



MBD^{insight} #36

It's easier to find a diamond in the rough than it is to apply pressure to coal.

In working with business development professionals over the past 27 years, 2 challenges consistently arise. First it is extremely difficult to change the behavior and thinking of traditional sales people who are typically product oriented and push-sell based on features, benefits and pricing of their product. It is true that any system will work as long as you have one. That system of continually pushing the value and service of the product, although inefficient and ineffective, will generate a certain amount of business. However, it will almost always puts the individual representing the product in an adversarial role. Helping a person to recognize the limitations of that system, changing the thinking that drives it, and elevating them to a higher level of business development has a low probability of success and is a painfully difficult process.

Secondly, finding individuals who are by nature problem solvers, introspective, somewhat introverted, more interested in asking questions and learning, empathetic and able to understand problems from another person's perspective, make much better candidates for developing into business development professionals. What sets them apart is their desire to understand the nature and scope of the problem, its ramifications to both the individual and the purchasing organization and being externally focused in helping to find a solution to their problems- whether or not they purchase it from the them. This type of individual engenders a more open relationship with strengthened trust and a superior exchange of information, resulting in a longer lasting professional business relationship.

In the modern world of service oriented, technical services companies, a technical engineering specialist who has backed into the role of business development provides a much better candidate for success, is a more reflective student, and is more inclined to learn both the thinking and process of professional business development.

It is much easier to discover a diamond in the rough and to mentor and coach the individual rather than to try to retrain traditional sales thinking and process.

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