



Business Munch

www.salespartners.co.nz

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Developing great sales professionals who can compete and win

Food for thought from Sales Partners

Keeping in touch!

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Need a speaker for your next sales meeting?

Call us to discuss how we can provide some food for thought for your sales team....

Hi and welcome to the Business Munch where we aim to stimulate your thoughts on how you sell. To Munch on this month:

Starter: **The key differentiator is you**
Main Course: **Is it time for your own webpage?**
Dessert: **14 steps to selling smarter**

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

Starter

The key differentiator is you

There are plenty of studies regularly published on what makes sales people successful when measured through the eyes of the customer. While different skills and attributes top the lists in these studies, there is something very consistent in all studies:

What differentiates the top performers is their personal qualities and behaviours.

At the top of the list are generally competencies such as:

1. Understanding of the customers business
2. A long term partnership strategy to help the customer achieve their goals
3. Responsive to needs and provides a service to facilitate the change
4. Manage expectations and keeps customer informed.

A good product and service, knowledge of these and a competitive price are now conditions of entry into any market. Many competing products look the same so as the sale becomes more complex, the buyers attention moves towards the credibility and trust established by the seller. The key differentiator is you. Get this wrong, and your product or price is unlikely to be of much significance.

This is one lesson that we must keep working on. It is particularly more evident in a service industry where there is no tangible product to 'hide behind'. I purposely don't have brochures for my business, and don't take any sales collateral to introductory meetings. I have no temptation to reach for a brochure to do the talking for me. Following a meeting last week I received an email from the prospective client – 'nice work today, we were equally impressed' it said. Confirmation that I demonstrated my key point of difference – me!

Main Course

Is it time for your own webpage?

Another study I was looking at recently presented results about the gap between marketing departments and sales teams.

As well as the usual debate around the sales teams saying the marketing department feed them unqualified poor quality leads that are not worth doing anything with, and the marketing department saying the sales people never follow up on their leads or feedback what they need (sound familiar?), at the top of the list of the things that sales people say limit them is inadequate websites.

It is true that most customer decisions to buy or to change will now involve some research on the internet. In fact many decisions to buy are based only on research on the internet! (How many of you do this?)

Most corporate websites I look at are generally limited to history, capability, products, services and financial reports for analysts and shareholders. All this stuff is necessary, but I have never found a corporate website to be any help for me as a sales professional to differentiate myself from the rest of the crowd. After all, corporate websites are fairly generic.

May be it is time for sales people to have their own webpage?

This would present information which is of value to each salespersons own clients. For example their experience operating in their customers industries, major projects they have worked on and their learnings from this, tools specific to the needs of their clients, articles they have written, and case studies of projects they have been involved with.

One step further would be personal blogs. It is not a topic I am qualified on but it is fair to say most large companies would perceive the risk too high to allow discussion via the web.

There is no doubt it would provide an opportunity to present the key differentiator – you!

Raise it at your next sales meeting – I'll be interested to hear what response you get!

If you are in a smaller company and not part of a sales team, how well does your website sell you?

When things get complex, it is not your product or service that will be the key differentiator, it will be you.

Dessert

14 Steps to selling smarter

Most of us are short of time and up against tight deadlines either from customers or internal business needs. The 14 Steps to Selling Smarter are my suggestions of what you can do to sell smarter.

Download it for free now at www.salespartners.co.nz

I find one of the most important things to do is to manage expectations. This is point 4 in today's starter, and the topic of step 5.....

Manage Expectations

This is probably one of the most important focus areas on the road to effectiveness, and selling smarter. If you find that you are fighting fires too much then take a look in these places:

- Is there something wrong with your systems and procedures?
- Are you managing the expectations of your customers?
- Are your suppliers informed of your expectations?
- Are you communicating the expectations of your customers within your own business?

This might be a simple view, but in my experience, sales people who are complaining of spending most of their time fighting fires are suffering from poor internal business systems and procedures and poor management of expectations. When people are left to guess what is happening, at least half the time they will be disappointed. This is when the fires start.

Check in with people you are working with on a regular basis. Ask them what their expectations for the outcome are. When complete, ask whether their expectations were met.

A Parting Thought

Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.

Winston Churchill

Have Fun!

.....Paul