

The Coaching Wizards Series: How to Grow Your Own Six-Figure Coaching Business

Dan Janal www.prleads.com Interviews Dianna Booher, www.booher.com

Dan – Welcome to the Coaching Wizards session. This is Dan Janal, the President and Founder of PR Leads, and I'm delighted to welcome Dianna Booher as our guest today. Welcome.

Dianna – Thank you. It's great to be with you.

Dan – Dianna has a great background. She is a very, very well-known speaker. She holds every major award you can work for in the National Speakers Association—the CSP Award and the CPAE Award, which is the Speaker's Hall of Fame—so I'm particularly honored to have you on the line with us today. Dianna has also written more than 60 books, which I don't know how old you are, and I won't ask you how old you are, but I have to believe that that's well more than book a year, if not two or three or more.

Dianna – You're giving me far more credit; it's actually just a little more than 40—42, not 60, but I'll take the credit you want to give here.

Dan – That is a lot of books. We're going to talk about how you achieve that and achieve balance in your life and also grow your business at the same time. First, let's learn a little bit more about you and your coaching practice. What is the focus of your coaching practice?

Dianna – Actually, it's the corporate market and I focus on communications skills. People might call me up to help them write a certain kind of document. It might be on oral communications, interpersonal skills, a struggle or a relationship. Sometimes it's a corporate or an organizational problem. They're the head of a department or an organization and they can't get people to work together or to communicate a negative message. It could be in any of those areas of communication. Sometimes it's a general market. They want to write a book to market their professional practice, like a medical doctor or a psychologist or something like that (www.GetYourBookPublished2006.com).

Dan – What is the primary benefit your clients receive?

Dianna – Actually, career benefits, if they're coming to me for help with an oral communication—they need a promotion and they feel like they need to be more visible in the company, so they're working for a promotion. If they want to write a proposal and they want help with that, obviously, they are looking to make a multi-million dollar sale. They're promoting a product or a service and they want to sell something so they can bring in more income. If it's an interpersonal skill issue or problem or relationship, then an organization might be looking to save a division, solve a problem between two executives who can't get along, or figure out how to keep a department alive and save a lot of jobs. There are some big benefits or it could be just a personal payoff.

Dan – How long have you been a coach?

Dianna – Actually, I have a lot of prongs in the business. I’ve been in the training business about 26 years, and actually, coaching individuals, going out networking with individuals about 15 years (www.boohier.com/coaching.html).

Dan – Why did you want to be a coach?

Dianna – If you wanted to boil it down to a word, I’d say freedom. I just wanted to have control of my life and set my own schedule.

Dan – Wonderful. What is the most rewarding part of being a coach?

Dianna – I would have to say its personal satisfaction, seeing a person or an organization make a change, whether that’s becoming more productive or getting along with somebody better, and actually measuring the results. Sometimes you help somebody do something and you hope they did it, but you can't really see the payoff, at least in your lifetime. But with the things I do, going in and helping somebody present themselves better or do a presentation better or actually do a proposal and they go out and win a business. Like last week I was coaching a team of three people to actually do a presentation and they come back and say, “Hey, we got it!” It was a 220 billion dollar sale. That is a huge satisfaction. I just have to say it boils down to personal satisfaction, and in addition, you earn a very nice living.

Dan – That’s a wonderful story. Thanks for sharing that. Let’s take the flip side. What’s the most frustrating part of being a coach?

Dianna – I guess it would be having a company or a person call you in, ask for help, and then they don’t take it, or they butcher it. You outline a plan—here’s the way to change that situation, here’s the way to improve that situation or that relationship, and they, “Well, I want to change this, well, I don’t really want to do this step, well now I think that approach wouldn’t work, I’d rather do it this way,” and you think, “Why are you paying me to outline this approach, to help you, if you’re not going to do it?” That’s always puzzled me and it’s very frustrating because you get emotionally involved with your clients, and if they’re not going to do it, it’s not just you paid me the money and I don’t care, it’s you paid me the money and I do care. That’s frustrating.

Dan – Very good answer. I know a lot of coaches feel personally involved with their clients, so it becomes a very interesting relationship. Let’s look at the beginning stages of your business. Go back to the very beginnings of when started your business. What were you doing before you were a coach?

Dianna – Actually, I was writing full-time. I had taught school for a couple of years at all different levels. I taught kindergarten one year, high school one year, college one year. Then I became a full-time writer, and I had published a novel, so that was it (www.BoohierDirect.com).

Dan – How did this background help you become a good coach?

Dianna – I think, first of all, you're always researching as a writer of how-to books. You're always on the cutting edge, you're always looking at research studies, you're always working with people, as a trainer at the university level in a classroom, and so you're always dabbling in psychology. If I had it to do over again—my Masters is in English—but if I were starting all over and didn't have to do all those term papers, I would be a psychologist. I think you can not have a better background as a coach to research and study the psychology of people and what makes them tick and what motivates them to make change.

Dan – How long were you a coach before you started making a full-time income from coaching?

Dianna – Actually, I made a living...this is amazing, and it's a fluke, but I actually made a living really right from the very first year. I set a goal. I talked to a friend of mine at the lunch table one day. I came home from church. These friends of ours had invited us over for dinner. He was the Vice President at ExxonMobile, and he said, "We pay this lady to come in from Atlanta to teach all of our engineers how to write and we pay her big bucks. You ought to learn how to do that if you've got a book on it." So I set a goal, and I thought if they're paying somebody who has the same credentials I do and she's got a book on this, like me, why can't I be doing that? I just hung my shingle out. He said, "I'll set up an appointment with the person you need to talk to." I started calling on oil companies and bingo; they passed my name around. It's a real small community. That's how I got started and I made a living at it from the get-go. That's not to say I didn't have some down years, when the oil business went into the crunch times and I was working for IBM and the high-tech, I had some down times. But I think if you've got a plan and you've got good word of mouth, you can make a living from the very beginning.

Dan – Fantastic. That's great inspiration for all of our listeners and readers. Let's look at the marketing aspect of your business in the early stages of your career. What were some of the biggest mistakes you made when you started your coaching business?

Dianna – I think one of the biggest mistakes is that I thought that if I knew or understood something that everybody knew it and understood. I had to first figure out what I had of value that somebody would pay for. I know that seems like an odd thing to say, but I think many of us don't realize what we know that has value for other people.

I think another mistake I made was narrowly defining my client base and myself. I didn't realize how I could take the concepts that I knew and had learned and process it and transfer those to other industries and bigger bases of clients that could use what I did. Let me just give you an example of that. IBM called and said, "Can you do customer service?" and I said, "No. I don't know a thing about that." And they said, "Now wait a minute. The same things that you do in communication, in writing and in speaking, are the same things you do if you were running a big call center. It's communicating. It's getting to the bottom of a relationship, figuring out what's wrong, and fixing the problem." I thought well, you know, I researched those other things, can't you research this. I just transferred the process I was using to communicate in other methods to that method, and researching and writing a book to researching a customer service problem. I think another big mistake was that I was not charging enough. I was not realizing the value of what I had to offer. I was charging for my time rather than the value of what I was delivering. Also when I was doing selling myself, I was intimidated to call on senior executives. I was going

for the person where I felt I was on their level, so to speak, because I came out of an academic setting. I mentioned teaching as a background. I was going in at sort of the middle management level and I thought who am I to call on that senior executive. I didn't realize how easy it was really to get access and what it took to be considered their equal and what kind of credentials I needed to be considered their equal.

I made so many mistakes, Dan, it's hard to figure out all of them. I think another one is when I thought my time is limited, and I need to go after the big clients. I'm not talking about the top level people, but the big clients. I didn't realize that everybody else out there in the whole world is going after those big clients and I was aiming my efforts so that my time paid off in going after the top Fortune 10 or the Fortune 20, but so was everybody else. So I picked out a rung in that Fortune 500 so that everybody in the world wasn't competing for the same people, but I didn't waste my time on the bottom rung of ladder. They had to be the right profiled group where I wasn't wasting my time, they had enough to really pay me the kind of fees I wanted, but I didn't run into everybody else knocking on their door at the same time. (www.boohar.com/clients.html)

Dan – Yes, that's great. These are wonderful tactics that many people can learn from, so I'm very glad you're sharing them with us. What mistakes did you make in running the business?

Dianna – In running the business, I think that...I made so many there also. I held on to people too long. When I hired people, I was just always in a crunch to get somebody. I was usually way overloaded. When they didn't perform well, I kept them hoping they would turn around and become more productive. That was a real drain on the payroll. I hired a general manager, that was really what I would call a maintainer rather than somebody who knew how to grow a company, and there's a huge difference. You get general managers sometimes who are operations people, and if you set it up and you know how to grow it, they can maintain it. On the other hand, you get a general manager, or if you're small, an office manager, and they can grow it, but they may have no sense about administration and operation. Those are just two different animals. I think it's real important to distinguish between the two.

I think there have been periods of time where I've lost touch with my business' strategic direction. If I've been really, really busy for a year, just totally booked, traveling a lot of times, I've let some wrong people make strategic direction changes that didn't work out, and that's been a mistake in actually running the business.

Dan – What were some of the best moves you've made regarding marketing and also running your business?

Dianna – Probably the very best move I made was to write books early on. I'll tell you how I got into it. I kind of fell into it. When I first got into coaching and consulting, I was sitting in the audience and during a speaker's Q&A time, when somebody raised their hand and said, "How do you do your invoicing if you travel and you're always booked?" He said, "You know, I never thought about it. I just decide on what kind of lifestyle I want and I send out invoices. I divided it among the clients that I have and I send out an invoice to them at the end of the year and they all pay it. Nobody's every complained." I'm looking at him, thinking he's putting one over on me. The second person asked him the question and they said, "Well how do you market if you have

this much business?" He said, "You know, I've never thought about it. I just hide and somehow people find me." And I thought this can't be real, but I know this guy's busy. I knew him by reputation. He's one of the biggest in the industry, and I thought what do you have to do in our culture to make people find you, if you really hide and you do no marketing. I thought you've got to be a movie star, you've got to be an athlete, or you've got to be a celebrity author, and I hated making cold calls, because it was early on. I decided, "Okay, I can't throw a football and I'm not a movie star, so I'm going to write a book." That was my sole strategy—write a book and that's how I'm going to get known so I don't have to make cold calls. That was probably the best thing. I didn't learn till later that was probably the best thing I could do to grow my business.

Dan – We're going to talk more about the size of your organization and how you run it and also more about your book publishing enterprises in just a few minutes. First I want to go back to something that you briefly touched on, and that was pricing your services. You said early on that you didn't charge enough and then you use a value-based system. I think that's a new idea for a lot of people listening. Could you explain what that is and how you determine a value-based system for pricing?

Dianna – It's hard to do. There are three ways I look at it. I have different people on the phone who sell now and there are three ways that we do price it. Sometimes, but rarely, by the hour; sometimes it's by the project; and other times it's by what the market will bear, in other words, what is the value of what we're offering. That's the way we want to price it most of the time. If it's something, a service, that's a commodity, in other words, coaching on how to write a proposal, that's pretty much a...well, no, that's not so much a commodity as presentation. Somebody's going to do a big presentation and they want to call you up, or they just need to get better. Sometimes an executive, a CEO, will call and say, "I've got to go to Wall Street and we've got some problems in the press and the media and we've got to have help with this speech. Can you help us?" Well, there are a gazillion coaches out there on presentations, and that's pretty much a commodity. They need a day's time and you pretty much bill it by the day. But sometimes there's a project, there's like a team, maybe in aerospace defense, like I was talking to you earlier about, will call and say, "We've got this team of three and they don't really know how much time it's going to involve. It's going to be over a couple of weeks. They may need you to help them with this and it might be that, it might be X, and they just want your access. Can you be available to them in whatever they need?" That's a project and you just kind of have to guess how much time it's going to take, and so you can't come up with this hourly fee. Sometimes you build a relationship over a long term, and this time you're going to win, you're going to get a lot more than what you really spent in time. The next time it may be a little bit more time than you planned. But the real thing to work for is what I mean value. We try to question that client and think what is at risk here. If this goes wrong, how will it damage my relationship with that client? If they don't do a good job at the end and they can't do what they hope to be able to do after I work with them, how has their relationship been damaged? What is the risk here? Then what's the reward? What results and how much will that result earn them and propel them in their career, their adventure, etc.? What's that huge payoff for them? And then you price accordingly. Of course, that's the most profitable for you and it's the most profitable for them.

I know early on in my business, we were talking about saying no to a client. I heard an IBM executive once say to me, “We don’t ever tell a client no. We always say yes, for a price. If you want us to do this, we will price it high enough, as your coach.” I walked away thinking, as an individual coach, I will say yes as long as I can price it high enough that if I have to put in more hours and more hours and more hours, it will still be worth it for me and the client. I think that that’s the way to go in coaching.

Dan – Great examples. Thanks so much. Let me just ask a somewhat follow-up question there because I’m sure a lot of business people are used to getting hourly quotations or fixed price quotations or projects or whatever. The value of things seems like it could be a new concept to a lot of people who hear it for the first time. How do you justify those prices to clients who are unfamiliar with the system, or if I could phrase it another way, what do you say to handle an objection to that kind of pricing structure?

Dianna – I don’t think, if when you’re talking to person who has sign-off power, they ever care. They don’t ask you the price. I can give you an example. When we were dealing with a client who won a \$220 billion contract, that we worked with to help deliver that, they came in and said, “Here is the issue. Here is the problem. Here’s what’s at stake. How can you help us achieve it?” We sat down and talked to them about and 1-1/2 hours and said here’s how we would go about it and here’s the approach. When he started to walk out the door, he said, “Oh by the way, how much is this going to cost me?” He never asked the price. We were ready to deal with it. We had talked about the implementation, the dates.

I just did this coaching thing that I was working on last week and I called in at another, while I was in Houston, and called back to my office, and the top executive was on the phone. He said, “We’ve got a problem. We just heard from the Department of Defense. We’re on the short list. We’ve got to do this presentation upcoming. We need your help. Can you come out?” I said, “I’m booked until the third.” “Can you make yourself available?” I said, “Well, I can switch my schedule around. I can do it.” We hung up the phone and he said, “Reserve that week for us,” and he never asked the price. Ever. We sent him an invoice for half the price—they have to pay half up front. If you’re talking to somebody who is a decision maker, they are used to making those kinds of decisions and they know what their risk is if they don’t win the deal, and they know what the payoff is if they do. My fee is peanuts compared to what they have at stake.

If you’re talking to a lower-level employee, yes, they’re going to ask the price. I think the response that you give to them would be something along these lines, “A price like this will allow you,” talking to the customer here, “the most flexibility. If I charge you by the hour and it takes me longer to do this when I get into this project, we might have to do this and I’m going to have to interview more people here and I may do this and then the price may, if we’re letting the clock run, it may run up to as much as X. I don’t know if this is going to be a 12-hour thing, if the coaching is going to involve this, if we’re going to run into these problems. But if we work with a fixed price here, I’d feel more comfortable and I think you’d probably feel safer if we just agree on a price of Y.” You want to present it so that they can bank on something. It may be more than they’re used to paying, but it’s a safe fee. I just think you have to let them see the pros and cons. You give them options. You give them...when you walk into Sears and you say here’s a good washing machine and here’s a better washing machine and here’s our highest quality

washing machine, and then you give them options and you see what they're willing to pay. Then once you decide, and if they keep looking at that good machine, they're not willing to pay much and so they're probably going to take your option A and then you can give them, "Here's Option A+ this," and then you say, "Here's Option A and we can add on this and we can add on that," and you give them add-ons and whatever they ask you about, that lets you know what their budget is. Once you decide their budget, you want to give them the most value you can give them for whatever they have to pay, whatever their budget allows, whatever their objectives are and what they want to achieve.

The key is to go through the questioning process up front trying to find out what they're trying to accomplish, and what their expectations are. Just like if you had called me for this teleseminar and you said, "I'd like to ask you all about growing your business, marketing your business and all your trade secrets. We can spend five minutes on this call." Well, immediately, that lets me know the lack of depth of your questions and how I should tailor my answers accordingly. If you call me up and say, "I'd like for you to give me your strategies on coaching and how you grow your business and running your business, etc., and we're going to spend four days on it, I know the depth of the answers you want. The same thing applies to questioning your clients up front. That's just the key to knowing how to price. If you know what their expectations are then you know how to price.

Dan – Thank you for that wonderful explanation. Let's move on to growing your business. How do you get your new clients now?

Dianna – Three ways. We track that very carefully. I have this great spreadsheet and we ask every caller. We know what length they came to us on the Internet. Basically, the top three are, previous work is number one. Second is referrals—word of mouth, somebody else told them, and usually another person in their network; it might be in their industry or somebody in another division of their organization, etc. The third is through books or an article that they've seen published. That's our top three. There are about 20 that we track. We track Internet leads, if they came to us, we know whether they came through Google or if they came to us through MSN or Internet or whatever.

Dan – How do you keep your current clients? How do you avoid turnover?

Dianna – Most of what we offer our clients are things that they need on an ongoing basis. It's not like you help them with this and they never need it again. It's like food; everybody eats. It's through staying in touch with them, staying in front of them. We send them, like most people do, ezines with communication tips of the month. I send them new books as they come out and I give away gazillions of new books. I always personally autograph them. I don't have the publishers send it to them. I don't have a marketing director send it. I personally sit there, and it takes me days but I write them a personal note, and send it out to them. I send it to the top person. We may send ten to that one organization all for their executive vice presidents. Then my sales people stay in front of them. They are continually, every three months, sending something—the drip system—just to stay in front of them. I have somebody who booked a speech today and it's a very little company, somebody that we wouldn't go after; we wouldn't spend any time calling them, but just because of this little drip system that's set up automated on

our contact manager system, they got something from us and called in and booked a speech. We're not doing the outbound marketing to them, but it's just a call in system, so just trying to stay in front of them so they just remember us when they need what we offer.

Dan – Do you think you run your business differently than other coaches? And if so, how?

Dianna – Probably not, but I don't know how everybody else runs their business. I couldn't really answer that. I think I probably have to work a lot harder at it. I do work long hours. I think a lot of times people get into coaching because they think it's going to be a wonderful lifestyle and they can do it three hours a day from the beach in Hawaii. I've never figured out how to do that. I do really work hard at it. That freedom I said I wanted as I started the business, is something that I have, but I don't always take advantage of it. At different times when I've had a general manager, I've been able to leave the country for three weeks and not have a worry, but sometimes I leave the country and still check email from wherever I am.

Dan – I think everyone has that feeling. What role does referral marketing play in your business?

Dianna – What roles does “advertising” you said...?

Dan – Referral marketing.

Dianna – Actually, referrals from different people, like affiliates or strategic partners. With strategic partners, it's very important. We have partners in other countries. We have referral partners in Europe and in the Middle East. That is an important part. Referrals from affiliates here in the US; there are not a lot. We have a lot of referrals from clients—a lot. That's a big part. It just depends on where those referrals come from as to how significant they are.

Dan – Do you host any seminars or retreats?

Dianna – I do. We do public workshops in the training topics that we do, like in writing and in presentations. We do them here in our training center, in the Dallas-Ft. Worth office area, right outside the DFW airport. Then we do public workshops around the country, in several cities around the country. Those are two-day seminars. (www.boohar.com/public_workshops.html) Then I'm doing an upcoming one on getting your book published, March 23-25, that will be coming up.

Dan – Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Dianna – www.GetYourBookPublished2006.com is the website about that. It's going to be really a kind of “roll up your sleeves” kind of deal. There are a lot seminars on publishing like how to market using the Internet, how to do this, that and the other, and have a bunch of speakers coming in. I want this to be a really get it done type of seminar. When you show up, you're going to bring your laptop, notes, files, research, sit down, and when you leave, you're going to have a pitch to send to an agent, a query letter to send to an agent, and the proposal's going to be finished. I'm actually going to coach people through the process so when they leave, their book

will be ready to send to a major publisher and get it sold to Warner or Harper-Collins or Simon & Schuster, or whoever you want to sell it to. It's going to be a real working event.

Dan – What is that web address again so people can find out more information?

Dianna – www.GetYourBookPublished2006.com

Dan – Thank you for telling us about that. I know you're a CSP, which means that you speak a lot, sort of the highest designation that the National Speakers Association offers. Can you tell us what role speaking plays in your business growth strategy?

Dianna – It generates a lot of inquiries for our other services that are really the high ticket coaching services. The speeches, I consider like paid marketing. You want to get in front of people and so you get paid to do that. You go out, you spend a day, you're in front of 2,000 people, and you get paid to market to them. Then they call you up and say, "Can you come out and help me do this, that and the other?" It's just an integral part of marketing for all the other services—consulting, one-on-one, individual coaching, all the other things.

Dan – I don't want people to get the wrong idea here that when you go to speak that you're not actually marketing from the platform and selling your services...

Dianna – Oh, no, I never mentioned that.

Dan – ...and I'm sure you meant something different than that. Can you explain that please?

Dianna – Basically, you are letting people know what you do when you give examples. If I'm speaking and I'm doing...one of the speeches I do is the communication clues and cues, and I'm talking about big picture strategies in an organization. But as I mention one of those strategies, I talk about the importance of writing and I just say, "For example, when I was doing a writing seminar, talking about developing winning proposals," people would go, "Oh! Man! We could sure use help there!" So that generates an email saying, "Could you come out and talk to us or have somebody come out and talk to us about doing effective proposals?" Or I say something about how people write such confusing email and that generates an inquiry or phone call about, "Can you help our people do better email?" or presentations training, or whatever it happens to be. You're not selling. You're not passing out flyers and saying, "Look at this website and call us," but just through the stories you tell and the illustrations of people doing things, you are marketing your services; if you do a good job. Now if you do a lousy job when you're on the platform, they're never going to call you.

Dan – Right. Thanks for clearing that up. Let's go back to book writing and publishing for a few minutes. You've written well more than 40 books published by many of the major publishers. How has that had a direct impact on your ability to grow your business?

Dianna – Actually, I think it is the single most important thing that I've done. First of all, in the early days, when I was by myself and I didn't have other people on the phone, I just didn't have the time to write and send out marketing letters, and I hated to make cold calls, and today I don't

think you can make cold calls. I don't think you can talk to a live person by calling them up. Particularly, if you're going to coach senior executives, you have to have the same credentials they have, or what they consider the same credentials, at the same level. Look at TV and see who's on there. They're interviewing politicians, CEO's, authors, movie stars, and sports figures. That's who's on there. If you're going to get that kind of marketing clout, you've got to have those kinds of credentials. It used to be just professors—publish or perish. Now it is everybody who is a professional who wants credentials, you have to do that. I didn't purposely think of a strategy when I started out. I just thought how could I market without getting on the phone to make cold calls. And I did it. That was my background. Now if I were a zookeeper or something, or an engineer, I would have never thought of that probably because that wouldn't have been my skill. That just happened to be my training and my background and I loved to do it, so I thought hey, I'd try this. And it just happened to be the best thing I ever did. People came along and said, hey. That happens to be the in thing to do now; I just didn't know it was the in thing back then.

Dan – Let's talk about how you manage your business. Most of the coaches I've spoken to before are virtual one-person companies; they have some outside help every now and then. You're the first person I've talked to that really has an enterprise. Can you give us an overview of how many people work for you and what your structure looks like and such?

Dianna – The reason I have an enterprise—and I've re-thought that very often through the 25 years I've been in business—is that as an individual, you only have so many hours a day. As an individual coach, you're selling your time. If you are doing paperwork, signing checks, opening the mail, planning your travel, you cannot be making money. That's not billable time. From the very get-go, in fact...I started my business in January 1980...in February I had hired an administrative assistant. She was working 9:00-12:00 and by May she was working 9:00-2:00, and then toward the end of the year, I had two assistants. I have always had somebody else. Now I have three regional managers who are on the phone all the time selling. I have a marketing person. I have an office manager. I have a workshop coordinator. I have just a general administrative person. I have a person who's always just doing my speech slides and general office stuff. I outsource a lot. I outsource accounting. I outsource IT stuff. There's a lot that I try to outsource. Of course, my publishers handle book stuff. There are different things, projects, that I outsource, like building a website or something like that. And I have a lot of trainers, so I license my program. Once I develop something—I research it, do a book on it, and then I do a course on it—then I figure out how to do a coaching process on it. If I wanted to teach somebody else how to do it, what's the process to coach them through the process?

Like, today, I had a coaching...the last two days I was coaching somebody how to get the message across to their subsidiary here in the United States and she was in charge of making sure all the managers and executives in the US are implementing this strategy and she didn't know how to go about that. I was coaching her on the phone for the last two days, through 11:00 this morning, on how to get this strategy out. I was just taking her through this process. Once I get it down, and I start with the most complete thing, which is a book, then a course, then a speech on it, then a process on it to coach, then I can train other people behind me to do that same process and then I take a cut of what they make. It's a process. Then I can live off the income that they generate.

If you're by yourself, running a business just by yourself, you're going to always be limited to about a million dollars. That's always going to be your limitation because you just have a certain amount of hours that you can do and a certain amount of projects that you can handle. You may get to two million or something like that, but that's going to be it. If you build someone behind you and you can more or less clone yourself, then you get to take life a little easier, if you choose to do that, if you don't get personal enjoyment out of everything you do. That's been my philosophy; give away and train somebody else to do what you don't personally enjoy doing, the projects you don't personally enjoy doing, and take a cut, an override, most people call it, take an override of the other salespeople's work as a consultant or as a coach, take an override of what they get billed for. It's done in every profession. It's like a doctor who owns a hospital. You have other doctors who work at the hospital and you take a cut, an override, of what they charge. That's my principle for having more staff rather than just one person. You always have to keep looking at it, making sure that you're profitable, that you're not the administrator and you don't lose charge of your life. I just think it's a different model maybe. Not all coaches follow that model, but it's worked for me.

Dan – I'm sure you're going to expand a lot of people's thinking when they hear that information and really process it. I want to get a little granular on you here. Percentage wise, how much time do you spend on the client side, marketing side and administration side of things, if you keep track of your hours that way?

Dianna – That would vary by year. Let me just pick out an average year. I try to write a book a year, and I write quickly so that's probably going to be about 10% of my time that I would spend on writing a book and marketing a book, doing interviews and that kind of thing. Then I would probably spend about 40-50% of my time client face-to-face, and then 20% of my time actually doing marketing things. I consider speaking marketing things, even though I might be getting paid for it, I am marketing if I'm on a platform somewhere. Then probably 20-25% of the time I'm performing administrative kind of things.

Dan – What advice do you have for managing your people?

Dianna – I would say don't. Get competent people and then just let them do their thing. I realize that's a platitude—hire the best people and get out of the way. People say that all the time, but that really has been my strategy. I am not a manager. I don't have a business background. I know nothing about accounting. I've learned it by asking a lot of other people who are a lot smarter than I am. I have a lot of friends who are entrepreneurs, business owners, so I'm always, in the early days, was forever saying how do I do this, how do I do that, how should I judge financial ratios, what should I look for. But I think that when you're small, like we are, you have to get the right people and then trust their judgement.

I've probably had two conversations already today saying, "I don't know how to do this. Just figure it out and then check back with me at this point and let's decide the next step." And that's how I run my business. I just find somebody. I look at their credentials. I interview them the best I can. I check their references. And I say, "Okay, this is your responsibility. This is how I'm going to measure you. If you're successful, we're going to check it out in three months, we're

going to check it out in six months.” Then something that I have done for the last two or three people that I’ve hired—it’s worked beautifully—I’ve said, “I intend to hire you full-time and here’s going to be your salary and here’s how we’re going to measure it, but I’m going to bring you on in a consulting arrangement for the first six months,” I did one of three months, “and here’s your first list of to-do’s and how I’m going to measure that, and let’s work together for three months. Make sure you’re happy and make sure we’re happy. At the end of three months, here’s how I’m going to check to make sure it’s working out. You can decide if you like it here, your culture and you’re happy, and then we’ll turn it into a full-time job.” Every one of those three people that I’ve done that in the last couple of years has worked out beautifully and we’ve been happy, they’ve been happy, and they’ve become full-time employees. I wish I had done that much earlier because some people who have not worked out, I would have been able to see that right up front and I wouldn’t have kept them on as long as I did.

Dan – That begs the next question of how many hours a week do you work?

Dianna – Far too many. Far too many. It depends, like I said, on what year. I have had a general manager with me for the last seven years. During that time, I was able to work a nice, typical 40-hour week doing what I wanted. He left about six months ago to go to an opportunity, a company that was about three times our size, and I’ve been playing three roles, doing three jobs, and we’ve been hugely busy. Last year was our best year ever. I have been playing those three jobs and I’ve gotten one person in here in the last two weeks and hired another one in December and I hope that’s going to ease the load. But in the last six months, I’ve been working closer to 60 hours, which is terrible.

Dan – I think a lot of our listeners would be happy to work only 60 hours. Let’s talk about how you balance those 60 hours in your life. How do you balance your work life and your personal life? What tips can you give us on that?

Dianna – Very carefully. I rebalance them every morning (*Get a Life Without Sacrificing Your Career* (McGraw-Hill) www.booherdirect.com). I think that it’s far, far too easy to become unbalanced as a consultant and as a coach because we have total freedom and we love what we do. If I didn’t like it, it wouldn’t be so hard, but when you get personal satisfaction out of what you do, and because you’re working often with executives who work those kinds of hours—the people who can afford us as coaches, who pay us big bucks, they work those hours. They get up and they’re going at 6:30-7:00 in the morning and they see you after hours and they’re working till 7:30 at night or 9:00 at night. It’s easy to get caught up in that and if they are enjoying what they’re doing and you’re enjoying it, you just keep going around the clock and they say, “Can you help me out Saturday? Can you do this on Sunday?” and you give in.

I think you have to write your goals down and you can look at them every day. I get up in the morning and I do my Bible study and reading and prayer time, meditation time, and I read those goals and I think, “Uh oh, I’m not achieving that. I was going to do this and I was going to do that and I was going to build a better relationship here and I was going to do that. I’m not doing it. I’ve got to do a course correction.” I’m always doing a course correction. I just think that that’s really important because it’s too easy to get off track if you’re having fun. And I don’t mean get off track in the sense of doing something you don’t want to do, but letting something

overpower something else. If you have two priorities, for a period of your life, you can give more attention than you should or need to and one relationship can suffer over another.

Dan – Very interesting. Let's get a few demographic questions out of the way as well. Do you have any children living at home right now?

Dianna – They're grown and married. I have grandchildren.

Dan – When they were growing up, I assume you were still running your business then, how did you balance children in your life back then?

Dianna – I did not travel. I tried to not travel. And that was part of my decision to clone myself because when IBM came to me and said, "Hey, we want you," I was working with their consultants and they said, "We'd like to put you in a room for five days and bring in this team to do this and we'd like to send you to this city and put you in a room with these four people to accomplish this," and I thought, "Eww, that's 20 weeks this year. I have teenagers. I don't want to do that." That's when I said I've got to get other people. One time I lost a big oil company, Shell Oil, who said, "We want to give you 100 dates this year. Can you do them?" I opened my calendar and I said, "I don't have that many dates. I can only give you about 20 days. That's all I have." They took the business elsewhere. I thought, "Oh no, I have worked too hard for this to let business walk away because I'm not big enough." I had several friends who said, "You need to start cloning yourself. You've got to get more people trained in your process so they can do this work with you." Even when they were growing up, I tried to focus...my work was in Houston then...focus my work where I am, stay at home when I can and do what I can over the phone. Then I took them on short trips with me. When I traveled, I tried whatever I could to get home that night. If I finish up at 10:00, I get on a plane. If I get in at 2:00 in the morning, so I would be there when they got up in the morning for 30 minutes before they went off to school, just because it counted as one more day I was home; one more day mom was here because she saw me between 7:00 and 7:30 this morning before I left for school. It's a real struggle; calling them very often and that kind of thing.

Dan – Are you married and does your spouse play a role in your business?

Dianna – Yes. My spouse was not involved in the business during those times, and that was harder, but he joined me in the business in 1987. For the last 18 years, he has worked in the business. He does sales, so he doesn't travel with me, but he's free to. If he wanted to, when I go out of the country to do something for a couple of weeks, he'll go with me. That makes it nice.

Dan – Good. I want to thank you for sharing all your thoughts with us. As we come to the end of the interview, I'm curious on what you would tell a coach who was just starting out? What would you say to them on a dark, dreary day when everything looks bleak?

Dianna – I would say it's the best life in the world. You do have to keep your goals in front of you. I would say don't pretend to be an expert, but to actually become an expert in your subject. Whatever it is, create, whether it's a new model, a new method, a new concept or process, and

then people will find you because people are always looking for that new thing. You just have to figure out a way for people to know who you are and to earn those credentials.

Dan – Thank you very much, Dianna Booher, for a very illuminating and interesting discussion on how you grew your coaching business. You've given us a lot of great ideas and a lot of food for thought on ideas I'm sure a lot of people have not even remotely considered until you brought them up because you play at a much larger level than most coaches do. Thank you again for your help today.

Dianna – Thank you, Dan. I've enjoyed it.

Dianna – This is Dan Janal, the President and Founder of PR Leads thanking you for joining us on our latest installment of The Coaching Wizards Series: How to Grow Your Own Six-Figure Coaching Business.