

Hello and welcome to another episode of Approaching Schools. So today we're talking all about when your offer to schools and nurseries could be, well a little bit off. But before we delve into this topic, I just wanted to let you know that there is a very special offer to work extremely closely with me in 2025 which has not been available before.

I'm very excited about it, and you can be one of a very small handful of people to claim this if you go to the link in the show notes before the end of this week, if you're listening to this in real-time. Now, today's topic, I've actually been talking to one of my very, very regular franchise networks about recently, and it's why offers might be hitting or missing. In fact, the mark. So why might your offers be a little bit off? So one of the things that came up in our conversation with this particular franchise network was actually religious reasons. So remembering that there are not just faith schools and nurseries out there, but there will also be schools and nurseries that don't necessarily respond to your offers if they are purely Christian, so things like religious festivals or even other kind of seasonal events like Halloween may simply not be celebrated. So if your offer, although we have lots of clients having a lot of success right now in the run up to Christmas, using Christmas as one of their kind of themes and reasons for contacting their local schools, you do need to make sure that you are being culturally sensitive with this. And for many of my approaching schools Academy members, they're very targeted with their offers. So very often, if they are making something Christmas themed, they are presenting this offer to CV schools, for example, Catholic schools. So it's about looking at the targeting of your campaigns, and whether it's going to be 100% relevant for each of the different types of schools and nurseries that you were contacting, and being aware if there are any faith schools on your list, but also any settings that may also decide that they're actually not going to do things that are Christmas or Halloween or Easter themed because of the children that attend their setting. So do make sure that you are conscientious of this and that you're being culturally sensitive all the time. Another reason could be that it's not relevant. It's simply not relevant to them right now, we may never know if this is the case until we contact them, but one of the ways that we can ensure that it's the most relevant as it can be is by offering to link it with a topic they are studying. So there will be very popular topics that lots of schools and nurseries study at different times in the year, but also they get to choose their own so long as they are fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum that's relevant to that particular school or setting, they can choose their own topics. So you may have some schools choosing very unique topics, but you can always offer for them to let you know what topic they would like you to link to with your offer. Okay, so this is something that my approaching schools Academy members talk through with our curriculum expert Karen every single month on a call with her to make sure their offers are not only always relevant in terms of being linked with topics creatively, not just for the free demo, but actually to ensure that you're then invited back to make sure that you are getting the long term bookings off the back of your free offers as well. So have a think about it from that point of view, what topics could you potentially link in with? Now, they may already have a service or an activity or a product like yours, but this is where their problem solving element can really help to eliminate these sorts of objections, so you don't constantly get schools and nurseries who's coming back to you saying, we've already got a dance club, we've already got a Lego club, we've already got someone that comes in and does yoga. Their current activity may not actually be addressing the same needs that your activity can. Learn, even if you're in the same niche. So be aware of this and make sure you are really focused on solving problems that you offer to solve a different problem each time you send a new campaign because different needs will need to be addressed at different times of the year, and this will pique the interest of different senior leaders at different times of year as well.

Another thing is the perceived value, because at the end of the day, if we're offering a free demo, we it's no good just being free. Okay, we're about to move into 2025 and schools and nurseries are busier than they have ever been before, and simply offering something for free is not a good reason for them to have you in, because they need to spend time speaking to other decision makers about whether they're going to get you in. They need to get it all signed off. They need to go and speak to other people. They potentially need to change up their timetable that day, they potentially need to find space to have you in that day. There's lots of moving parts, there's lots of things that have to be done. There's lots of sort of paperwork that needs to be signed off, even just to get you in for free as a one off. So being a free demo is not going to cut it, not on its own, you really need to clearly communicate the curriculum outcomes, even if you're actually wanting extracurricular work at the end of this, because your taster or your demo is still likely to be in curriculum time. So there needs to be a really good reason for putting your demo on the curriculum that day. Okay? So you do need to make sure that you are clearly communicating what those learning outcomes are that the children are going to be working towards when they work with you in this session, just simply being a free taster is not going to be a reason that the school or nursery are going to book you. And have you thought about this? I've alluded to the fact that they've got to make a lot of things different things happen just to get you in for free. You don't want to be a disruption to their routine. Okay, so, for example, are you only offering your free demo to a small group of children who would actually need to be taken out of a lesson that they may need to catch up on, that is going to be a serious headache for the head teacher, getting that group of children caught up on whatever lesson they've been missing because time is precious. It's highly likely it's an extremely important lesson that they're actually going to be missing because they're taking time out to come and do your demo. So it is in your best interest wherever possible. And I appreciate this isn't always going to be relevant to you, but for a lot of people listening to this episode, you will be able to offer a whole class demonstration in some way, even if you need to kind of tweak what you do in terms of your setup to make it work, so that at least the whole class are in there, in the session with you, this is going to be really important, right? Because then the teacher can work around you, and you haven't got children going out and missing a fundamental learning opportunity with their class teacher, and are you being too prescriptive with time constraints? Because one of the key objections you are going to get when you approach schools and nurseries is time, okay? Time, money, you know, the budget and needing to go and ask somebody else about the budget as well. Those are very often objections that we get or that they have it already, which I've already mentioned. But you do need to be as flexible as possible to fit in with their timetabling requirements. So don't be too prescriptive right now, with the number of children that you're going to offer this to, or with the length of the session, because you want to be able to fit with them. And these are things you can negotiate when they get back to you about your offer. And the other thing that needs to be addressed is you may be completely unknown to this school or nursery, in fact, as if this is the first time they're considering getting you in for a demo you most probably are unknown. Maybe they didn't open your previous emails. Maybe they're not aware of your work in the community. You are probably your community's best kept secret, no matter how much marketing you think you've been doing, especially if you've only been marketing on social media up until now. So schools and nurseries may be wary of providers that they're unfamiliar with or who lack established credibility, and they may also have had negative experience with similar offers or providers that they've been hesitant to engage with in the past. So we need to be aware of this. Okay, especially if there are. Providers in your area doing something similar to what you do. And this is where social proof comes in. This is where case studies come in. This is where you can be name dropping your local schools or nurseries that you do work with or have worked with, if you have permission to do so. So this is another thing that came up in that session with one of my regular franchises recently. So do make sure you are always including some form of relevant review of your work. Now, if you haven't worked with any schools or

nurseries before, I'm sure you've worked with children in the past. So this could be a review from a parent or a family member, for example, until you've got social proof from working with schools and nurseries, and even if you've just done a few demos, don't forget the power of feedback. Get some feedback from them and get permission to share it in your next campaign. This will go a long way to building some credibility and making the school feel confident with getting you in this isn't even about investing at this stage. This is about endorsing you by putting you in front of the children, by letting parents know they've got a provider coming in today. So next time you send a campaign or you follow up one of your local schools or nurseries, I want you to ask yourself the following questions, is it culturally sensitive? Could it link with their topics? Are you solving a problem that other providers may not be? Are you communicating curriculum outcomes?

Are you being flexible with class sizes, session lengths and the space you require, and are you including social proof to build trust and eliminate objections based on past experiences of external provision? So if you are ready to escape the overwhelm and build a stable business with long term impact in schools or nurseries in 2025 now is the time to join the Approaching Schools Academy. This is my CPD accredited professional development program. And don't forget that fantastic offer to work with me more closely in 2025 via additional one-to-one support alongside the program for a full 12 months, I would love to work with you.