



Sound of Sales Music

'When the dog bites, when the bee stings, when I'm feeling sad....I simply remember my favourite things and then I don't feel so bad'

OK...that's enough Sound of Music for a business article.

When we're under pressure for sales figures, how many of us revert to selling what we like and have sold before, rather than being open to the client's real needs.

Pre-sales and consulting people love discussing so called 'proven solutions' because they know it works, there is less fear and apprehension and it makes their lives easier.

Sales people often have their favourites too – favourite products, that all in one package thingy that people tend to like, the left handed Collectimizer 2000 that slots in seamlessly or that favoured hourly rate based service that is an easy sell.

All well and good when it works, except there is a downside. They may not want one.

As the old saying goes 'If all you have is a hammer, every problem starts to look like a nail'

Our own biases and prejudices can often lead to clients preferences being dismissed, open discussion about business problems being shut down and a lengthening of the sales cycle as you try to wedge your favourite widget into their business.

Interestingly, in our sales training programs we run an exercise in advanced listening habits and techniques. It's only six well crafted questions but the average recent success rate from pre-sales and sales people across different industries based on over 250 participants is just 2.8 out of 6. It's not too simplistic to say there are a lot of pre-conceived prejudices and thoughts that prevent people from listening to the whole picture.

One company achieved a score of 5.2 out of 6. It was no surprise that they were true consultants and solution architects with no agenda to push, just a real desire to seek to understand

Whilst no-one wants to re- invent the wheel on every deal, clients don't want to feel that you're just re-jigging your favourite widget and dressing it up to look like it's fresh.

They want you to listen without prejudice and then consider with sincerity what the best options are for their business.

After all, you don't want them switching off or worse still saying 'So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehn, Goodbye.....Goodbye.....Goodbye!

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