Not?

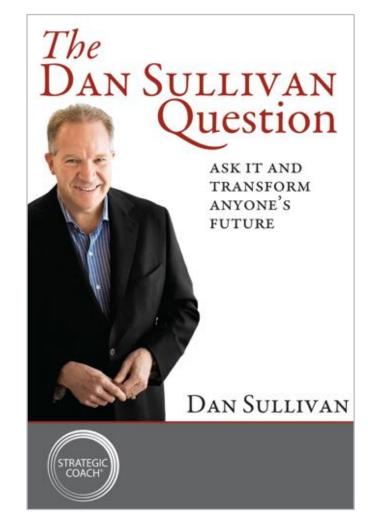
From "Value-Based Fees" by Alan Weiss





The ultimate value-based question:

"Imagine If we were having this discussion 3 years from today, and you were looking back over those 3 years, what has to have happened in your life both personally and professionally, for you to feel happy with your progress?"

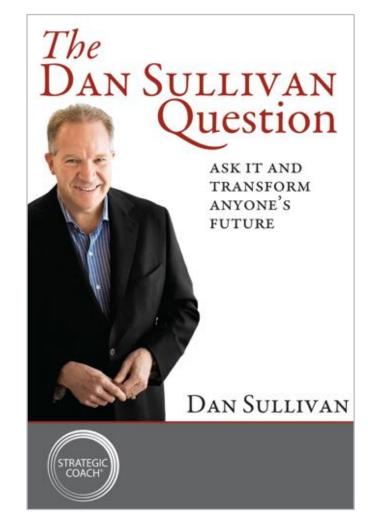




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The ultimate value-based question:

"Imagine If we were having this discussion 3 years from today, and you were looking back over those 3 years, what has to have happened in your life both personally and professionally, for you to feel happy with your progress?"





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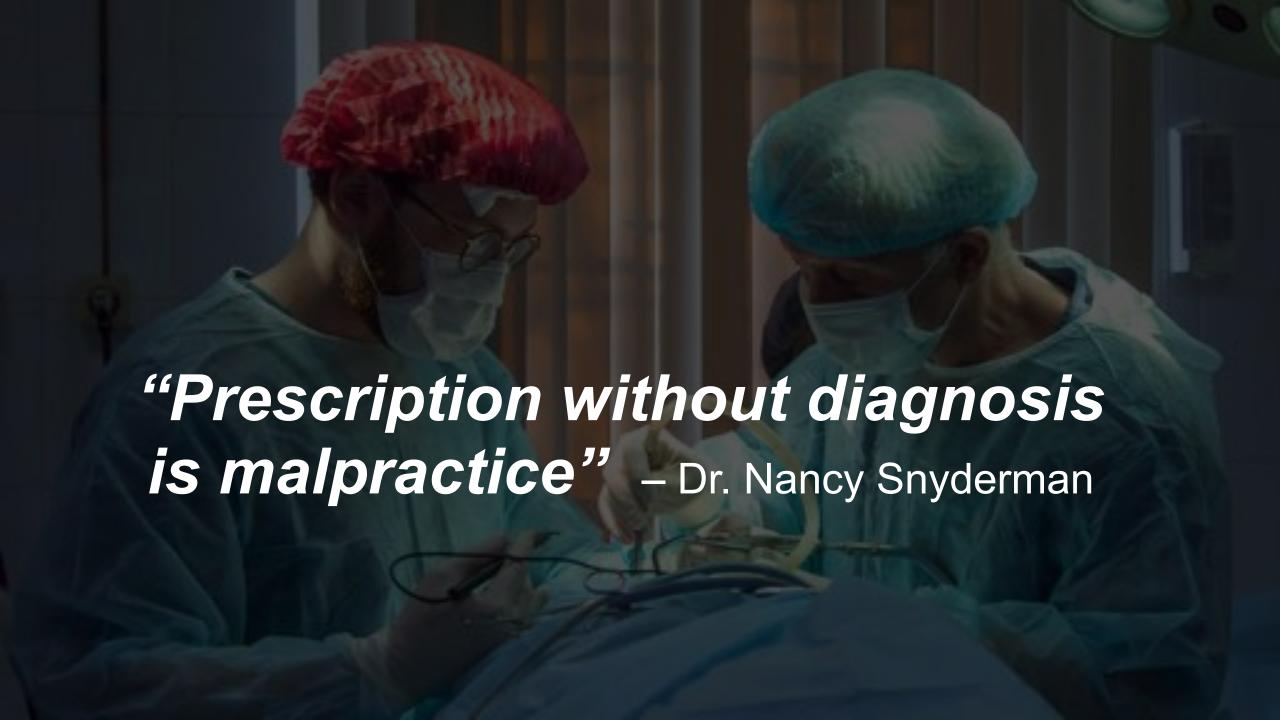


Understanding source of value

I need you to fix my inventory

- 1. What makes you say that? My inventory QTY's are all wrong
- 2. Why is that a priority? Because my Inventory Asset and COGS is wrong
- 3. Why is it so important to fix? Because I need to know my gross margins
- **4. And how will accurate margins help you?** I can pay my sales commissions accurately and on time
- 5. And what kind of issues have that caused? I lost my top sales person last month and I suspect is because we always had errors in the commissions and took forever to reconcile





Understanding source of value

So what is the cost of losing your top sales person?

"20% decrease in sales and \$10,000 less bottom line"

"Training new sales people: \$5,000"

"Anxiety about losing more customers to the competition"

(priceless)



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Measuring the VALUE of the solution

Mahan Khalsa's 5 Golden Questions:

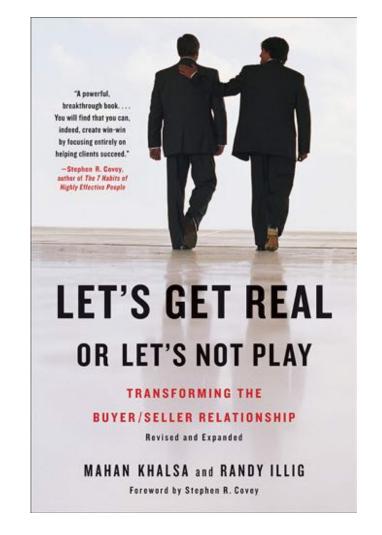
How do you measure the problem?

What is it now?

What would you like it to be?

What is the value of the difference?

What is the value over time (typically 2-3 years)?





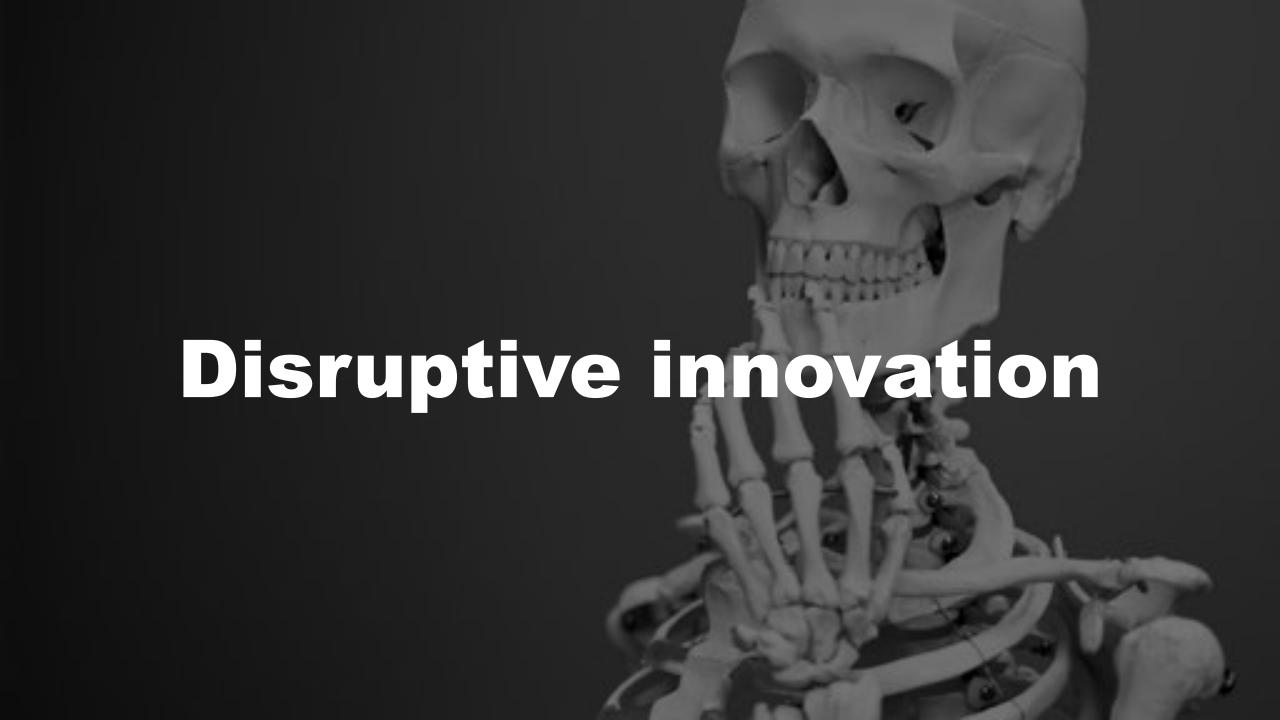
Workshop 30 mins

- 1. Get together in group of 3 people
- 2. Each of you think of a typical customer's first request like "I need you to reconcile my banks, how much are your fees?"
- 3. Ask 2 to 5 "Why Questions" to get to the bottom line pain point
- 4. Once the pain point is identified; go through the Mahan Khalsa 5 Golden Questions to identify the value from the results of your work





Home workshops on innovation



Disruptive innovation workshops

Productized services

Leveraging the subscription model



Homework innovation Workshop: Productized service

Build a productized service

Think of the <u>most common (medium complexity) services</u> you perform for <u>most</u> your clients during the first year of working with them

Think about the <u>hardest (high complexity) services</u> to predict how long it will take

Think about the top things (<u>easy wins</u>) you do for clients that makes them feel great and are not time consuming to your firm

Pick the ones with the most relevancy and pick it as your next productized service



Productized service brainstorming

Complex Services	Most Common Services	Easy Wins

Productized service brainstorming

Complex Services

Clean-up the whole year of accounting

Training a an internal bookkeeper

Move operations to the cloud Build an auditable document archive

Representation or support during an audit

Most Common Services

Organize Chart of Accounts
Clean up A/R Aging, A/P Aging,
and Inventory Valuation
Analyze entity choice (Corp,
LLC, Partnership, Sole Prop, SCorp vs. C-Corp, State Nexus,
etc.)

Educate owner on what they need to do in QuickBooks and/or record keeping

Teach client how to read financial reports

Easy Wins

Find useless/redundant expenses

Customize Invoice (colors & logo)

Connect their banks to

QuickBooks Online

E-sign / E-File tax returns

E-mailing documents they

requested immediately

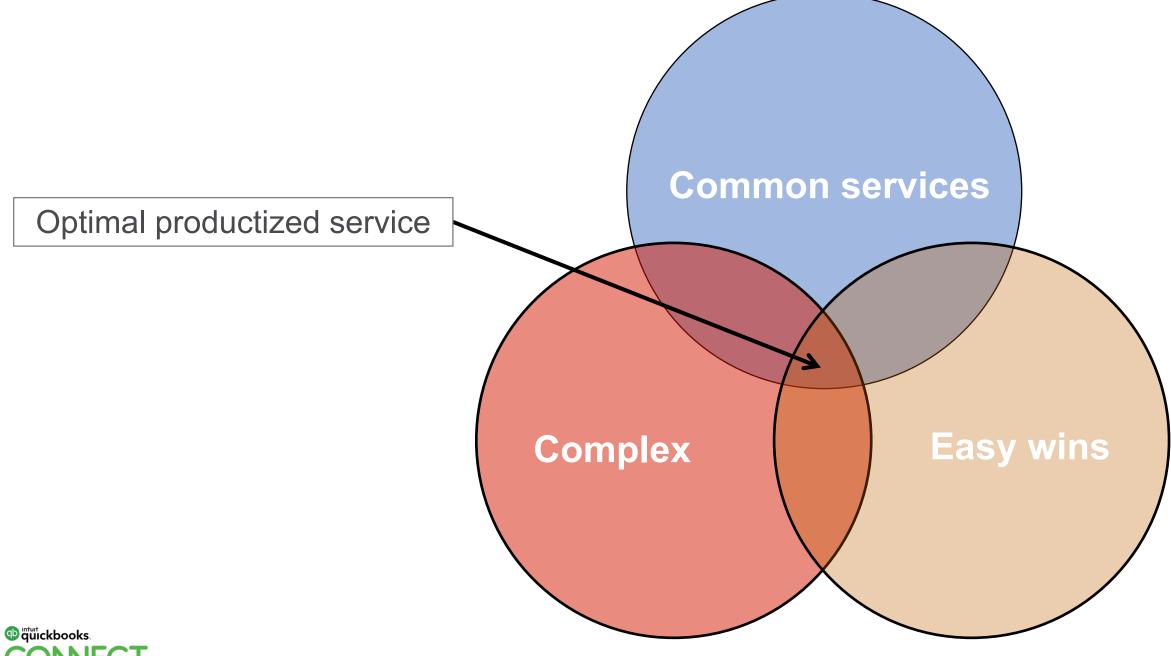
Registering a fictitious name

Identify top items sold or top

customer sales

Answer an e-mail with a phone call immediately

Summarize results from phone conversation





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Productized service brainstorming

Describe what your most happy clients feel great about using of your services

Peace of mind about accurate books

Peace of mind that there will be no penalties from compliance

Increase effectiveness because they have better decisions support data

Transformed client to focus on profit, save money long-term goals, reinvest profits into high ROI expenses

Improved cashflow from improved pricing, invoicing presentation, and collections process

Relief from tedium of bookkeeping

Feeling of ready to take over the books



Identify "Job to be done"

A productized service needs to have a defined "job to be done"

It is beyond what the customer communicates to be what they want/need
"Job Done" is the desired and guaranteed outcome



Build your productized service

- 1. Select 3 to 6 items from Complex/Common/Easy Boxes (at least 1 from each)
 Clean-up whole year of books
 - Organize Chart of Accounts
 - Clean-up A/R and A/P
 - Find useless/redundant expenses
- 2. Pick top 2 feelings from happy clients after your services Increase effectiveness because they have better decisions support data Feeling of ready to take over the books
- 3. Give it a unique name



Go to market with your offer

Total Quality Cleanup Service for Manufacturers

With this service **you will have** totally clean books* up to the current month, an organized Chart of Accounts, accurate accounts receivables and accounts payables, and in-depth analysis of all your expenses/purchases by category and payees

Guaranteed to make you most effective by giving you accurate financial reports so you can make better and more timely decisions. And be 100% ready to take over the books with moving forward.

Project completion time 30-60 days
*See our project scope guideline for details

\$899



Homework Workshop

- 1. Draft your own productized service offering that is for a **one-time service** with a finite target / "job to be done"
- 2. Give it a unique name

quickbooks.

- 3. List the scope limitations (what is NOT included)
- 4. Get with a friend or colleague to discuss ideas





*Build Your project scope guidelines

We must have discreet access to QuickBooks file 24/7 during project

Customer most provide all requested documents before we commence the work

Data entry for missing transactions will be created by customer (we will send you that list and guidelines)

We will delete all redundant transactions and provide accompanying report, it will be the customer's job to reconstruct any relevant information from those deleted transactions if they need it

We will use banks and credit cards to reconcile accounts, customer is responsible for entering/reconcile cash-based transactions

No training or user support will be included during the clean-up project

We will be closing the periods as we complete and customer will not be able to modify those transactions

Price based on 6 months of data



Homework innovation workshop: Subscription service options

Create a subscription service

This is the second step after successfully completed/delivered Productized Service

Create a maintenance/support plan to service the productized service year long

Build a list of the 10-15 things you to best for your customers and could do it periodically

Create 3 possible prices you <u>want</u> to charge and give each option a unique name



Build your 3 subscription options with prices

Build backwards:

- Create your 3 tiers first (desired prices to charge)
- Name the services
- Then figure out the scope/offering

Accurate Bookkeeping Service

\$500

Bookkeeping & Compliance Plus Service

\$900

All Access Accounting & Advisory Service

\$1,500



Brainstorm top services included in monthly subscription

Answer any of you accounting questions

Correct errors you create

Making adjusting journal entries at end of period

Reconcile account statements you couldn't get to

Spot check (another word for "Audit") the source documents to determine correct categorization

Visit with you in person to discuss numbers

Prepare Sales Tax Returns

Verify Payroll forms before filing

Discuss your financials with 3rd parties

Deductions and Taxable Income Planning

Update Budget and Forecast – Monitor Budget vs. Actual Reports



Put services and variations in buckets

Tier 2 Tier 1 Tier 3 Service Name: Service Name: Service Name: Price: Price: Price:



Put services and variations in buckets

Accurate Bookkeeping Service

Answer all your questions via email within 3 biz days

Make adjusting entries annually

Reconcile client prepared payroll and sales tax to books

Annual meeting to review accounting

Bookkeeping & Compliance Plus Service

Answer all your questions via email by next business day

Make adjusting entries quarterly

Assist with preparing sales tax forms and payroll tax forms

Quarterly meeting to review accounting and forecast tax estimates

All Access Accounting & Advisory Service

Answer all your questions via phone within 2 days (if requested)

Make adjusting entries Monthly

Prepare sales tax forms and payroll tax forms, guaranteed penalty-free

Monthly meeting to review accounting, budgets, and estimated taxes

\$1,500

\$500



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\$900

Homework Workshop

- 1. Draft 3 service offerings with different scope and outcomes for **ongoing services**
- 2. Give each one unique name
- 3. Think of price ranges for each one with scaling values
- 4. Get with a friend or colleague to brainstorm on your offerings





Value pricing vs. Productized services vs. Subscriptions

Value pricing is about customizing the price of every custom job/project based on the value we provide to the customer AFTER a Value Conversation

Productized Services is about getting new clients in the door based on a predetermined "job to be done" (quick outcomes) Before a Value Conversation

Subscription is about merging the two concepts to build a portfolio.

Subscribed customers you be the only one with access to the most valuable resource you can offer:

Ongoing Transformative Advisory



Positioning, pricing, and innovation in summary

Define the focused target market where you want specialize in

Create your unique positioning statement will help you communicate what you do, how you do it, who you do it for and the value you create

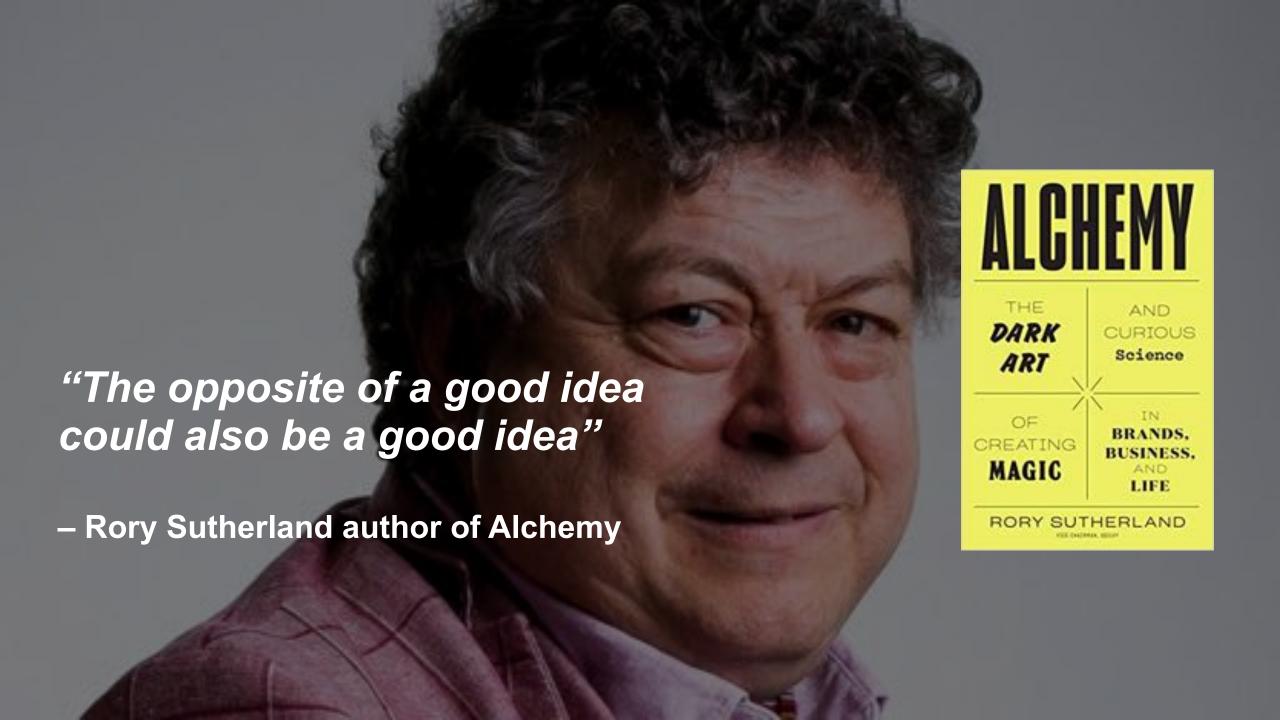
For custom projects, price your services AFTER you know what is value you are going to create (price on purpose)

Create a productized service to get your customers quickly "in the door"

Offer an ongoing subscription to maintain/grow the value created via the productized service

Provide Advisory services only to your subscribed customers either as an added value or add-on





89/31/19

Questions

The ALTAccountant manifesto

We are uniquely positioned to help your target customers

We are known as the experts in our specialty

We strive to understand why and desired outcomes

We price below the value we provide

We give our customers choices

We strive to be effective even at the risk of being inefficient

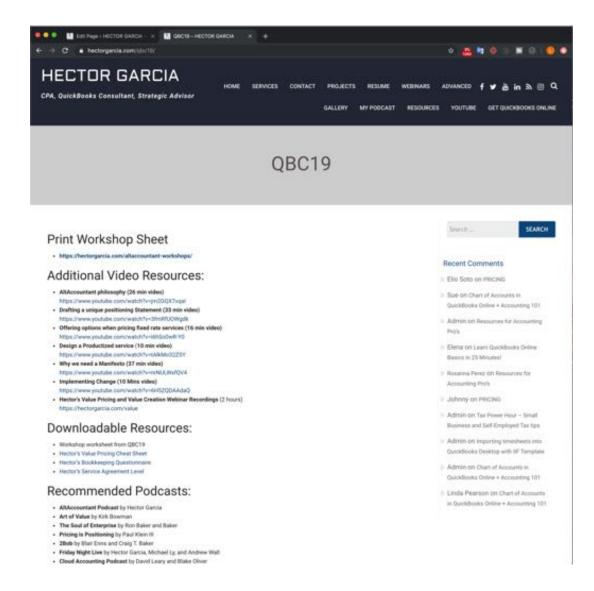
We believe that there is always more...

We control our present, so we can own our future



Additional resources:

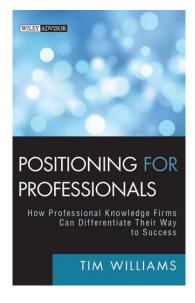
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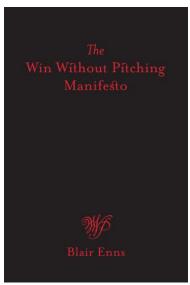


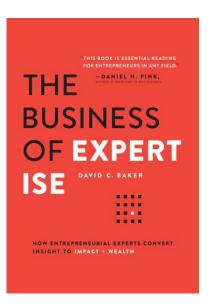


Books on positioning

Positioning for Professionals by Tim Williams Win Without Pitching Manifesto by Blair Enns The Business of Expertise by David. C Baker







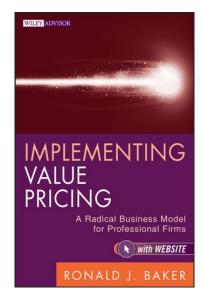


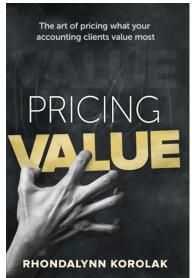
Books on pricing

Implementing Value Pricing by Ron Baker

Pricing Value by Rhondalynn Korolak

Price: The fastest way to change profits by Mark Wickersham







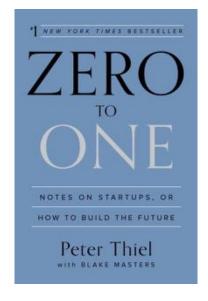


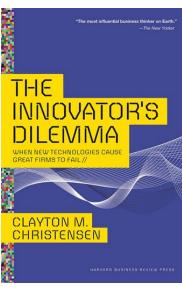
Books on innovation

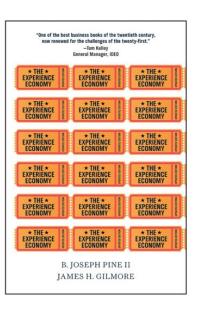
Zero to One by Peter Thiel

The Innovator's Dilemma by Clayton Cristensen

The Experience Economy by Joseph Pine









My favorite Podcasts

AltAccountant Podcast

Friday Night Live with Accountants (Live on FB on Fridays @11:30pm EST)

Art of Value Show

The Soul of Enterprise

Cloud Accounting Podcast

2Bobs

Pricing is Positioning Podcast

#QBConnect

Ditching Hourly

The Business of Authority

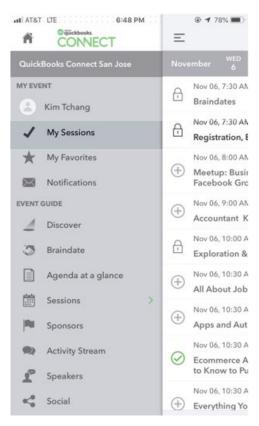


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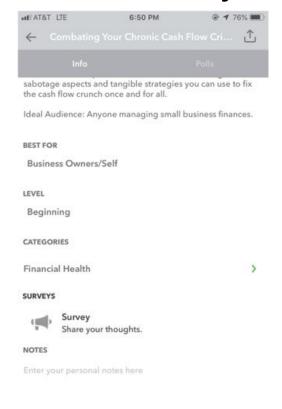
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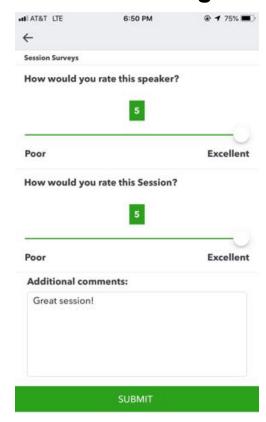
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4. Add Ratings



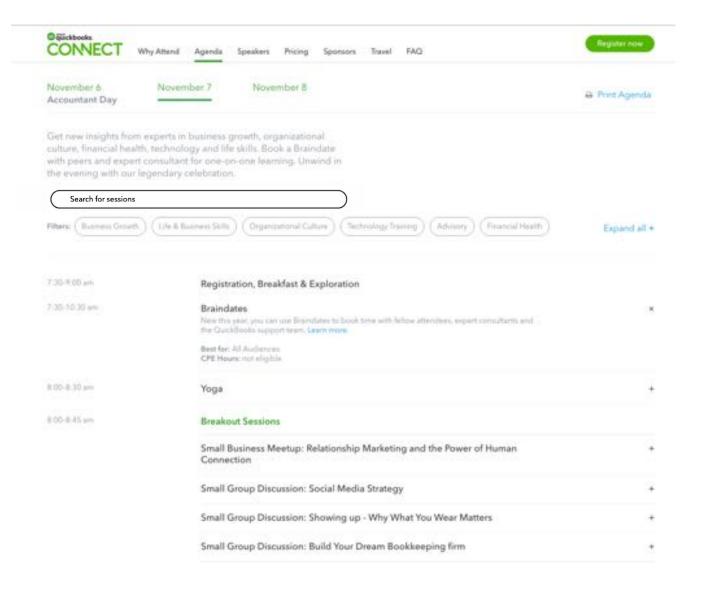


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