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Face-to-face courses aim to put wind in your sales



TRAINING PROVIDER:
Andy Szebeni

MANY companies wax lyrical about the success of their direct marketing campaigns, telephone sales strategies and email blitzes but nothing beats face-to-face selling.

A quick phone call or an email is much easier than the great expense of time and money in meeting up in person. However, it is easy for a customer or prospect to ignore emails and calls, especially as they are likely to get a whole barrage of them each day, which makes selling a lot more difficult.

When you meet someone in person they are focused on you, providing you with lots more information and the opportunity to overcome any objections they may have from buying from you.

Your chances of success with face-to-face selling can be greatly increased by taking steps like researching the company in advance, arriving on time, taking control during the meeting, making an effort to look smart and adequately preparing your response to objections, for example when they say that no budget is available or the company is happy with who they already use.

There is a real art to selling face-to-face and a number of courses are available that are ideal for new

By Ben West

recruits to field sales, those with sales in their job spec and managers in client-facing roles.

Courses typically cover the essentials of face-to-face selling, how to turn sales meetings into business, when to close the sale, empathy and sympathy, reading body language and countering any objections that may occur.

A good course will help a salesperson communicate clearly, provide useful information, create a positive first impression and become a skilled listener.

Skills

"People don't always regard sales as a career but increasingly it is being seen as one," says Andy Szebeni, director of Croydon-based A&P Sales Improvement, which offers training courses and consultancy for companies wishing to improve the sales skills of their staff.

Among the many areas that A&P's courses cover is the encouragement of salespeople not to give up too soon.

There are now an increasing number of courses that can propel you to senior areas of the sector,

such as the University of Portsmouth's 18-month part-time MA degree course in sales management, which covers such areas as integrating marketing and sales, key account management, team selling and corporate governance in sales.

Even Harrods has got in on the act by last year becoming the first retailer in Britain to offer its own BA honours degree in the art of selling. The two-year degree covers modules that include human behaviour, psychology and business enterprise.

"Sales is not a profession yet but a series of skills like any other," said Mr Szebeni.

"However, it is now being regarded much more as a cohesive skills set in an organisation.

"In the past a salesperson may have been expected to simply know the product and know the people they were selling to.

"Now they need to also clearly understand other factors in selling too, such as the different steps in negotiation."

INFORMATION:

- A&P Sales Improvement: 0870 710 2233/www.a-and-p.co.uk
- University of Portsmouth: 023 9284 8484/www.port.ac.uk