

Finding the Right Person

This is definitely not a romance column. You got the wrong guy for that kind of advice. What I am talking about here is finding the right person in the sales process. You see, there are a few problems with the way a lot of salespeople deal with the “people” side of selling.

There is a direct correlation between the people we know and the business we get so it sets up the following kinds of situations:

- We have a customer and we know all the people we need to know
- We have a customer and we know some people but need to know more
- We want a customer and we know some people
- We want a customer and we don't know anyone

Here's the problem—a lot of people should wear a t-shirt that says, “I'm not important, ignore me,” but they don't. Instead, they tell you they are the decision-maker. In some cases, they tell you you better **not** talk to anyone else in the organization.

Your second job as a professional salesperson (after making sure you have a customer that can pay their bills) is to make sure you are directing your sales efforts at the right people. Have you worked with a customer, asked for the order, and been told something like this...“I'd love to work with you but I've got to run this past my boss.”

Not getting the order there was not because you didn't close correctly (and it also had nothing to do with your price, quality, service or anything else like that)—you never had a chance at that piece of business because you did not involve **all** the decision-makers from the beginning.

This highlights one of the hardest parts of selling—finding the right person. A lot of salespeople think about it this way: **Who in this organization buys widgets?**

Wrong question. You really need to start thinking differently. The real questions look like this—Who in this organization has the authority to buy a different widget (or from a different supplier) than they bought last time? And, why should they want to do so?

Do you see the difference between the first question and the second? Just about anyone from the guard shack to the VP can tell you who buys what you are selling but finding out who actually has the authority to buy something different is

much harder. And getting them to tell you why they might want to do something different is even harder.

When you want a piece of business that you are not getting, make sure that you are clear on the answers to the following:

- Is this person empowered to do what I want them to do?
 - Do I understand what they care about?
 - Does my proposed solution meet their needs?
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