

March 2007: Four situations that can make or break your appointment

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Sometimes our best presentations can fail due to factors beyond our control. Here are some hints for improving the sales process:

1) Client is feeling underlying tension: Many people are time-poor and as the appointment continues, the more the clients may be thinking "Hurry up!" Don't assume they are not. They don't know what to expect from you, or from the meeting. They *do* know that they will have to make a decision at some point and naturally they don't want to make a bad decision.

Solution: confirm their role in the first three minutes of the meeting by having an agenda printed for them. Most people are happy to accept an assignment or responsibility if it is clearly defined.

2) You are acting timid: Clients want to be shown what the next step is. They want to see what you see, know what you think and find out what will be useful. Don't let them lead the discussion - it puts you in a subservient position, and then nobody benefits.

Solution: Act as though the business has been done. You must have an equal mindset to the client, neither timid or arrogant. When you conduct yourself as though you have already been hired or will be hired, your best personality comes across.

3) You are working too hard during the meeting: In situations where the outcome rests on your shoulders, you may find yourself doing more work than the client – talking, explaining, and doing

your best to impress them. If the burden of conversation is falling on you, then the balance is all wrong. You cannot conduct effective discussions or get new business when you do all the talking.

Solution: Strive for a talking ratio of 60/40 in the clients' favour. Get the clients to speak more than you do, but control the conversation by asking leading questions. As soon as you believe there is an imbalance say something like, "You know, I have just realised I've been talking a lot. Let's go back to the agenda." Train yourself to talk in paragraphs, each time pausing to see if the clients respond.

4) You are not tuned in to what's most important to the clients: During the initial appointment, you become too focused on your own agenda and area of interest. This is dangerous as you could waste valuable time and the clients' attention as they want to discuss something completely different. This is a missed opportunity for you to discover your clients' goals.

Solution: Find out the clients' priorities and address them. Continually check with your clients whether this is what they want to discuss. What they spoke about last week may not be important to them now. Priorities change and new problems arise. Always confirm the agenda and allow the clients to add items to be discussed.

New books: Over the Christmas break I have written two new books which are available on CD: *20 Steps to a high profit business* and *37 Mistakes Managers make*.

My new web site will be launching this month and you can purchase both books as well as my other e-books. Just log onto www.properadvice.com.au or call me on 08 83763644.



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Testimonials

I found the coaching sessions, precise and informative, very impressed

- Liesi Fimmano

Loads of good information, I wish I had coaching 10 years ago

- Linda Livingston

It was all extremely relevant to my business

- Kathleen Duggan

Very worthwhile – relevant marketing ideas

- Paul Ratcliffe