

The Defining Mark

Barrier Free Business Development Ideas

This issue: Value & the Bermuda Triangle

I am sure that you have heard the story, it has been used by sales professionals since the dawn of time: "I don't know what happened. I was sharing our story; describing the features and benefits; it was going great. Then, all of a sudden, he just disappeared."

It is the story of another prospect vanishing into the mysterious Bermuda Triangle. Your sales rep was using some of their best "material" and trying to develop rapport, yet the prospect simply wasn't buying.

So what happened? Why did your rep fail to engage the prospect? There are as many reasons a person doesn't buy from you when you expect them to, as there are compelling reasons to buy.

One of the key factors in creating an environment conducive to a successful close is congruence between your product offering and your prospect's needs. "Sounds simple", you say? It is simple, just not always easy.

Within the business environment, there are three basic levels of interaction between a company and client:

- **Transactional** - low degree of interaction; client's understanding of product is above average; little feedback requested or expected
- **Consultative** - supplier expertise & insights expected; several options and solutions available which require clarity; supplier value found in simplifying process
- **Partnership** - close working relationship and high degree of trust necessary; longer-term agreement and strategic planning inferred; clear understanding of each other's needs and responsibilities

The challenge arises when the prospect is expecting a level of interaction which is different than that being offered by the sales rep, (either higher or lower). A customer getting a pack of gum at the corner store, would require (and expect), a different level of interaction than the same customer in a computer store buying his first laptop.

It is good marketing to develop your company's value proposition in order to help differentiate yourself from your competitors. More importantly however, you must recognize and act on your client's value requirements in order to service them effectively.

The single best method to give yourself a chance of meeting the expectations of your clients is to simply ask what they are. Clear two-way communication and a conscious decision to understand your client's expectations, will provide you with the necessary protection from interacting at the wrong level.

It is by meeting the expectations of your clients that you can ensure they don't get lost in the Bermuda Triangle and disappear.



Jim Carty, CSP

*Try not to become a man
of success but rather to
become a man of value.*
- Albert Einstein

Action Plan:

- Develop a corporate value proposition
- Consider your client's value requirements
- Sell to client needs vs. your own quota
- Remember, AltiMark is available to assist & advise with any of these steps