



August 2006

# Business Munch

*Keeping in touch!*

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## Food for thought from Sales Partners

Hi and welcome to the Business Munch, where we aim to stimulate thought on how we sell. Thanks to all you of who sent such positive comments last month – your feedback and opinions or experiences are most welcome. This month, we introduce a new short workshop, and look further at the elevator speech to make the most of your answer to the question, 'what do you do'?

If you know anybody who would be interested in reading the Munch, then please forward this on to them.

### Starter

#### The 10 biggest mistakes sales people make today.

Our new 'in house' workshop identifies the top ten mistakes made by salespeople today, and the secrets the top performing sales professionals use to avoid these traps.

The workshop is about you, how you sell and how to differentiate yourself from your competition.

If you are getting your sales team together for a meeting then it will make a great focus session. The duration of the workshop, and the practical content will be tailored to meet your specific needs and objectives and be relevant to the issues you face in your business.

More information is on the website at [www.salespartners.co.nz](http://www.salespartners.co.nz)

#### So you might be asking, what is the biggest mistake?

Well, from my own experience, my observations, and the research of others it has to be:

##### **Lack of preparation.**

Abraham Lincoln once said 'if he was given nine hours to cut down a tree, he would spend six hours sharpening his axe'. Lack of preparation usually leads to an unsatisfactory outcome for you, or even worse, your client. In other words, the tree falls down the wrong way. I'll look at the importance of preparation more next time....

## Main Course

### So what do you do?

Your answer to the question 'What do you do?' can really differentiate you from all the other sales people out there, and open the door with prospective clients.

A typical answer I often hear is something like 'I work for Bloggs Engineering and we make machines, and I cover the Northern region.' This is what most other sales people do and say as well!

This answer should not be what you do for your company – but what it is that you do for your customers.

Next time you are asked this question, take the opportunity to explain what it is you do that is of value to your customers, rather than what it is you do for your employer, or own company. Your response needs to be customer focussed.

Here is what Ray Webster, the recently departed CEO of Easy Jet, Europe's second largest low cost air carrier said he did in his job. 'We've been responsible for thousands of life enhancing experiences and journeys, made millions of introductions and forged countless friendships. We've launched long distance love affairs, mended broken hearts and helped people realise their dreams.'

Sure like all CEO's he ran the company, but his CEO responsibilities would be of little relevance to most customers.

A reply like this conjures all sorts of pictures in the mind that will do a lot to inspire a listener to enquire more about the products and services you offer.

A client of mine was trying recently to gain access to a networking group, competing with other companies in the same industry for the membership place. He asked me what he should say at the selection presentation, as the other companies were much bigger and had more presence in the market. He thought he had little chance of gaining the place. I suggested that he spend 80% of the time describing the top 3 things he provides that his clients value, and give specific examples. Then finish with information about your company - your qualifications, experience, where you are based, how many people you employ etc.

A couple of weeks later he called me to say he had been accepted and that the other companies spent all their presentation time talking about themselves!.

Two further points to consider on this:

1. It is also very appropriate to explain your position within your company, and particularly your level of authority. This question is very often on peoples mind, and it is a necessary part of establishing your credibility with the people you are meeting.
2. End with a question. You have just described something, so seek the persons' opinion on it. Stimulate conversation with a relevant question.

#### Must Read

#### **Let's Get Real or Let's Not Play.**

The demise of dysfunctional selling and the advent of helping clients succeed.

**by Mahan Khalsa.**

Like the title suggests, this is down to earth stuff. It has much less sales process theory than many books I read. It's strong on the how to do it, rather than the what to do. Easy to read and a great reference.

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## Dessert

### Slow down for yellow traffic lights.

One of the very good points Mahan Khalsa makes in his book, Lets Get Real, is to slow down for yellow lights. He says:

“When you are driving along, particularly when you are anxious to arrive somewhere important, and you encounter a yellow light, what do you do? If you are like most people I know, you go faster. Unfortunately we use that same response with our clients. We hear something that concerns us, see a reaction that spells potential trouble, feel we are running into difficulty, and we speed up to avoid running into our own worst fears. Ultimately we are afraid the light will turn red. We don't want to fail at a red light, so we speed up, hoping we'll make it through. If we can't slow down for yellow lights, it's hard to get real.”

You have to stop when you hit a red light, but hitting a red light is not failure. Unless of course you have repeatedly crossed through yellow lights and committed time, money, and resources to hit a red light that you should have been at weeks ago.

If you hit an orange light, pass it to the customer and see whether it is going to change to red or to green. Ask the question, 'If I understand this correctly (explain the situation as you see it).....so what should we do at this point?'

**Remember**, orange lights occur in your own organisation too – sometimes more often than at your clients place! Look out for them before they turn red on you.

### **A Parting Thought:**

***It is what you do for your customers that is important to them, not what you do for your own business.***

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