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Must-Do Tips No 33: Back To (Business Development) Basics

The relative sophistication of the world we live in - e-communication, multichannel, multimodal, 'platforms' aplenty - can be enough to beguile us into thinking that we (or they) are doing a good job when it comes to persuading clients and prospects that they should use our services. In short, the technology (or, for many in the professions, 'Marketing') will somehow take care of it.

Oh dear no. Why? Well, as lawyers, surveyors, accountants, architects, consultants or other professional advisers, we are selling a service: a more or less intangible thing that is extremely difficult to shackle with sufficient conviction into any medium other than one. To paraphrase that American election-winning slogan: **"It's YOU they're buying, Stupid"**. This is a statement of the obvious that appears to be blind to a surprisingly large number of professionals that we have encountered. So here are three things to remind us of the selling basics.

Tip 1 – appearance is (nearly) everything

With no other real way of assessing what you offer, what prospective clients see and then feel can be all-powerful. One prospect remarked to us recently: *"When people come to our offices we make a bit of a deal about it – with decent catering, flowers etc. We try to create a personality for us and our company. Firm X just didn't bother with anything to create a good impression."* Professionals can and do ignore this, or dismiss it as fluffiness or somehow not serious. But in this case, as a result, the prospect rejected the firm pitching for his business....

Tip 2 – get to the point

Selling waffle is rife in many branches of the professions. Daunted by the challenge of communicating 'difference' in an intangible world, people descend either into incomprehensible technical-speak, or cliché – "committed to excellence", "cost effective", "partner-led" and the like. Clients don't buy either. Instead, to focus them on what is important, get your professionals to express *in one sentence* why the client or prospect should buy from you/them rather than anyone else.

Tip 3 – BIG up your successes

Many professional service clients cannot tell when the service they receive is performed well. But they can all spot when things have gone wrong. If the professionals we work with are typical, many of us don't like to blow our own trumpets; it's not the "done thing". But, given the precarious nature of the service relationship, we MUST give our intangible substance – otherwise only our failures will get noticed! So if you have done a good job, **tell** the client that you have and demonstrate it with evidence and the opinions of valued others.



This isn't puff or boastfulness – it's making sure that the client (or prospect) knows what (s)he won't necessarily be able to see.

For more information on our Business Development workshops and programmes to enhance the personal selling impact of your professionals, hit 'Reply' and type **Business Development Basics**. For more general information about what we do, go to www.peoplescope.com.

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Best regards.

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