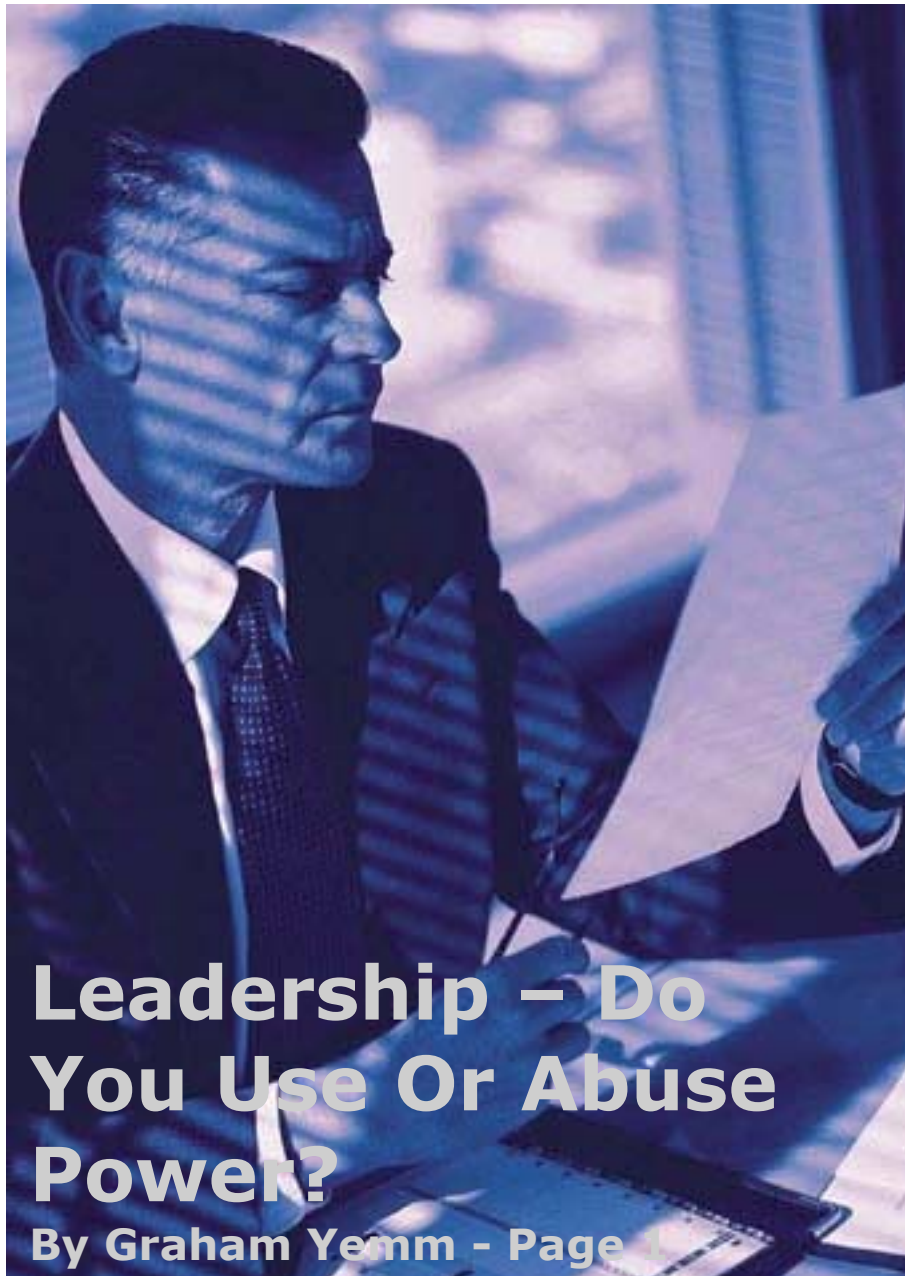


Better Business Focus

Essential reading for managers and entrepreneurs



August 2006

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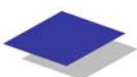
Alphas Of Real Estate Reveal Their Secrets

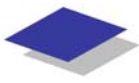
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13.

Better Business Focus aims to be the essential key for business owners and managers. It achieves that aim by focusing on the way in which successful businesses in the UK and elsewhere compete and manage their organisations.

It focuses on how people are recruited, coached and developed; on how marketing and selling is undertaken in professional markets as well as in markets with intense competition; on how technology and the Internet is reshaping the face of domestic and home business; and on how people are being equipped with new skills and techniques. In short, it's a focus on a better way to do business.





Leadership – Do You Use Or Abuse Power?

By Graham Yemm

Many people are promoted into positions where they are responsible for leading and managing others, with very little development or support. With these positions comes "position power". However, if leaders are not confident and skilled in these new roles they can easily begin to abuse this power – often unintentionally. GRAHAM YEMM of Solutions4Training looks at what 'power' is and how it can be used productively.

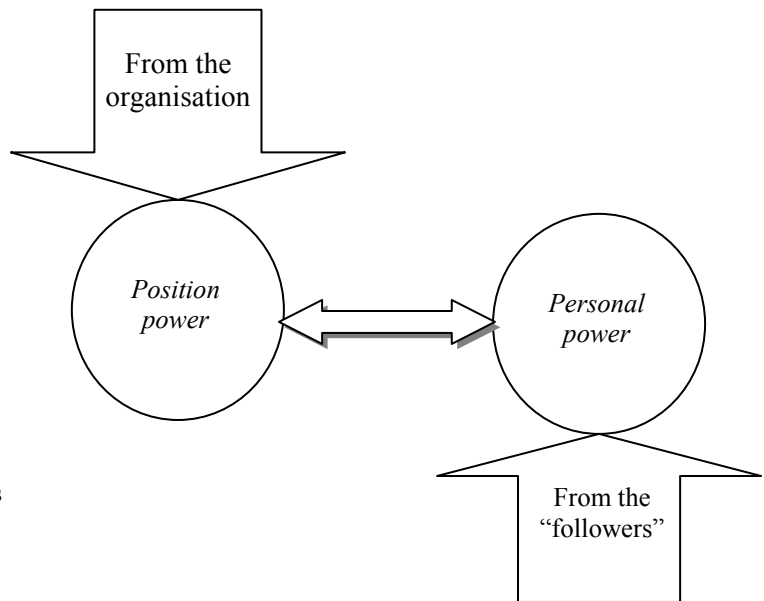
The dictionary defines power as "control and influence exercised over others". With positions of management and leadership comes power and it seems to sit more comfortably with some more than others. It is increasingly recognised that organisations need good leaders if they are to go forward successfully. Their people will feel motivated, empowered and want to contribute. Leaders who are not using their power positively and abusing it will act in a way which will be coercive and, in extremes, could be bullying. This latter situation is one which appears to be on the increase and is creating further problems in the workplace such as stress. We want to consider how leaders can become more confident in their positions and

with their power and explore the benefits for all parties when they do.

"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Lord Acton

There are two elements of power in an organisational context – "position power" and "personal power". The leader has "position power" given from the organisation. This comes from the authority which the job role has to do things or make things happen. The "personal power" is about the degree of influence the individual has and is given by the followers.

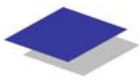
Problems arise when people are put into roles where they have considerable "position power" but feel out of their depth and under-confident. What starts to happen is that they feel a need to cover their discomfort and they begin to do this by abusing the power they hold. During my years of working with organisations, I have heard and seen so many examples of poor or inappropriate behaviour from various levels of management and leadership. This is despite the amount of training which many of these people have participated in! I wonder how many times you have been on the receiving end of such behaviour?



The two are interlinked to an extent. People will look to the leader's "position power" and give them a degree of "personal power" based on how they perceive the leader might influence them. Equally, when organisations are looking to promote someone, the more aware ones will look to see how well individuals can seem to influence others around them – and give them some "position power".

More to the point, how many of you have been guilty of using them? Sometimes, these abuses of power are obvious:

- shouting, screaming even, at staff;*
- threats being used;*
- unreasonable demands;*
- intimidating body language;*
- being a time-stealer to staff;*
- setting unreasonable levels of expectation, etc.*



The list can go on beyond this – and could expand to include some less obvious behaviours. Why is it that so many previously reasonable people can start to behave so unreasonably? Experience suggests that one factor is that they are often merely carrying on a trend from their bosses! If there are not good role models, it can be difficult to behave correctly. However, this is something of an excuse. What is really going to be achieved with abuse of power? The daily reports of problems with bullying in the workplace and increasing stress-related problems in the workplace are clear indicators that this is an ongoing issue.

The consequences for the organisation and the leaders, can be significant. There are probably issues with productivity and effectiveness, absenteeism (or just presenteeism!), and staff retention might also be a problem? If these things are happening, there is potential for a vicious spiral – the manager feels under more pressure and passes this on with even more inappropriate use of their “position power”.

The flip-side is to consider what can happen when the leader is able to use their power in a constructive manner. Why are they able to do this? Partly it is because they are comfortable with their “personal power” and adjust to the additional “position power”. Maybe they have the right role models, or suitable training. They do recognise that they can get more from their people by supporting and encouraging rather than coercing!

“Power does not corrupt. Fear corrupts... perhaps the fear of a loss of power.” John Steinbeck

For me, this quotation says a great deal about the two types of leader – the abusers of power are frequently out of their depth in their role. They fear losing their position and the likely loss of face, status and money. They do not feel that they can ask for help or support to improve the way they operate. Possibly, they believe it will be seen as a sign of weakness and so they aim to compensate

with what they think is a show of strength.

Leaders have a right to ask things of their followers. There are many different ways they can go about this and there is no, one right way. At times a leader may need to be more directive and authoritative – at others more inclusive and supportive. Whatever the situation, the leader still operates from “position power” – and the good one, remains aware of their own “personal power”.

When you are in a position of leadership, stop and think about how you behave with those you are leading. You will gain far more “personal power” by treating people with respect – and earn it in return. Accept that with your position comes responsibility. Regardless of how your bosses may treat you, or colleagues treat their people, it is no excuse for you to abuse your power. Remember, the most effective way to engage people and to get them to work with and for you is to treat them as they want to be treated!! Pay attention to your behaviours and notice if you have any tendencies to make unreasonable demands or revert to authority to get things done. How difficult is it to think about the other person first and then ask for what you want in the most appropriate way?

As a leader, you have a choice about whether you abuse or use the power you are given. Many who are abusing their power do not always realise that they are doing it, or why. The reason is usually that they are struggling in their role. If you find yourself slipping towards this, do something about it! Think about what is making you feel like this and identify what areas you want to improve or develop. Now go and find out how you can get the support or training you want and go and ask for it. Learn to be comfortable with your power, both “position” and “personal” and you will be pleasantly surprised what you can achieve as a leader!

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About the Author:

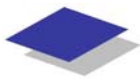
Graham Yemm is a consultant who has worked with a wide range of organisations helping them to develop their leadership and personal skills for over 20 years.

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Obviously everyone wants to be successful, but I want to be looked back on as being very innovative, very trusted and ethical and ultimately making a big difference in the world.
Sergey Brin

Successful enterprises are usually led by a proven chief executive who is a competent benevolent dictator.
Richard Pratt



Opportunity Pursuit – Part 3: Keeping A Finger On The Pulse!

By Phil Shipperlee

Finally! This is the stage where you get to make sales, take orders and earn money for your business.



As stated previously, opportunity pursuit is different and separate from the creation of customers; it is driven by a process that we call **Quantification**. This draws on information gathered through the earlier process of qualification, and is used to continually evaluate the health & development of an opportunity up until the contract is secured.

Quantification shares one characteristic with qualification in that they both involve asking planned questions in a controlled manner. The key difference is that quantification is about hard facts such as decision and delivery dates, the decision process, amounts of money such as the budget and contractual matters, whereas qualification is more about building the relationship between supplier and customer.

The questioning technique used is known as “extended structured questioning” which involves a series of short sharp linked questions that lead to a specific point that you want to know. This is rather like chess where each move has a small purpose in itself but when linked to other planned moves, and the anticipation of the other side’s moves, creates a linked strategy. Good questioning technique is the ultimate communication tool for shaping and steering the progress of a sales negotiation.

The sorts of questions you ask in quantification depend entirely on

your company, your proposition and your target market. In effect, you are taking the criteria from the Market Focus stage, where you defined your proposition and profiled who might buy it – the “ideal” prospect, and those characteristics that define “ideal” create the quantification questions.

Even if the prospect is already at the specify stage when you meet them, you can use good questioning techniques to both fully understand the specification and also to dig behind to find out what issues stimulated the desire to seek a solution. The more you know the more control you have.

A valuable selling process involves anticipating and preempting objections. By providing your proposed solution in a form that includes answers to questions and objections that you expect the prospect to raise, you are controlling the high ground when it comes to the negotiation stage. You can only achieve this if you have good information and you can only gain good information through careful research cross-correlated with your inside contacts. Again, this is about carefully planned and executed questioning. I know one company who were short-listed from over 20 bidders to the last two but lost at the last hurdle because they had pushed their capability with leading edge technology. All the evidence proved the customer was not that brave and preferred proven technology but the supplier was trapped by thinking that what they had to give was more important than what the customer wanted to receive.

Is it moving ...or dead?

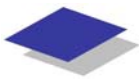
It is often said that if a deal is not moving it is probably dead.

Quantification helps you to know where you stand. It also provides input to the probability of winning the deal by addressing such factors as; how well your solution fits the requirement, how well your financial position fits the Customer’s budget and how you are positioned against competition, including recognition that the Customer may be a potential “competitor” with an internally developed solution. These factors are then further adjusted against time – the time until the decision is to be made by the Customer – the further you are away from the decision date, the weaker your position.

Finally, and most importantly, the information collected through quantification tells us what we have to do to win the deal. Too many bids are well planned up to the stage of presenting the proposal but run out of steam when it comes to managing the customer relationship as they go through the process of selection, sign-off and sanction. You must have had that experience of submitting your bid only to find all communication from the customer side dries up. Whilst creating your bid plan ensure you have routes into the prospect throughout their buying cycle and that you have advanced agreement that they will talk to you on specific occasions.








Quantification is not a one-shot activity. It is very important that the factors affecting probability are reviewed, and updated every time circumstances change. The frequency of review will increase as you approach the customer’s decision date. Consequently, the quantification process provides a valuable management tool enabling critical review of the progress of opportunities through

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The Performance Initiative



the bid cycle. The golden rule with quantification is to ask the same question of different people, to ask the same person the same question in different ways and to re-ask the same questions at different stages of the buying cycle. This process of “triangulation” increases your certainty that what you know is real and true.

TIPS:

-  Quantification helps to decide whether to “no-bid” the opportunity but more importantly it helps you to decide how to bid – it feeds your bid strategy and plan.
-  Short sharp questions are easier for the prospect to answer accurately, and they are less likely to create an unwillingness to answer at all.
-  Extended structured questions will help you to discover those things that are traditionally hard to unearth; the names of your competitors, the budget for the work and where you are ranked against competition. But remember the prospect will feel under less pressure away from the bidding process.
-  Don’t forget to triangulate – ask the same question of different people, ask the same person the same question in different ways and re-ask the same questions at different stages of the buying cycle.
-  The repetitive calculation of probabilities at different stages of the buying cycle, based on quantification, supports decisions about what does or doesn’t belong in the pipeline.
-  Whilst delivering your account plan, ensure you create routes into the customer giving you access throughout their buying cycle.
-  If you do lose a deal, call the prospect to undertake a loss review. It will provide valuable

information that you can use on future bids. In some cases you may find that “buyer remorse” has set in and that they are not happy with the decision that have made – you might just win it back.

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About the Author:

Phil Shipperlee, CEO and Founder of Performative, the fourth successful company that he has started since 1980. Special area of knowledge covers the creation of high performance selling operations within any corporate environment. Other specialisms; solving the business issues of SMEs, M&A, and the use of off-shore delivery.

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My main job was developing talent. I was a gardener providing water and other nourishment to our top 750 people. Of course, I had to pull out some weeds, too.

Jack Welch

Don’t worry if you don’t know what Earn-out is, here’s an explanation:
Earn-out – A formula for calculating sale proceeds to be paid to a disposing management that relates an element of the proceeds to future earnings.

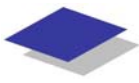
Source: Bizezia’s Glossary of Key Financial Terms and Business Ratios.

Bestsellers

- 1 Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything**
by Steven D. Levitt, Stephen J. Dubner, Penguin Books Limited
Price: £4.49
- 2 The Long Tail: How Endless Choice Is Creating Unlimited Demand (Hardcover)**
by Chris Anderson, Random House Business Books (6 Jul 2006)
Price: £10.78
- 3 The Undercover Economist**
by Tim Harford, Little, Brown
Price: £10.78
- 4 Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-free Productivity (Paperback)**
by David Allen, Piatkus Books (24 Jan 2002)
Price: £7.25
- 5 The Money Diet: The Ultimate Guide to Shedding Pounds Off Your Bills and Saving Money on Everything!**
by Martin Lewis, Vermilion
Price: £3.99

Source: amazon.co.uk





Marketing – Overhead or Profit Centre.

By Owen Ashby, Founder Director, ThinkSmart Marketing

think**smart**marketing

Only last week, Think Smart were speaking with a large organisation who despite spending vast sums of money on promotional material, cutting edge web design and hundreds of hours of telemarketing time, were struggling to see any kind of tangible return from their efforts.

Don't open the door with a cold call. Not only does it take a telemarketer all day to get through to 15-20 decision makers but it also irritates most of them that they reach. So if irritating your prospects and finding the most time consuming and costly manner in which to do it is your goal, you've achieved it!

Are they alone? Sadly no. Today organisations of all sizes are struggling with ever tightening budgets from which they're expected to deliver more.

Allied to this is a common complaint, that the sales people just aren't winning enough business.

Evidently these organisations aren't stupid. Many of them are highly successful, long established multi-million Pound enterprises. So why are they finding it so hard to gain a tangible return on their investment in marketing?

The answer is often straightforward.

Most organisations are doing exactly the right things, but they're doing them in the wrong order. Not just that, they're also doing too much of one thing and not enough of the other and they're doing it to the wrong people, in the wrong way at the wrong time.

Strong words, I agree and of course it's not the same for every

organisation, but on the whole it's true.

In our view, the job of marketing is to get you from prospective client, to paying customer in the fastest and most cost effective manner.

We know that telemarketing or cold calling a prospective database can be an expensive and time-consuming business. We also know that we can expect somewhere in the region of a 4% take up rate. So if you have a prospect list of say, 10,000 organisations, it's going to take a long time and a good deal of your budget to work through them and turn them into leads for the sales team.

We also know that many organisations use direct mail extensively to prospect for business. Of course in the B2C marketplace this works well, but in B2B we can expect little more than a 1-2% response rate.

Where else in your business would you accept that level success rate and indeed that time to return?

Any sales person will tell you that their time and skills are best used either in front of the customer or speaking directly to them. Indeed this is what you pay them to be doing with their time. Why is it then that many organisations ask their sales team to work their way through the Yellow pages or engage in "market research" to find the right company or the right person to sell to?

Perhaps it's because based on industry statistics for Telemarketing and Direct Mail, they believe this to be a more cost effective way of finding likely prospects.

At Think Smart Marketing, our experience tells us that there is a more intelligent approach to new business generation, customer

acquisition and retention. eMarketing.

We're also dedicated to the idea that sales people should be given the chance to sell to well qualified prospects. After all, are you judging the success of your sales team by their market research capabilities or their ability to close the deal?

So what's the answer?

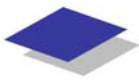
When was the last time you thanked the franking machine company for their cold call?

Don't open the door with a cold call. Not only does it take a telemarketer all day to get through to 15 -20 decision makers but it also irritates most of them that they reach. So if irritating your prospects and finding the most time consuming and costly manner in which to do it is your goal, you've achieved it!

So, let eMarketing do the market research. It's what it's good at.

It's Marketing's job to scope out the marketplace, to identify potential opportunities and to present the warm opportunity to the sales team. If your current marketing activities aren't doing that for you, what are they doing? In comparison to any other medium, eMarketing's response rates are staggering. An intelligently planned, managed and executed eMarketing campaign can rapidly deliver real and tangible returns, far outstripping any other mechanism with response rates regularly from 8-20+%.

Designing an intelligent eMarketing approach means that by the time the telemarketers get on the phone, they will be speaking to prospects that have already indicated a level of interest, know who you are and what you have to offer.



With this approach you'll see a far greater return from any telephone work, faster.

The telemarketers will be more successful, the appointments attended by the sales team will be better qualified, the customer will have a better impression of your business and you're more likely to close the deal.

It's probably also important to mention that this approach will also cost you a fraction in terms of time and money of the traditional - telephone - brochure - telephone - appointment, approach.

So,
The telemarketing team call fewer people to make more appointments.
The sales team make less visits and make more sales.
And the whole exercise costs you considerably less.

Does it really work that well? - Just this month, we were made aware of a campaign that netted a new business win in excess of £4Million by using exactly the same approach we advocate.....
.....you make your own mind up.

More Customers, More Orders,
More Profits

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ThinkSmart Marketing

Further Information:

If you would like more information about Think Smart Marketing or wish to discuss your own requirements further, call them now on Tel: 0044 (0)1525 288828; or mail them at:
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How To Read Your Prospect Like A Book

By John Boe

Top salespeople and the most successful managers recognise the importance of nonverbal communication in the selling process and have learned to "listen with their eyes." They understand that one of the easiest and most effective ways to close sales is to be aware of their prospect's "buy signals."

Are you aware that your body language reveals your deepest feelings and hidden thoughts to total strangers?

Body language is a mixture of movement, posture and tone of voice. It might surprise you to know that research indicates over 70 percent of our communication is done nonverbally. In fact, studies show that nonverbal communication has a much greater impact and reliability than the spoken word. Therefore, if your prospect's words are incongruent with his or her body language gestures, you would be wise to rely on their body language as a more accurate reflection of their true feelings.

Gain the Competitive Edge.

Get started on the right foot. Research shows that we decide in the first few moments whether we like someone or not. Yes, we also judge a book by its cover too. There is absolutely no substitute for a positive first impression.

Create a favourable first impression and build rapport quickly by using open body language.

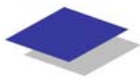
In addition to smiling and making good eye contact, you should show the palms of your hands, keep your arms unfolded and your legs uncrossed.

Create harmony by "matching and mirroring" your prospect's body language gestures. Matching and mirroring is unconscious mimicry. It's a way of subconsciously telling another that you like them and agree with them.

The next time you are at a social event, notice how many people are subconsciously matching one another. Likewise, when people disagree, they subconsciously mismatch their body language gestures.

You can build trust and rapport by deliberately, but subtly, matching your prospect's body language in the first ten to fifteen minutes of the appointment. For example, if you notice that your prospect has crossed his or her arms, subtly cross your arms to match them. After you believe you have developed trust and rapport, verify it by uncrossing your arms and see if your prospect will match and mirror you as you move into a more open posture.

If you notice your prospect subconsciously matching your body language gestures, congratulations, because this indicates you have developed trust and rapport. Conversely, if you notice your prospect mismatching your body language gestures, you know trust and rapport has not been established and you need to continue matching and mirroring them.







Body Language Basics.





Be mindful to evaluate the flow of “gesture clusters” rather than isolated gestures taken out of context. Listed below are some important body language gestures that will help you close more sales in less time.

Body Postures: There are two basic categories; Open/Closed and Forward/Back.


In an open and receptive body posture, arms are unfolded, legs uncrossed and palms are exposed. In a closed body posture, arms are folded, legs are crossed and the entire body is usually turned away.

-  Leaning back and closed = Lack of interest.
-  Leaning back and open = Contemplation and cautious interest.
-  Leaning forward and closed = Potential aggressive behaviour
-  Leaning forward and open = Interest and agreement

Head Gestures

-  Head neutral = Neutral and open attitude
-  Tilted back = Superior attitude
-  Tilted down = Negative and judgmental attitude
-  Tilted to one side = Interest

Facial Gestures

-  Eye rub = Deceit, “see no evil”
-  Eye roll = Dismissive gesture that indicates superiority
-  Looking over top of glasses = Scrutiny and a critical attitude
-  Nose rub = Dislike of the subject
-  Hand or fingers blocking mouth = Deceit, “speak no evil”
-  Chin stroking = Making a decision
-  Thumb under chin with index finger pointing vertically along the cheek = Negative attitude and critical judgement.

Are you missing your prospect's buy signals? As a professional salesperson you must continuously monitor your prospect's body language and adjust your presentation accordingly. By knowing your prospect's body language gestures you will minimise perceived sales pressure and know when it's appropriate to close the sale!

ACTION PLAN

1. Keep this article handy and read it again just before your next client appointment.
2. Before you begin matching and mirroring the body language gestures of your prospects, first practice by matching and mirroring family

members, friends or associates.

3. During your appointment, make a mental note of your client's three most frequently used gestures.

4. Identify your three most frequently used gestures and work on eliminating any negative or intimidating gestures.

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About the Author:

John Boe presents a variety of sales training and motivational programs for meetings and conventions. John brings over twenty years of experience as an award-winning sales trainer to the platform. To have John speak at your next event, visit www.johnboe.com or call (001) 877 725-3750. There is a free Newsletter available on the website.

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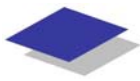
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Business Insight... Five Lessons From Life

- They never want the old man involved until there's a problem – and by then it's too late.
- Make something big happen in the first few days of an annual contract – it convinces the client they've made the right choice.
- Don't talk to clients about effort – tell them about results.
- A crisis is no time to be on a learning curve.
- When you've made the sale – stop selling.

Julien Speed is joint managing partner of Starfish Communications LLP, a leading consumer brand and lifestyle PR consultancy.



Get Rid Of Your Stuff! Declutter Your Life.

By Clare Evans

How much stuff do you have in your house that you don't really need or use?

It's probably taking up more than physical space, how does it make you feel emotionally – overwhelmed, frustrated, disorganised, even lethargic.

Step 1 – Get Ready



Create a list. Go through each room in your home and make a list of all the areas, drawers, cupboards that need clearing. Sort this into small, medium and large. Pin it up where you can see it.

Step 2 – Get Set



Get four boxes label them – Rubbish, Charity, Sell, Undecided.

Step 3 – Get Clearing



Go through each room – take just 15-30 minutes and tackle the small areas first, then when you have time the medium and large areas.

Work on one area each day and tick them off your list. Either put things away where they belong or place them in one of the four boxes. Place the Undecided box in a cupboard, attic or basement and come back to it in six months. If you haven't needed anything in it in that time – throw it away.

Clothing – when did you last wear it, does it fit, do you absolutely love it? Anything you haven't worn for two years –

put in a bag and take to your local charity shop. Only buy things that make you look good as you are now – not when you lose those few pounds.

Paperwork “handle it only once” or in reality twice. First when it comes through the door. Is it for action/junk or filing? Action – deal with it immediately or put it an ‘action’ folder/tray and deal with it in the next 2-3 days. Filing – tackle this on a weekly basis. Junk – straight into the bin.

Reduce the junk mail you receive – ALWAYS tick the box on any form to opt out. Sign up with the emailing preference service to opt out of unsolicited mail <http://www.mpsonline.org.uk/mpsr/>.

Magazines – how often do you read them all. Tear out and keep any articles that are of particular interest. Read them as soon as you can. Cancel subscriptions for those you no longer read or value.

Things you no longer use - gadgets, sports equipment, etc., unwanted gifts, impulse buys – things you bought but don't like or don't use. Either sell them, pass them on or give them away.

Decluttering questions to ask: Do you love it? Do you use it? Does it make you feel good? Learn to say no, so you don't clutter up your life with things that aren't important to you.

Get into the habit of setting aside a few minutes each day or a block of time each week to keep areas tidy and clutter free.

To avoid clutter accumulating - when you buy something think first – do you really need it? If you find it hard to let go, each time you buy something new, get rid of something so at least it's not increasing.

Notice how you feel after you've cleared out an area – whether large or small. You should feel a sense of achievement, satisfaction, relief and/or a burst of energy.

Step 4– Reward Yourself



Create small rewards for your effort as you go through the process, i.e. buy yourself a new item of clothing for clearing your wardrobe out.

See what you can do to create your own clutter-free existence and see what it brings in for you.

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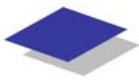
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Internet Marketing – What It Is All About

By Patric Chan, founder of The "Chan" Do Internet Success System
<http://www.youchandoit.com>

I'd like to take the time out to talk about what you're getting yourself into. Not just what you're getting yourself into, but what we've all dived in to headfirst; the fascinating world of online marketing.

Let me tell you, for the past 3 years, I've seen a lot. I've seen people that seem to know almost everything, I've seen marketers have amazing successes starting from the very bottom and working their way up. I've seen people succeed in achieving their dreams and goals, and I've seen people fail and just give up, not to mention countless methods and guides for success, new systems of all sorts.

Looking back, it's been one heck of a ride with ups, downs, major ups and major downs. When I first got going with marketing I noticed something a little scary, and that was the high rate of failure. As I progressed building my business, testing my own methods, and moving up the ladder as it were, I started to realise things.

People were going about their online business totally blind to the fundamental flaws that they were creating for themselves. I started to look back at the people I'd met that had dropped out early on before achieving their goals and a few things started to jump out at me. I then decided that the day I write an info product, the first things that I'm going to talk about, are the fundamentals of business.

Everything here I've seen and learnt at various stages of my business' development and would

like to pass directly to you before we even get started to provide you with a base for your knowledge. Real facts that you should keep in mind while doing business online, or even offline, if you decide to go that way in the future.

In true realisation, there are only 2 ways to make money online -- Either you sell your own info-products or you sell other people's stuff.

Make that clear in your head.

The easiest way to make money online is to sell someone's product as an affiliate marketer.

Affiliate programs are essentially commission-based sales schemes. You recommend a site to your visitors or subscribers and pick up a percentage of any sales those users generate. You benefit from the commission and the site benefits from sales it wouldn't otherwise have made. The benefit of an affiliate program is that it gives you another way to make money from your visitors. Instead of selling them a product yourself, you send them to a partner and take a cut.

If you're doing this, make sure you set up a site to promote an affiliate program rather than sending your traffic directly to an affiliate program.

But if you want to go on the fast track of making money online, create your own info-product and build an army of affiliates to promote for you.

How to get affiliates

One of the biggest fears new product owners entrepreneurs have is in finding new affiliates. This fear is a stumbling block that stops many site owners from getting started with affiliate marketing.

Interestingly, with a proper marketing strategy, getting affiliates may not be very difficult. Given below are some tips that may help in attracting new affiliates.

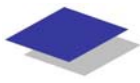
Find complementary sites - "Complementary" sites are sites that sell products or services that compliment your offerings. If you sell "gardening tools", a site that sells books on "gardening tips" would be a perfect affiliate. If you sell software, try looking for sites that sell computers or computer parts. Finding sites that already attract your target market, and can benefit from recommending your product or service to their visitors, is the goal.

Find content sites – There are many sites that do not sell any kind of product or service but are mainly content-oriented sites. Such sites promote an idea, concept, study or belief. Content sites that are used as a resource for your target market are ideal affiliates.

Finally, there are several sites on the Internet dedicated to listing affiliate Programs. Get your program listed in these directories.

The hardest part of administrating an Affiliate Program is deciding what your affiliates need to help make the sale. But, by carefully categorising your affiliates, you can easily determine what their needs are and how to accurately meet them. The plan given below helps in categorising affiliates in order to manage your affiliate program better.

The First step is to pick at least two types of affiliates. Take a



look at your affiliates and try to determine one outstanding characteristic that can easily be compared across the board and choose at least three types of the characteristic.

Capturing visitors is what you want. In order to do so – you have to know what they want. Visit your affiliates' sites to see what visitors are looking at and looking for. Ask yourself, "How does my product relate to what I am seeing?"

Here are some examples:

Level of Sales - You may find that your affiliates are so completely different that it's hard to find something to classify them by. Try classifying them by the level of sales they've reached with you. You'll most likely find that you have a few forerunners that lead the pack with a number of sales, quite a few affiliates that have sporadically made a sale or two and some that have yet to make a sale. This will help you classify them based on sales.

Products - If you sell a wide variety of products for specific interests/needs you may be able to classify your affiliates by product. For instance, a financial site could classify types like Personal Finance, Small Business Finance, and Corporate Finance.

The Second Step is to determine the needs of each type. Each of your affiliate types will have different needs; some of their needs will overlap, but you should find a distinct difference in many of their needs. If you find that all of them have the same needs, go back to step one and re-think your types.

Here are some basic things to look for:

Linking Methods - Different types of affiliates will need different linking methods. Let's use the example above where we had different groups based on sales. Your low sales group may be satisfied with a banner or two to place on their site. Your medium sales type may be interested in an article or two for added content on their site. Your high sales group will

probably pass up banners for articles, guestbooks, email ads and signature files.

Capturing visitors is what you want. In order to do so -- you have to know what they want. Visit your affiliates' sites to see what visitors are looking at and looking for. Ask yourself, "How does my product relate to what I am seeing?"

Different types of affiliates may expect different commissions. You'll have some Affiliates that have joined your program "on the side" and others that plan on earning a substantial income from the program. Determine what effort they are putting into advertising, how much other programs in your industry are paying, and the amount of time they devote to your program.

The Third Step involves the process of creating and compiling linking methods for each group of affiliates. Based on the needs you identified in Step two, create and compile linking methods for each type. Here are a few linking methods to think about.

Banners - Though they aren't as effective as other linking methods, banners are still widely used and expected. Make banners in a variety of sizes to fit tops of pages, bottoms, toolbars, sidebars and other miscellaneous areas.

Articles - These are great for affiliates that need content for their websites and newsletters. Be sure that your articles are articles and not ads.

Email Ads - Your active affiliates may be interested in placing ads in ezines or their own newsletters. Try writing a few ads in different lengths.

Signature Files - Dedicated affiliates may even add your tag to their signature line. Give them

a few witty lines to choose from.

Product Images - Give your affiliates images that show and link directly to specific products. They'll be able to choose an image specific to their site, or choose several images to display.

Review each affiliate Type and match them up with your new linking methods. You may have some linking methods that overlap Types -- this is okay. Just be sure you are concentrating on the affiliates' needs.

The Fourth Step is to decide commission levels. Your first decision will be to determine whether you want to pay a flat rate or percentage of each sale. Based on the needs you identified above for each of the affiliate types, decide on a commission amount for each Type. If you have a two-tier program, consider the possibility of different second tier rates as well.

The Fifth Step is to devise promotions for affiliate groups. Once you have your affiliates properly categorised and your system under control, consider developing promotions for your affiliate groups. Give them special incentives to sell more during a certain time frame, move seasonal products, or increase business during your slow months. Offer them additional commissions, or even bonuses for reaching a specific amount of sales.

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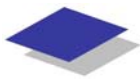
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For more information about booking Patric Chan as a speaker, hire him to write copy or marketing consultation or for more information, contact Patric in any of the following ways (please see Coordinates).



Promotion Or Demotion?

By Suzanne Evans

Promoting your top salespeople to a sales leader role could prove a risky business, suggests Suzanne Evans.

She's the best salesperson you've got. She's champing at the bit for a higher income and higher prestige and you don't want to lose her. So, when a coveted sales leader's position becomes vacant, it makes sense to promote her, right?

Wrong. She might be exceeding her targets month on month and have the keenest negotiating and deal clinching skills you've seen in a long while, but the truth is that the best salespeople don't necessarily make the best sales managers. It might seem natural to promote a good salesperson who's complaining about lack of opportunity and moving elsewhere, but it could prove to be a very risky move.

"It's absolutely not a good idea to automatically promote your top salespeople," says former salesman Mark Pringle, now a consulting partner with the Ken Blanchard Companies, who provide leadership training for sales leaders. "Your top sales people have something about them that makes them special. It's often a personality trait, some kind of charismatic element they have that's personal to them. Often they can be quite a maverick and just because they're a top salesperson, it doesn't mean they're going to be a top manager."

He argues that promoting good salespeople to managerial roles could be as foolhardy as suggesting good electricians take up plumbing.

"The skill sets for both jobs might overlap and there might be some

transferable skills, but they are two very different jobs. It's the same in sales – selling is one job, managing sales is another. How well high-performing sellers adapt to a managerial role will depend first and foremost on whether they've been trained up for the job and, second, how willing they are to take steps to supplement the skills they already have."

All too often says Mark, top salespeople won't have been trained up to take on the additional people management responsibilities leaders need because their manager will have neglected this aspect of his or her managerial role.

"Sales Leaders are the number one point of operational strength and ongoing success for a sales force. The best sales managers can hire and retain the best people and accelerate sales performance. But if they haven't developed their salespeople into leaders of the future, subsequently promoting those salespeople to managers could prove a costly mistake."

Mark Pringle argues that often, one reason why good salespeople don't always make good sales leaders is because of the selfishness of their managers, who choose knowingly not to equip them with skills they might need in the future.

"Poor managers fall into the trap of not developing their people because they think they will become better than them and take their job. Or, they think that if they develop them they will go off and work for a different company, and they don't want to lose their best people. It's amazing how many times I hear these two excuses when taking management development programmes. It's simply not true and it staggers me that these ideas are still out there. All the research suggests that good managers do develop their people

and that this secures the long term success of a company. Managers need to look beyond the financial goals for this month or this quarter and consider the effect their negative attitude will have on the business and their teams."

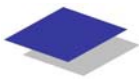
Training consultant Richard Moss agrees that no salesperson should be promoted on the grounds of their excellent sales record alone. He's been involved with management and sales' field training for many years.

"I've seen many examples of what happens when managers are put in this position from several different organisations and various market sectors," he says. "Time and time again people who know how to sell have been promoted without being given any additional management skills training. They get into hot water pretty quickly and then so too do their organisations."

The impact on the wider organisation is fairly obvious. The best salespeople bring in the most money for their organisations. Take them off the road and away from the customer and the bottom line can plummet. Add into this disastrous mix the fact they have few essential management skills and are likely to fail in their new role, and a business is likely to find themselves not just short of significant sales' income, but minus a sales leader too, because the new manager could well move on to pastures new in frustration.

Sales' training consultant Andy Beech witnessed precisely this domino effect while working with a pharmaceutical company. Current managers were asked to nominate sales reps they thought might make suitable sales managers. The candidates were then sent to an assessment centre so their management skills could be graded.

"Sales Leaders are the number one point of operational strength and ongoing success for a sales force. The best sales managers can hire and retain the best people and accelerate sales performance."



“Several people went through the assessment centres and bombed,” he claims. “Their managers had not assessed them honestly as to their capabilities and their readiness to become sales managers. There hadn’t been a good development plan in place, so most sales reps were unprepared for what they experienced at the assessment centres. Many of them went back with their tails between their legs, completely disillusioned as to their futures. The gap between reality and expectations had been too big and they were completely demotivated. Some did leave, so the company lost some of its best salespeople. Of course, it could have been much worse – at least none of them were actually put into positions of leadership. Who knows what might have happened had they not been weeded out at an earlier stage?”

Such potential pitfalls highlight the need for managers to control their direct reports’ expectations and for would-be managers themselves to be more realistic about what development plans they put in place,” says Andy. “Existing leaders need to act as coaches – that is key - as is an element of realism for those looking to move upwards. You need to identify very clearly what your key priorities should be as a sales manager and then plan to develop those capabilities within your current role before you move on.”

The question is, what advice can be given to those facing requests from a top salesperson for promotion to a management role, if they are not convinced of their suitability for the post?

“You’ve got to be able to have a very mature conversation with that individual around what their core skills are,” answers Mark Pringle. “Any man manager needs to be able to articulate that if someone is a position ‘A’ and they want to get to position ‘B’ they have to develop the skills to get them there.”

Then, he says, it’s up to the management to put that process in place and help them develop the

necessary skills. “If they believe they can develop those skills then all is well and good. If not, then it’s a question of developing them within their current role.”

“Too many people equate development with promotion,” he says. “Development doesn’t necessarily mean promotion. There will often, for instance, be situations where a sales person is earning more money than a sales manager. Would-be managers need to be aware that if they get promoted to their level of incompetence, they will struggle. When that happens, the organisation has failed the individual. Development is personal and might mean development within a job, not another job.”

Richard Moss believes that most salespeople will realise and accept this. “A good salesperson will usually have an objective understanding of what their strengths and weaknesses are,” he feels.

What is clear is that decision makers in organisations should not allow themselves to be bamboozled into promoting someone against their better judgement. In their 2005 Recruitment and Retention Survey, The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development revealed that 73% of organisations are experiencing turnover problems. And yes, while lack of development and career opportunities is cited as one key reason why people leave their jobs, sales’ organisations must also heed another warning – a report in this magazine from the UK Marketing and Sales Standards Setting Body - that there is also a shortage of highly skilled salespeople. So, unless you know absolutely that your quality salespeople will make quality sales leaders, can you really afford to take a risk? If you take them away from what you know they do well already, you might find it harder than you think to replace them.

When promotion is clearly not the way forward when it comes to rewarding a high performer,

organisations need to get creative about finding other ways to reward people. Nominating them for the ISMM’s British Excellence in Sales and Marketing Awards (BESMA) is one way to start this creative process.

When promotion is feasible, organisations have a duty to be crystal clear about their need to provide training to help people excel in their new managerial roles – for reasons that will benefit the whole organisation, not just that individual. They need to equip sales leaders with a set of core people skills – and what precisely these key skills are is what we will be exploring next month.

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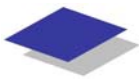
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When people can see which direction the leaders are going in it becomes easier to motivate them.
Lakshmi Mittal



Alphas Of Real Estate Reveal Their Secrets

By Alf Nucifora

Judging from this panel, the unifying platform for success is the fact that star performers achieve the pinnacle of success by executing the basics, but by doing it more consistently than their competitors and with much greater degrees of ferocity, perseverance and discipline.

I recently had the opportunity to chair a panel of six residential real estate agents representing the Bay Area of San Francisco. Each was a representative of a leading real estate firm selling to the luxury home buyer in upscale areas such as Lake Tahoe, Carmel, Marin County, the East Bay enclaves including Walnut Creek, and the affluent areas of San Francisco itself such as Pacific Heights and Nob Hill. Each of the panelists was the #1 producer in his/her respective firms with one of the presenters holding the title of top producer in the whole of San Francisco in 2005 (with a collective lifetime sales volume exceeding a billion dollars). These are agents for whom a \$20 million sale is not a rarity, and where transactions in the \$5-10 million range

are not uncommon. Understand, of course, that we're talking here about San Francisco, one of the most bizarre and irrational residential real estate markets in the country.

While interesting observations flowed from the discussion, a number of universal themes and common success attributes emerged. Judging from this panel, the unifying platform for success is the fact that star performers achieve the pinnacle of success by executing the basics, but by doing it more consistently than their competitors and with much greater degrees of ferocity, perseverance and discipline.

Develop the trust

The alpha agents share a common trait, they "listen". From the moment the prospect walks into the office or gets into the agent's car, the listening has begun. Like a dog acutely attuned to its master's every move, gesture or inflection, the alpha agents read the body language, listen for the physiological tell-tale signs and probe for a clear understanding of the buyer's state of mind and intent. So refined is their listening, that they can nail the profile in just a few meetings or encounters. At the same time they're developing trust with the client, by what they ask, how they listen and how they respond. With trust established, the game is over. It's simply a matter of locating the right property and closing the deal. The hard part is the upfront cultivation of the relationship between the agent and client, and the formation of a partnership based on trust between the parties. For the alpha

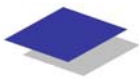
agents, this process is second nature. They can do it in their sleep. But they've worked to achieve that state of incisiveness and understanding. Most of us lack the patience and the drive.

Responsiveness is a mandate

The alphas will testify to the fact that responsiveness is the #1 client demand. That means constant hand-holding, 24/7 availability to client request, and the ability to be present at those moments of unscripted and unplanned vulnerability and crisis when the client needs psychological reassurance or a course correction. Remember too, that responsiveness means different things to different people. It's as much a perception as a state of readiness or reaction. Either way, alpha agents never let the client out of sight or mind. It's constant baby-sitting until the contract is signed and the closing takes place.

You can never have enough information

Agents will tell you that today's buyers, particularly the educated tech-types who populate major centres like San Francisco are data junkies requesting every piece of abstruse information that they think they need to make the right decision. One agent recounted an incident where the potential buyer of a new home requested deviation from the mean for the selling price of the home when it had previously changed hands. And of course, the more expensive the home, the more detailed the data and comprehensive the information sought. The alpha agents understand that to maintain their pre-imminence and success rate, they have to do their homework, keep on top of trends, have the information at their



fingertips, or know where to find it.

You've got to be first to know

The alpha agents always have the pulse of the marketplace at their fingertips. They're motivated by the constant paranoia and fear of missing out, of not being first with what's new, what's hot and what's happening. They're inveterate networkers, spying on the marketplace, divining meaning from the gossip, and always the first one called when the seller has decided to list that luxury home. That's how market leadership manifests itself, not in hollow advertising clichés and yard signs, but in the strength of the agent's network and the dollars transacted over the course of the year.

It's always a referral business

To a man and women, each of the agents reaffirmed the principle that the majority of leads and sales (more than 90%), particularly in the high-end luxury home category come from referrals. While each of the agents directs a marketing strategy employing traditional communication tools including brochures, direct mail and information-rich web sites, they do it because they're scared not to (there's that paranoia again). But the reality is, for the sale of a multi-million dollar home, Craig's List or the local Sunday newspaper classified section is not where it's happening. Interestingly, the smarter agents consider the sale and closing as just the first step in a life-long relationship with that client, one that may lead to another transaction down the road as the client's lifestyle changes, and one that should definitely lead to referrals. The ideal state is to move the relationship from agent-client to agent-friend, an indispensable, trustworthy one who can be relied upon to do it all from finding the optimal financing

to sharing a contact list of trusted remodelling contractors.

You can't rule without passion

In listening to these alpha agents expound their ferocity of style, in work habit, persistence, competitiveness, ego and passion for the job stands out like a beacon. They tower above their competitors because of it. Which reinforces the point that conviction and commitment will win out over background, schooling and industry best-practice every time. You can see it in the eyes. It's the alpha stare. And all six had it.

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...conviction and commitment will win out over background, schooling and industry best-practice every time. You can see it in the eyes. It's the alpha stare.

This is the nature of genius, to be able to grasp the knowable even when no-one else recognises that it is present.
Deepak Chopra

The winner is the chef who takes the same ingredients as everyone else and produces the best results.
Edward de Bono



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