



**Small
Business
Management
Consulting**



Alan Siege is the founder of Small Business Management Consulting based in Brooklyn, New York. When Alan first opened his consulting business in 1996, his focus was on helping non-profit organizations raise money as a fund raiser. As part of his decision to branch out, in 2002 he went back to school and earned an MBA with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. This resulted in his altering his business model to begin working with small businesses.

Today, Small Business Management Consulting works with small business owners and non-profit organizations to help them tell their story better and helps them reach their full market potential, become more effective, productive and profitable. Using the business tools he learned in school and his experience of successfully “selling” the mission of many non-profit organizations, he is able to improve the market and cash position of businesses in different industries along with a range of non-profits.

Alan, can you tell me how you first learned about Robert Middleton and Action Plan Marketing?

My relationship with Action Plan Marketing began innocently enough by following up on a tip from one of my earliest clients over 3 years ago. I went to their website. I signed up to get the newsletter and found I was looking forward to each installment since they were short, pithy and very useful. I then bought the Action Plan workbook, and started. I got a little ways into it and then joined a Marketing Action Plan group.

Why did you decide to join the Marketing Action Group? What marketing challenges were you facing?

It was clear I needed some structure to have this work. I did not have a clear sense of what I was offering – the real value proposition or the ultimate outcome. While obtaining my MBA I did have to develop a business plan which was a good beginning, but I did not have a real clear sense of what I was offering. I was learning to talk about the skills I had from my experience as a fund raiser, which involved translating a mission of an organization into money - - grants or gifts - - but not in the way Robert teaches.

I had a sales letter but I wasn't getting much work out of it. Robert helped me identify what I was good and what works. One of the things I got from this group was that I needed to start scheduling speaking engagements.

Also, the concept of producing an ultimate outcome really, really made sense to me. What do I do that is tangible? What do I offer to my clients? I have used that mechanism to great affect. I know you probably want me to tell you a dollar amount, but I'm not sure I can do that. But what I can tell you is my closings are higher. Before that, I was spending a lot of time just rambling.

Alan that brings me to a point I think is important. In addition to the monetary value (or hard money ROI) of these materials, I think there is another side to that. The soft-dollar ROI. What would you say has been the soft-dollar ROI you have experienced?

I have more confidence. I think Robert has definitely contributed to my having a much more refined mission than I had earlier. Very simply, I now say, "I help you tell your business story better". That has resonated with a lot of people. But where I've noticed real change is by beginning the conversation with, 1) what are your goals, 2) what's working, 3) what is getting in the way, 4) what would it feel like if you didn't have those obstacles, and 5) how I can do something about them. That five-step process has been helpful to me and to my prospects.

With my background as a fundraiser it was always about telling stories. I think I understood a lot of this stuff before, but you might say I got permission to use it more. I have confidence and comfort with that approach. At the end of day you have to have something of value. I can now say with greater authority what I can do for you.

I use the information I've gotten from these materials. I literally keep several newsletters on hand and read them before I go into meetings. I have created my own cheat sheets and carry them with me and refer back to them.

You touched on something I am hearing in your words and that is the information Action Plan Marketing provides is very practical. Is that a fair statement?

Very, very practical and simple. One thing that has really struck me is the work Robert has done with Byron Katie. What has fascinated me is it so resembles cognitive therapy. I know this from other parts of my life. Those materials have also been a big part of giving me permission. I keep coming back to that. To do things I thought would work, but Robert has tested them out.

Is there anything else you would like to share before we close?

Yes, without meaning to I've become a raving fan. I'm not one to write fan letters as I'm a believer in process over personality. Yet, after reading and participating in numerous Action Plan activities, I find myself recommending Robert's process to many people.

When I met Robert he looked no different than his picture. He's pretty darn casual. He's not super slick. Success has a lot to do with the core stuff. It is not about self aggrandizement. It's about the process.

Robert's stuff is not rocket science but in some ways it is harder. It's about self-discovery. It is just about doing the work and developing discipline.

It is easy to do business with Action Plan Marketing. I sat in on a Marketing Action Group before I decided to join. I appreciated that. There is always a mechanism which allows you to evaluate what you are buying and/or to make it very clear what you are buying before you buy it. No hidden agenda.