



Your Story had better be Good

Possibly the hardest part of bringing in a new sale into the business is creating interest in the mind of someone you are meeting for the first time. It's quite different from a telephone or online enquiry where that someone is already demonstrating a level of commitment.

Networking, Face to Face

When networking, the make or break question, “**what do you do?**” actually means “what have you got to say that might be of the interest to me given that I wasn't intending to buy from you” (they'd have Googled or phoned you already if they had been).

Okay, this is a bit cynical and as we know, true networking is about making connections. But in tough times competition is fierce, attention spans short, so **your story had better be good.**

Yes, we all know to avoid the hard sell; let them do the talking; listen attentively; ask pertinent questions; etc but what's the right way to respond to **THE question?** And what happens if they ask first?

A conversation

The crucial thing to remember is that you're in **a conversation** so never give a two word answer, as in: “What do you do? - I'm a marketer”. “What do you do? - I'm an accountant”. It's easy to say. It's kind of informative but it tells the listener nothing about **you**. It kills the conversation **stone dead.**

What people want to hear about is **results** - things that resonate with them. Successful companies often open up with their brand customers – we work with Pepsi or Vivienne Westwood say. It gets your listener's immediate attention and gives you kudos. But just to say you're a solicitor- so what!

As an SME, your clients may not be so grand, but **what you do for them** can still generate interest after quickly laying out the scene. People are short of time so it needs careful preparation - if your listener nods off half way through, you probably need to refine it – a lot.

Now is the time to ask if they **face similar challenges** in bringing in new business and (subtly) discuss how talking further might help them through. They won't always be the **decision maker** so suggesting an appointment with that person might be worth it. Maintaining momentum is critical.



Your website

The interesting thing about a one-to-one network presentation is that it's exactly what you should be putting on your **website home page**. This page answers "what do you do – what will I get" and as internet users now want **more personal interactions**, making it represent a conversation will work better for you than a bland list of skills you offer. These tell the reader nothing (I'm an accountant!).

It's **how good they believe you are** that counts.

Be prepared. Be persuasive. Make it happen.

Gerry

gerryw@flyingveemgt.co.uk