

NEWSLETTER

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Anderson & Mitterling

FIND SHARKS THAT ACT LIKE ADVISORS – SEE YOURS SALES SOAR!

Welcome to a whole New Business World.

Selling today is more complex than ever. It is confusing for everyone. Prices are soaring, operational costs are rising, suppliers look and sound similar, and the *cost of a purchase* is increasing. Likewise, the selling organization is also facing tough challenges. Reducing the *cost of selling*, increasing operational efficiencies, creating REAL competitive differentiators and hiring the right people - it is a tough world out there.

Who do you hire?

Finding the right sales professional is and always will be a costly endeavor. The interviewing process alone can cost thousands of dollars. Then, when the people are hired - with high hopes – the selling organization hands them a ‘tool bag’ and sends them out to sell. Many organizations want sellers who have experience in their industry, a successful selling track record and a healthy list of business contacts ready to buy. Organizations are expecting the seller to hit the street READY to find and close the business. Success is often measured in 90 day increments and you are only as good as your last 90 days.

But where do you find these SALES SHARKS?

Everyone is asking that question. Open the *Employment Section* of any paper in the world and hundreds of companies are looking for sales people. There are lots of people out there looking for jobs – but which ones fit the profile? Which ones will be cost effective investments? During the 80’s a prospective new hire took a battery of tests. Could one really predict a person’s sales future success? Could a test tell the interviewer this person has a *need to win* or a *fear of failure*? Maybe? Look, if people can beat a polygraph test – people can surely ace an employment test! A test can be beat!

So how do we decide who gets hired? Hiring is still primarily based on a person’s resume and the interviewer’s *gut take*. The challenge continues to be: How do you know if the person sitting in front of you can *really* sell before you hire them? **The Human Asset component of every organization is critical to its success.** Hire the wrong person and you have wasted valuable time and money. When you find good people, what next?

How do you train your HUMAN ASSETS?

Organizations through the decades – depending on the economy – have shifted from commodity or transactional selling to relationship selling. There are all types of training classes and formulas for success. On one hand, if you make 1000 cold calls a week, you will surely sell something. The odds are in your favor. This type of selling promotes a shark-like “love em & leave em” set of behaviors. The seller is “incented” to get in the door and sell something immediately. Little focus on long term relationships.

Little focus on the long term opportunities. But this approach drives revenue for the selling company – quickly.

Other formulas promote “understand the client inside and out.” This approach is focused on developing a long term relationship. This approach is focused on delivering value above and beyond the feature benefits of the product or service. It requires the seller to invest time to understand the customer’s business, understand their external drivers, their market place – and it demands that the seller understand HOW their own product or service can help the customer achieve their goals of increasing revenue or decreasing operational costs *beyond* the **feature characteristics** of the purchased product/service. This is admirable, but it takes precious time that many companies do not have - given the wild marketplace we are living in. To become a company Advisor – to be a valuable HUMAN ASSET - it takes a whole lot of time and experience and suggests that only a very special person can fill those requirements. So how do you marry the two – hire a shark that is also willing to take the time with their customer *and* behave like an Advisor, but knows when to be ruthless and close the deal?

Can we find them? Can we train them... Or do they just come that way?

One school of thought tells us, “you can’t train someone to be a great seller – they are born.” While, other schools of thought offer, “anyone can be trained – just give them the tools, training and your support.”

The purpose of this book is to explore - IS A GREAT SALES PERSON BORN OR TRAINED? You be the judge.

Please read this interesting parable – it may compound the confusion!

The Tale

The Scorpion & The Frog

There once was a scorpion and a frog.

One very windy day the scorpion found himself stranded on a leaf in the middle of the pond. He searched and searched for a way to get to the shore. He wiggled around on the leaf trying to create some momentum to propel the leaf closer to the shore. But nothing seemed to work. Hours went by and he could not figure out how to save himself. The afternoon turned into dusk and the scorpion was tired and scared. He closed his eyes for a moment hoping a ray of inspiration would hit. Splashes of water hit the leaf and startled the scorpion’s senses.

A frog was swimming by and the wake of his fins splashed water onto the leaf. The scorpion yelled, “Hey buddy, can you give me a lift to the shore?” The frog stopped, turned and looked at the leaf with a stranded scorpion and said, “Are you kidding. You think I am that crazy. You would surely sting me.” To which the scorpion replied, “No man, if I did that we both would die...I can’t swim. Come on, you gotta help out here. Honest, I won’t hurt you!”

The frog thought and thought about what the scorpion said. “Yea, I will help you...jump on my back.” The frog swam over to the leaf and the scorpion jumped on the frog’s back.

Slowly and surely the frog paddled toward shore. The wind picked up a bit, the waves began to splash the scorpion, and just as they approached the shore line the scorpion’s tale waved wildly around in the air and came down and stung the frog.

“Wow. What did you do that for? You said you WOULD NOT STING ME!” The frog screeched.

“Yea, I guess I said that...but I JUST COULD NOT HELP MYSELF.....STINGING **IS IN MY NATURE.**”

Interpretation

"IT IS IN MY NATURE"

...And that is the question we will look at throughout a series of articles. Is the profession of selling IS "in my nature," or can someone be taught to sell successfully? Billions of dollars every year are spent developing the HUMAN ASSET of selling...if we can help you find the answer to that age-old question...the reading time you have invested will be well worth it. Check out our next installment in May, 2003.

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