

Sales strategies

Introduction

This article is part of our [sales guide for contractors](#). In this article we describe some of the strategies used in sales, all of which you can use yourself, but also need to avoid being used on you!

As a contractor, you may feel that you have little knowledge of the sales industry and are therefore unsure of sales people and the practices they use. This can be daunting and leave you feeling that you have been tricked or misled by a sales person.

In many cases for contractors, this is felt to be true when dealing with recruitment consultants, for example. You can actually quite quickly gain an understanding of the way sales works and actually employ some of the techniques yourself.

Establishing Facts

Sales, at it's best, involves the following:

presenting a product or solution in the best possible light,

clearly describing a product,

explaining and demonstrating the benefits of the product,

justifying the costs of the product,

making it easy for the customer to buy.

When you are being sold to, be aware that you are probably not being presented with all of the facts. It is not the job of the sales person to tell you everything about what you are about to buy, it is their job to sell it. Don't be too alarmed by this, it is business and the way of the world.

So when you are being sold to, it is your job to discover the information the sales person has not told you. Ask lots of questions and always question detail. The agent might not have too much detail about the contract and could over promise. You should ensure you verify these facts at any subsequent interview.

In contracting this works both ways. For example, the agent might not want to tell you that the last five contractors hired by the client left in disgust after the first day. Likewise, a contractor might not want to tell the agent how they totally messed up their last project and were escorted off the premises!

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Buying Signals

When you are being sold to, the sales person is looking for buying signals. These are signals that you make, often involuntarily, that indicate that you wish to buy the product. The buying signal relates to the reason you may have for buying.

For example, when buying a new car, it may be the running costs that are most important to you or it could be the speed at which the car drives. The sales person does not know why each customer is looking to buy and so needs to find out by talking to you. Once they have found your weak spot, you are likely to give off buying signals. To make life hard for the sales person, practice dealing with sales people and giving away none of your feelings. This can actually be quite difficult, but you will see the sales person squirm! Lawyers are especially good at not reacting to pitches made by sales people and are therefore considered very difficult people to sell to!

For contractors, when speaking to an agent after an interview, it may not be wise to tell them how ecstatic you are about the position and that you would love to start straight away!

Don't be Rushed

All sales people including agents have targets to meet and so want you to sign the deal now! Do not be rushed into signing a position you have been offered.

Sophisticated [closing techniques](#) can often manipulate you into signing when you may not have been ready to commit. Take your time, digest the information you are receiving and try and take a balanced view. It is easy to be caught up in the moment and sales people know it!

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If you have been offered a position, agents will certainly try every trick in the book to get you to sign, as they are a signature away from making another deal.

Body Language

The majority of your liaisons with agents will be over the phone, but body language will be important for you during the interview stage when you become the salesperson.

Body language is a fascinating aspect of human life and can reveal much that is hidden. However, this is widely understood in the sales industry and manipulated by sales people to good effect. A sales person is often taught to mirror the same body language that their customer is displaying. This makes people feel more connected and eases the atmosphere.

Your body language also gives away a lot as to how you are feeling. When you are being sold to, be aware of your body language and make sure that it is neutral. Neutral means not sitting forward, rubbing your hands and looking like you are just about to reach for your wallet, and not slumping back in your seat and looking like you are about to fall asleep! You want something in between that does not give anything away.

Despite how professional you may look when turning up for interview, if you yawn and appear like you are not really listening you will not be taken seriously!

Summary

Sales is quite easy if you want to pick up the basics, but can take a lifetime to master. Like it or not, it is absolutely essential to business and you will have to deal with sales in many aspects your life. Learn more about sales and it's practices and you will benefit accordingly. Happy selling!

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