



MBD^{insight} #7

No Problem ... No Need ... No Prospect!

In Business Development, most of us think you have to establish a prospect's need for your product or service. But there's a significant hurdle that must be tackled first: the real problem. In order to have a need, there has to be something driving that need. Psychology teaches that people are driven either to avoid pain or pursue pleasure. And the strongest, most basic force is avoiding or overcoming a threat or pain. For a prospect to need a solution, this need must be propelled by the desire to avoid or overcome an existing problem. Most of us don't dig deep enough to find this out. We often look for a problem and take the symptom of that problem as its "first cause". We are unwilling to ask the probing questions, which slowly peel away pain layers, to discover the first cause of what motivates a person to pursue a solution.

This pain developing expertise is based on the Socratic Method. Socrates believed that we grow through a continual questioning of the fundamental concepts of life: What is good? What is just? What is right? He would claim ignorance and then lead his students through a participatory process of questioning the "what" and "why," resulting in understanding in a more full and fundamental manner. This questioning of all assumptions to get to the core truth is now called the Socratic Method. In order to get to the "first cause" of your prospect's pain, you must use this technique, returning question for question until an understanding of the real problem is finally revealed. Only then is it appropriate to talk about possible solutions.

Remember: no problem ... no need ... no prospect.

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