

March 2008: The Sales Edition

The Three 80-20 Rules of Selling

They say the world is governed by the 80-20 rule.

There does indeed seem to be an 80-20 for nearly everything and sales is no exception. In fact, here are three that you ignore at your peril.

The 80-20 Rule for your First Meeting

This rule refers to how to spend your time, at the first meeting with a potential customer. Use your time with:

80% Information Gathering

20% Information Giving

So at the start of your meeting, establish how much time your prospect has, to ensure you can get the information you need. And since no rule is perfect, make sure you leave 10 minutes or so to close the sale if you can (always try) and agree next steps.

The 80-20 Rule for Junior Buyers

Junior and middle managers are intensely practical people. They have to be: their job is to get things done. So ensure you address their interests. When you gather information, listen for their concerns in this proportion. And when you give information, address their needs in the same ratio:

80% The "How" of it

20% The "Why" of it

All selling is about finding an itch and offering a scratch. Operational people's itch is a process one. Not so their senior colleagues.

The 80-20 Rule for Senior Buyers

Senior Managers' role is to think strategically. Reverse your pattern with them to focus on what they need:

80% The "Why" of it

20% The "How" of it

So how do you gather information?

There is an art to it. Think funnel:

Start at the top with a wide open funnel, and ask wide open questions, like

"Tell me about ..."

Listen for where their itch seems to be, then start to probe, with narrower questions like:

"Tell me some more about ..."

Next, confirm your understanding by asking detailed questions like:

"So, what exactly ..."

Finally, play back your diagnosis of the nature of their itch, to ensure you know what sort of scratch they need:

"From what I've understood, you ..."

Learn More: [Sales - The Client Meeting](#) is on 12 March

Get Strategic

Senior Managers ask "why" because they need to be strategic. It's all part of the role of leadership. Here's a simple five step prescription for becoming more strategic:

1. Get the basics in order to create time to get strategic
2. Move your focus from "effects" to "causes" and use all available data and analyse them
3. Prioritise ruthlessly: avoid being seduced by the "urgent" and stick with the "important"
4. Make the most of all of your resources - particularly people
5. Look for a chance to demonstrate the value of your ideas

Learn More: [The Leadership Programme](#) starts on 11 March, with Day 2 on 11 April.

Dress to Impress - on the Phone

Some of our clients do a substantial part of their business by telesales. Others have large call centres. Whether you are selling by out-bound calls, selling in response to in-bound calls, doing customer care over the phone, or handling complaints, the lesson from the most successful telesales and telemarketing firms is simple:

Have your staff dress as they would if they were meeting the customer in person.

Why is this? Maybe the customer can't tell the rustling of a wool suit from the rubbing of frayed denim, but phone operators can feel the difference.

Selling is about emotion and customer care is about respect. If your staff feel smart, they will convey this in their voice and style. If your staff dress in a way that is respectful of your customer, they will remember who their customer is.

Learn More: [Telesales and Selling by Phone](#) on 3 April.

Selling: The Absolute Basics

If you want to sell, there are two basics that you must master. These are "The Customer" and "The Itch". Let's look at them one at a time:

The Customer

In any potential customer organisation, there may be many individual possible customers and decision-contributors. These are the people who either make, or help to make, the buying decisions.

Your job is simple: get to know as many of them as you can, find out what they care about, and tailor your message to them.

What they care about is their Itch.

The Itch

What is it that is bothering your potential customer? What do they want to solve, fix, dispose of, create or acquire?

Find out and then create a way that they can scratch it. The final step is to craft a compelling and persuasive way of presenting you scratch.

Learn More: [Sales Essentials](#) on 10 April.

Get your meetings off to a great start

Whether it's a sales meeting or any other type of meeting, use our simple six step meeting guide to get your meeting off to a great start.

1. Plan your meeting, focusing on the outcomes you're after
2. Invite all the right people - and only the right people
3. Send an agenda, and set out what preparation people need to do
4. Welcome people with some small talk before you get started
5. Confirm the finish time and check that the agenda remains your top priority
6. State the purpose and objectives for the meeting

Meetings are a craft. Practice them for years and you will start to master them.

Learn More: [Meetings - Making them Work](#) on 11 March.

More courses in March and Early April

PowerPoint Advanced	10 March
Excel Introduction	12 March
Excel Intermediate	15 April
Word Intermediate	16 April
Personal Effectiveness	9 April
Appraisal Process	16 April

Kent 2020 - Kent's Biggest Business Show

Come and visit us at the Kent 2020 Exhibition on stand E4, on Thursday 3 April.

If you would like a one-to-one meeting with one of our Directors, call us on 01892



836110 to arrange a chat over a cup of coffee.