

This episode of The Approaching Schools podcast is brought to you by Love Admin, the ultimate solution for booking management software. So say goodbye to admin overload and hello to award-winning customer service and growth support personalised to help you hit your business goals. Ready to take your organisation to the next level. Visit [love admin.com](https://loveadmin.com) today to get started, welcome to another episode of approaching schools.

I want you to picture this. It's early morning, and instead of anxiously cold calling schools, your sipping coffee while your phone pings with new bookings, new inquiries from schools and nurseries, schools and nurseries that are genuinely excited to hear from you, no more awkward conversations with busy secretaries or that sinking feeling of being brushed off by head teachers who don't have a clue how incredible your services really are, because in the approaching Schools Challenge, you'll discover the exact steps to craft emails that speak directly to what schools want. So you can ditch the fear of rejection and the nagging worry of inconsistent income, and imagine finally having a clear, repeatable method that brings in steady bookings, leaving you free to enjoy your evenings and weekends with the family that you've started this business for in the first place.

So if you're ready to replace that feeling of overwhelm and quiet with quiet confidence and secure the future you've always envisioned. Then I promise you the approaching schools challenge is for you, and we're starting on the 27th of January, so head to the show notes to reserve your place. Now some of you listening will be in my group on Facebook. It's called Approaching Schools and nurseries with Karis Kennelly. Go and find it if you're not in there, because lots of my lovely members have been asking me questions this week. So I thought we would do an episode to answer some of the community's questions. So the first person I am giving a shout out to is Jan Morgan. Jan's company is tots in sport, and Jan would love to know who to approach in a school. She says, should it be the lead teacher or directly to the head teacher? So it's a really good question, and I think the one of the frustrations people find when they're trying to approach schools and nurseries for the first time is getting to the right person. And the problem and the reason why a lot of providers are finding it hard to sell to schools right now is because they're speaking to gatekeepers. They're not speaking to decision makers. So the aim of any communication you have with a school or nursery, really is to eventually be able to sit down and speak to that decision maker, isn't it? So how do you do that when the gatekeeper is your first port of call? Well, there's lots of different ways, and I'm a big advocate of offering value first. Why would a busy member of the senior leadership team give up 20 minutes of their precious time to speak to you what is going to be of value for them? So can you offer them something first, where you serve them in some way before sitting down with them and having that conversation and finding out what their needs are and looking for a solution together.

So if you've listened to this podcast before, you'll know that I love it when children's activity providers can showcase their work by providing some kind of demo, whether that be a demonstration, lesson or an assembly, in some cases, a consultation, so long as that consultation is clear on the benefits of them sitting down with you and what value they're going to get. But there's really nothing like showcasing what you do and showing them how the children respond to you, and the people that are going to be really, really excited and interested at snapping up your free offer are most likely going to be the curriculum leads. So if you're talking about primary schools, it's like the various different leads. So for you, it is the PE coordinator in secondary schools, for example, it would be the head of departments. So the head of PE. But what you really want to do one of the ways that you can not get past a gatekeeper, but win over again. Gatekeeper is by keeping your communication really personalised. So you want to make sure that you are naming that person, that key contact, in an email or a letter. And although all the schools have the staff names on their website, you can't

always tell who's in charge of what subject, but you can always find out the name of the head teacher. And it also depends what service you're looking to provide, because if it's a whole school solution like PPA cover, you probably are going to want to speak to the head teacher. It also depends what type of school it is. If it's a small rural school, for example, a lot of those head teachers are wearing many hats, and they may also be the person you deal with directly, less likely in a very, very large, multiple entry school with lots of different classes per year group. So it does vary by school. In the interest of personalisation, head teacher is always a good one. It also depends, are you looking to hire their hall to provide a club? Because then you might be needing to speak to the business manager, for example. And in every school, it's slightly different, because there may be a different teacher that is responsible for coordinating clubs.

If you are looking to deliver PPA, as mentioned, it's a whole school solution. So it depends on a number of factors. If in doubt, personalise it for the head teacher, it will be filtered down. If you put for the attention of it's more likely to be forwarded on. And also, when you encourage people to forward your email on you, you improve your sender reputation score for the future as well. So that's something worth knowing. So it is a little bit tricky to give you a definite answer, Jan, because it does vary from school to school, but one of the ways you can actually get past the gatekeeper for PE is to put the PE coordinator job title on an envelope and send them direct mail. So when I was art coordinator in a school. I opened all my own mail. It didn't go through the gatekeeper. So I hope that gives you a little bit of insight. Jan, Jan from tots in sports.

And next up is Emily. Kate Murphy, with a great question for you all to hear the answer to today. I'd love to know if your business is basically just you, whether you should sell yourself in your original email. I'm looking to offer PPA cover, but I don't have a PGCE or QTS, which could be seen as a negative. I have tons of experience and other qualifications, though, but I'm marketing myself as a business rather than under my name. Not sure if I should mention any of that, so there's a bit to unpick here, Emily, I want to assure you that none of the things that you brought up today are negatives. There's no reason why these things should be barriers, long as you position your offer in the right way, and it is your offer that's going to sell you. One of my best pieces of advice for people just starting out is don't try to appear bigger than you are. If you're not this big brand, this big company with lots of staff members, own it own that you are, you know, a solo business owner that is going to be sort of highly personable and be able to offer a highly personalised and extremely reliable service to this school. Don't underestimate the power of kind of being your own personal brand. In this instance, you don't have to be appearing to be a big company. You don't have to appear under a business name if you don't want to. I know you mentioned separately that your business name is a work in progress at the moment, you can simply be Emily. You know, Emily is a member of the local community approaching a school who is the at the center of this community, and schools love to do business with members of the community, so there's absolutely no reason why you can't just be you. Now, the caveat to that is you're asking, should you sell yourself in your original email? It really depends what you're talking about with regards to selling yourself, because I want your original email to be less about you and more about them, and more about how you can help them. Most importantly so you what you don't want to do is you don't want to spend your first paragraph talking all about yourself. Big reason why the approaches Schools Challenge exist. When dance teachers came to me asking me how I got my business into schools, I looked at what they were sending, and they were all talking about their qualifications and their certificates and their awards and all their experience. So they were doing it all in the beginning of that email. There's a place for all of that. Of course, the school is going to want to know what your experience is, but really that's a sales tool or a follow up tool or something that they're going to ask you about when you send them further information. Conversation. You start having a

conversation about arranging your demo or arranging to sit down with them. It's not something that you need to really talk about in that first paragraph. What you should be using your first paragraph for is grabbing their attention and identifying a very real need that you understand, that schools and nurseries have, and if you've listened to previous episodes, you'll know that I've identified seven critical challenges that schools are currently facing. So think more about them and what they need, and that's what's going to make them sit up and take notice and read more of your email than talking about yourself. But don't feel like lack of qualifications is going to hold you back. You know, we used to provide PPA covering, although I have QTS, my teachers didn't, but they were suitably qualified in dance, and we were insured, and the schools were able to clearly see their very, very relevant experience, and it wasn't an issue for them. So don't ever feel like having certain things in place or not having certain things in place is going to hold you back. There's nothing that you've said here, Emily that I think is going to present an issue to you. You can use being yourself to your advantage, you know, because you can really start building a lot of trust with schools. And there are some schools, I remember one school saying to me when I started hiring staff or carers, don't get too big too soon. Some schools actually have been burnt by working with companies that have got lots of staff, because sometimes they have high staff turnover and there's no continuity for the children. So you, you as yourself, can actually ensure really high quality progression for learning. So don't underestimate the power of that for a school. I hope that helps answer your questions somewhat. Emily, thank you very much.

And we have Bronia Robinson, who is from BPD company, which is a dance school. And Bronia would love to know about pricing structures on what to charge. How do you know what to go in with? Well, this is such an interesting question, Bronia, and there is so much I could say you need to start with your business model and your personal situation, because you need to look at how much money you need to earn at the end of the day, and you need to look at how much the business needs to profit, and that's going to be the very first thing that you start with. And then you're going to need to look at your costs, and you're going to need to make sure that you're able to make a healthy profit on top of those costs, because it's not just about the money that's left over after hiring a hall or paying a team member. It's also about your wider business and the expenses that you have, not just the expenses that are associated with that particular school, but your wider expenses in your business as well. So that's the first thing that you need to take into account. Pricing is very personal. It's very unique to each person, and that's why we spend a lot of time coaching on pricing. Also spend a lot of time coaching on money mindset and strategies behind deciding on a price that's right for you and your business. In the Approaching Schools Academy, we have an entire module called selling with ease, and we have coaching with our business mindset coach. We have pick your brain sessions with our assistant head teacher, and we have strategy Q and A with me. But the reason we do all that is because it has to be unique to you, and it has to be a price that you're confident with.

First and foremost, it isn't necessarily about there being a going rate, because the going rate is only really applicable when a school sees the value in what you do, and there is a huge range in value among providers in the market, and there is also a huge range in school budgets and what they are prepared to pay. So in terms of pricing structure, we don't just have one price. We have options. We have different levels that meet different budgets, because we know and we hear all the time that budgets are tight, but schools have priorities. Schools have targets they need to hit, that they need providers to help them hit. You know, they need solutions, and they do have budgets, however tight those budgets may be. So if you can offer different pricing structures that meet those potential budget needs. You're less likely to get a no and you're more likely to get a yes to one of your options, and if you do get a no, there's usually somewhere for you to go with it. So your budget friendly

option could be a club that the parents pay for. You could even make the school some money by hiring their whole Okay, so your budget friendly option, you've got kind of middle of the road option there's going to be probably your multi sessional programs, depends as well what you're looking to offer. Bronya, I know Emily mentioned PPA, for example. Now with PPA cover, it comes out of a different budget as well. So with PPA cover, it can only come out of the core budget. So this is something that you need to take into account when you are deciding your price is, what is my service and how are schools potentially going to fund it? And when you have an understanding of that, you have a better idea of where to pitch it, and you might have your premium level, which is like an annual contract. So we encourage all Approaching Schools Academy members to have longer term options, because most providers that want to work with me want a more stable income, and the way that we get you a stable income is it's recurring, it's long term. There's a commitment there, and it's a higher value option. And some people are surprised at how relatively easy it is to sell their annual options as it is to sell a one off.

There's a misconception that if a school is hard to sell to, I should sell them the shortest time commitment for the least money. But a lot of the time, schools are not making their decision based on your price. Okay, whether budgets are tight or not. They want the best for their children. They want the best quality, and at the end of the day, they've got to endorse whoever they put in front of their children to the parents, so when they look at your prices, so long as they do have budget for it and it is prioritising a real need, they're probably not even going to pick the cheapest. You know, we I remember our approaches, schools, Academy, business mindset coach Philippa saying that when she was head of department and she was a senior manager in a middle school, she was wondering what was wrong with the cheapest options. You know, the higher priced options look like the best value for the school and for the children. So there's a lot that goes into this, as you can probably imagine, but definitely take those different elements and different levels of pricing into consideration so that you can really meet budget needs. At the beginning of this academic year, we had a graduate from the approaches schools Academy say that they just invoice the school for 17,000 pounds up front. And it was a school there. Well, it was, it was a thing where previously they'd just been, you know, pricing up per class, and not really thinking about the whole school solution, the value of the whole school solution, and what that would cost. And the school actually saw more value in the higher priced option, because they could understand how it would help, the more help the whole school, and that's of more value to them than helping one class and paying less for it.

So it's amazing to kind of reframe this in your thoughts around pricing, and I hope that's helped give you some insight born, yeah, my group that you're in the approaching schools and nurseries of Charis Keneally group on Facebook, we did a poll in there, and there was a huge range of what people were charging. And I think the highest vote at the time, and bearing in mind, this was a couple of years ago, was 100 pounds an hour, and the lowest vote was 30 pounds per hour, and the most popular vote was 50 pounds per hour. I know my approaching schools Academy members are charging at least 60/75, 100 depending on what they're offering. But we also work with people to kind of forget the hourly rate if they're not just providing clubs. We look at value of what you're providing. We look at packages rather than single sessions. So there's a lot to pack into your pricing structure, but I hope that gives you something to be getting on with when you're deciding what to offer to your next school, because for you bronys, it's going to be about testing the market. You're going to see how schools respond to you, and you're going to get loads of feedback so you can adjust your prices in the future. They don't have to be set in stone.

So to all of my other lovely listeners, I hope you have found some value in the answers to those questions. If you would like the chance to pick my brains every single week, next week you are going to want to be on the approaching Schools Challenge if you're ready to ditch the endless guesswork and finally land consistent bookings in schools or nurseries, I'm inviting you to join me and my ambassadors. This is your chance to master a proven feel good approach that draws in head teachers and nursery managers without any stress or awkwardness. So head over to www.ceryskeneally.co.uk, the link is in the show notes and secure your space, because we start on the 27th of January.