



Facing rejection with grace

Ada Polla once pitched her skin care products to a local doctor who co-owned a medical spa. Knowing he'd need more partner buy-in, he said the timing wasn't right.

Polla, CEO of Georgetown's Alchimie Forever LLC, says that's the response in four out of five such pitches. "I tell myself that 'no' means 'not right now,'" she says.

She has a checklist for the naysayers: Send an e-mail or handwritten note thanking them for their time and consideration. Set digital reminders to reconnect at the end of each quarter, not to ask if the timing has improved but to swap company news or her pithiest blog item. Drop them a line before health care trade shows to catch up over coffee at the hotel. She opts for e-mail for its lack of intrusiveness but asks how they'd like her to follow up.

Polla has been at both ends of that drill. She's had to ask people pitching her to try back in six months. "If I say that 20 times, maybe I'll have one person contact me in six months."

After three years of keeping in touch, the medical spa doctor was ready to meet. Polla nailed her sale.