



Age: 34

Lives in: Kiryat Sanz, Jerusalem

Industry: Business strategist, marketing consultant and motivational speaker

Clients include: Google, Jewish National Fund, Apple Computers, National Geographic

Background: In addition to addressing conferences and providing training seminars, Rabbi Issamar Ginzberg is an author and columnist for *The Jerusalem Post*. Although he lives in Israel, he travels frequently to America since a large percentage of his clients are US-based. His articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Christian Science Monitor*, among other prestigious publications. His career as a business consultant began when companies sought his advice after the publication of his book, which advises business owners on ways to build up their credit.

Issamar is a descendent of the Rebbes of Nadvorna and Chernobyl, and the Maharsham of Brezhan. A graduate of the Ohr Lagolah rabbinic training program, he plans on opening his own *shul* within the next two years. He and his wife have four children.

LUNCH BREAK

with **Issamar Ginzberg**

How can you be a successful consultant if you don't run your own businesses?

I happen to own several small businesses, but the reason I'm successful is that Hashem has granted me unique analytical skills. When someone tells me that I don't know anything about his particular business, I respond, "That's why you need me, for a fresh perspective." The reason I *don't* specialize in a particular industry is that I enjoy borrowing ideas from one industry and applying them to another.

What is your number-one suggestion for self-promotion?

The key is getting other people to promote you. You have to get recommendations, whether in writing or on video. When others recommend your services, you're perceived as being in a position of authority. When I first started, I bartered consultations with a few high-profile businesses, and their recommendations led to some very significant clients, such as a *New York Times* best-selling author and a bank in Ohio.

What's the best business advice you've ever received?

Someone once told me that you need to make your own opportunities instead of trying to find them by others. You have to make yourself stand out. Keep a blog. Hold your own events. Be a black zebra with white stripes. You can be doing the same thing as everyone else, but make yourself conspicuous.

What advice do you have for growing businesses?

Whether with advertising or any

other promotion, whenever you put yourself out there, it has to be a call to action. By that I mean a sale or any other request for a customer's direct response. This way, you have the exposure as well as results. Marketing should always lead to direct sales. Also, always use serif fonts.

What's the most common business mistake people make?

Ignoring the low-hanging fruit. People think they have to do something drastic to get things moving, but it isn't true. For instance, instead of focusing on a new place of business, they can hire more salespeople to increase sales.

Is there a common denominator among heads of successful companies?

Yes—drive. Successful entrepreneurs are driven to succeed, regardless of the size or type of business.

How do you get people to follow your advice?

I make sure they pay me (*laughs*). There is a famous story about Rav Yerucham Levovitz, who charged money to listen to his *shmuessen*. When you pay for something, you listen.

Do you have any general rules for businesses?

Every business is different, but I find the principle of consistency to be a major factor. Customers like to stay consistent with their previous actions.

How is business different in Israel

than in America?

When I advised my clients in Eretz Yisrael to offer money-back guarantees, people thought I was nuts, but they did just fine. As business becomes more global, the differences are almost insignificant.

Fortune 500 companies didn't mind that you are a *chasidische*-looking person?

I think the novelty helped in the beginning. I also use it to my advantage; I will mention the fact that I've never watched television or gone to college. At the end of the day it's what I say, not who says it.

How should one start?

I hate the expression "Fake it till you make it," but it works. You also have to make yourself sound experienced.

Consult for free, or in exchange for goods or services.

Google is known to be meticulous about who they allow in. How did you get them to hire you?

I once gave a seminar somewhere and another presenter worked for Google. She recommended me to them, and they hired me to lecture on the art of building your personal brand.

Can anyone become a consultant?

The business of consulting is taking the smarts you already have and bottling and selling them. ●

To suggest a candidate for this column, or questions for Lunchbreak interviewees, please contact us at editorial@amimagazine.org.

● MARKETING QUOTE // OF THE WEEK

“You won't need to convince people if you connect with them.”

Moshe Shindler
Mint Media

