



Business Munch

July 2006

Keeping in touch!

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paul@salespartners.co.nz

p: 04 586 4733
m: 021 784 070

Food for thought from Sales Partners

Hi and welcome to the first Business Munch, where we aim to stimulate thought on how we sell.

Following our name change to Sales Partners International Ltd I now specialise in working with businesses who have **complexity** in selling their product or service. Through education, coaching and partnering clients on major opportunities, our clients learn to differentiate from their competition and win by the way they sell.

Your feedback on the Business Munch is most welcome.

Starter

Think before you speak!

Recent research by American Time Management guru Dr Alec Mackenzie identified telephone interruptions as the top factor that disrupted peoples time management schedules:

Here are a few suggestions that will serve to maintain your respect and credibility when you are making those important calls:

1. **Think before you speak.** Plan your calls, both in and out. Prepare in advance so that you cover the agenda in a logical order and efficiently. This also applies to incoming calls that you are expecting to receive.
2. **Manage expectations from the start of the call.** If you take a call that you can only give limited time to, then tell the caller at the beginning. Make sure when you make a call, you ask if it is a good time to talk – lead by example!
3. **End the call when you are speaking.** If the call is dragging on and of no value to you, then end the call when you are speaking rather than by interrupting the other person when they are speaking. You could say 'we have covered everything we need to, so unless you have anything else, I'll speak to you next week'....., or 'I do have another appointment so I'll need to end now'. The commonly used line "I won't take any more of your time" usually means that you don't want them to take any more of your time. Be careful of who you use this one on.

Must Read

Winning by Jack Welch.

The best business management book I have read in the past 12 months. It made me realise just how complicated we tend to make things. Many of Jack's ways and methods are clearly the Smart way. If you haven't read it yet, you must do so.

We're on the Web!
www.salespartners.co.nz

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m: 021 784 070

Main Course

Establish Relevancy - The key to opening board room doors.



To gain access to senior people in organisations, you need to do this by establishing relevancy with the key issues they face in their business.

I asked a Managing Director recently how many calls from sales people he received – 'not many' was his reply. 'And what would make you listen and talk to those who do call you' I asked. The answer he gave was 'if it is relevant to the issues I have in my business'.

Establishing relevancy goes a long way to answering the questions that go through the mind of the person you are calling:

Does this person sound professional?

Why are they calling me?

Is it worth my while talking to them?

Calling the owner of a business prospect and launching into describing your product, how good it is, and why he must see it is likely to result in a wasted call, resulting in no appointment. Or maybe you will get the standard response of 'send me some information' from which nothing further happens. Let's face it, many sales people still do very little to establish relevancy, but launch into a scripted patter on their product or service, without knowing anything about the circumstances, or whether the product or service will be of any value to the person they are calling.

This 'about me' approach usually arises from most of the preparation being based upon what you want out of the call, which is then at the forefront of your mind. You can begin to change this by thinking about what the prospect will get out of the call.

So, how do you do establish relevancy? By establishing relevancy we mean connecting the issue that the customer faces in their business to the value of the solution that you provide. You will understand the issue they face in their business by doing research and preparation first. What is their strategy, what is impacting on the success of the business, how do they differentiate from their competition? Ask yourself, how is this company doing things today in the absence of your product or service? Do your homework!

In your opening you can then establish your credibility as someone who is knowledgeable about their customers business.

So if your solution overcomes production capacity issues, rather than starting with 'I'd like to tell you about our system for getting an extra 10% production....',

A more credible opening would begin:

'From my experience within your industry, production is limited by the capacity of the xyz. I'd like to spend a few minutes getting your view on this issue....Is this a good time to talk?'

This style of opening will answer the questions on the mind of the person you are calling and establish that all important relevancy that is essential at the start of the conversation to establish your credibility.

For those of you in a city ...

What do you do if you see a Spaceman?

Park your car in it man!

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Dessert

Does your elevator speech work?

I met with a PR company yesterday to discuss some ideas on the development of my business. I took some time to explain what is different about my business, what makes a sale complex, and what issues companies typically experience when they have the wrong approach to selling for the nature of their sale.

In closing the meeting, Dan said, 'I think you need to work on your elevator speech.'

Well, I have spent a lot of time working on my elevator speech, but I clearly haven't got it right yet! Putting my hurt feelings aside, I had to agree that the way I am communicating my work in the field of Complex Sales is making the introduction too complex! There is a good chance people would be lost and switched off before we had reached the 1st floor.

By way of comfort, when researching her new book, *Creating Competitive Advantage*, business consultant Jaynie Smith could find only two out of 1,000 CEOs who could name their competitive advantages.

More on this next time.....

A Parting Thought:

True credibility is achieved by what you know about a customer and their business, not what you know about your own business and products.

Your customers are changing how they buy
– are you changing how you sell?



Consulting Facilitation Coaching

Winning The Complex Sale