

7 STEPS TO

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

smarter selling
stop talking and start listening!

Charmaine Keegan, Director, Keynote Speaker and Founder of Smarter Selling is a world leading expert in training high performance sales teams.

She is one of Australia's leading sales trainers. She has studied and observed the psychology of human behaviour, influence, persuasion and trust for over 2 decades and is considered an expert on Sales Techniques and how it relates to communication, in particular how to sell your solution effectively, with authenticity and integrity.

Charmaine has trained over 8,000 sales professionals empowering them with the confidence to embrace selling with integrity and authenticity to deliver immediate revenue growth.

She believes sales is comprised of four fundamental elements - good communication, exceptional customer service skills, personal accountability and a commercial mindset. She is passionate about selling and even more so, empowering others to sell.

Smarter Selling training programs set sales teams up for lasting success with simple to execute, contemporary and proven sales methodologies. They are developed and trademarked by Charmaine. They evolve as communication evolves. Her speaking engagements, webinars, workshops and programs are renowned for being informative, engaging, fun, interactive and highly practical. She makes it easy for professionals to sell and your customer to buy.

She also trains in NLP (how we operate), Hypnotherapy (unconscious communication) and Timeline Therapy (recognising your baggage and the baggage/beliefs of your customer). She continuously studies the psychology of human behaviour and is considered an expert on sales techniques.



7 STEPS TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Business Development is a skill that all salespeople need to have. It should be natural and organic to grow the business, find new clients, expand the offering to current clients.

Let's first explain the difference between Account Management and Business Development. Account Management, in 'old money', is what we refer to as 'Farming'. As an Account Manager you would be looking after current clients. Business Development traditionally refers to the 'Hunting' – getting new clients.

These days we seem to have either evolved from those terms or, in my belief, are trying to avoid sounding like sales by using fancy names like Consultant, Business Executive, Success Manager and the like, yet it's all sales and encompasses business development. In other words, regardless of what your email signature title is, we all need to be commercially minded and recognise our job revolves around growth of the business.

Let's look at 7 key steps to develop and grow the business

1. Be a market expert

2. Mindset

3. Be aware of your value

4. Work smart

5. Know how to approach prospects

6. How do I get more business

7. Take action consistently



1. BE A MARKET EXPERT

A successful Business Development person knows the playing field of their industry. They understand the ebbs and flows of the market. They know the key players and their respective unique selling points.

Most salespeople know information on their own business, but not necessarily that of the competitors whom they are up against. These are the alternatives that your prospect may be weighing up and comparing you to. When you know the fuller picture, you know what questions you need to ask, you know the types of problems the client may be encountering. You know how those problems can be fixed and which businesses (including yours) can resolve them.

As you ask better questions (and knowledgeable of the pain points and solutions) your value increases and the client see you as an industry expert.

What marketing collateral do you take out? Spend time understanding your market position (get someone to explain the marketing direction) and understand the decks (like PowerPoint presentations) to really know, 'inside-out', the information you are showing to clients. So many salespeople take out collateral from 'marketing' but unclear of the figures, sources or anything. They will become unstuck. Remember the client is looking for someone credible they can trust. By 'knowing your stuff' you become the trusted advisor.

If you are new to the business, then this is where you need to focus your time and attention to find and learn the key pieces of intel. For example, ask directors and the CEO what they are reading, the sources of their knowledge. What alternatives are out there for your client and what are the Unique Selling Points of each.

What to do

Be and act as thought leader of your field - be seen as the authority, i.e. comment intelligently on industry forums within Li etc.



2. MINDSET

Success, your opinion of the world and how you operate, all starts in your own head. It starts with how you decide to view the world. What lens are you going to use?

Empowered are those that have decided to adopt the stance of 'I choose how I view my situation', 'I'm in charge of my thoughts', or 'I don't let what is happening outside of me affect my mindset'. Their take is 'I decide and control on how I act and react'.

There is a great quote from the epic novel by Gregory David Roberts, 'Shantaram', where while he was chained up and being beaten, he owns: "I realised I was still free - free to hate the men who were doing this or free to forgive them as they don't know anything different".

This awareness of one's mind has profound effects on life. Seeing each interaction as a lesson of how you could have made better choices- being able to rise above and think 'what can I learn from this, what can I improve next time'. Whenever you think like this, planning and practising what you could say next time, you are actually hard wiring the circuits of your brain and reprogramming your mind to choosing a better future response.

Great Business Development people don't use excuses, they don't have bad days, they have good days and better days. They have high awareness and therefore a heightened EQ. They learn from each interaction. They constantly evolve, develop and mature.

Being in charge of your mindset and enhancing your awareness also means you become conscious of stress. Stress has horrific consequences on your body, mind and output. Take time to breathe, to slow the mind down. Ditch what may not be serving you, be it alcohol, caffeine, bad choice of foods, recognising and managing any other negative influences. Reframe yourself positively on what you do have and look at the situation through new eyes. Take care of your number one asset - you.

Feeling like it's not all sunshine and roses? Grab some Mindset tools (we discuss Mindset in many blogs on our website), one such technique is adopting a level of gratitude, that often does the trick. It's highly likely you woke up in a comfortable bed and have food in your cupboard, now that alone already puts you in the top 10% of the world - how lucky are you!

What to do: Adopt a position of gratitude, put things into perspective.



3. BE AWARE OF YOUR VALUE

What value do you bring to the table? What does your product, solution or service offer? Why would someone want it and what does it mean for them? How could it benefit them?

Often, we get caught up in the price of our own product that we don't see what the implications are for the buyer. To know this, you need to know innately what pain your prospect is experiencing, how long they have had it, what solutions they have tried, what they liked and didn't like. You need to know how informed they are about the different solutions available and the uniqueness of each.

You need to be 100% sold on what you are selling (for your client to have any chance of being sold- you need to be) and with that you will act confident and sound 'certain' of your worth. This is tangible to the client. And if your solution is identical to the competitors then you need to value your own personal worth.

What do you personally bring to the table? Are you professional, reliable, consistent, helpful? People 'buy into' people – so remember that. They are buying into you to trust what you are selling them. Ensure you are always operating at your best, so they (and indeed your colleagues) see the best version of you.

What to do

Learning your features and benefits upside down, back to front, inside out. Know where you sit in the marketplace. What are the USP of each competitor?



4. WORK SMART

Working smart starts with planning. You may have heard of the sentence “failing to plan, is planning to fail”. It’s true. Planning means you know who to target, when, how much time it will take. You know which potential and current clients will have the biggest positive impact on your bottom line. You know each opportunity and its worth. Because of this exceptional planning, you easily prioritise the most profitable clients and focus on how you can engage with and bring them value.

The best Business Development people carve off time for growth of the business. They remove distractions. They make time to research bigger potentials. They know what approach to take and have practiced and refined what questions to ask and what compelling solution(s) they can put forward. They plan days, weeks and months ahead. They are organised and tidy. My favourite mantra is the ‘energy & effort versus outcome’ formula. We only have so many hours in the day, the smart cookies prioritise so they are ultra-efficient and able to reach more of the right people.

Often, we are in sales because we like people, and like people interaction. This in turn can lead to us not being selective enough with our focus or delegating an activity better handled by someone else. We can end up racing around after every little distraction ‘just getting things done’ or chasing and over-servicing the “rats and mice” clients. Sometimes we even feel we ‘own’ the client. We can spend too much attention on the wrong clients not leaving us enough time, bandwidth and energy for the larger or more profitable clients.

For Account Managers, handling larger clients, you need to be constantly curious, asking questions so that you can understand how they have evolved (something they said ‘no’ to four months ago may now be relevant, or they may now be more informed on it, or now it’s become priority). We often think we ‘know’ the client. Take a deep breath before each client engagement, and if your internal chatter says ‘I know them and what they want’ take a brick wall and your head and connect them. You are blinded to new opportunities. When you re-read your notes say to yourself ‘that was my opinion of what I thought they wanted before, which may or may not be correct anymore and may not bear any resemblance to what they want now. Basically, avoid the “assumption vortex’.

What to do

Become the most organised person you know. Be aware of where you are putting your energy and effort.



5. KNOW HOW TO APPROACH PROSPECTS

If your true intent is to help someone, then internally you would be keen to get on and engage with people so that you can assist them. If you need to summon that feeling, then a strategy may be to keep a list of all those satisfied clients, and 're-play in your head' their thanks for helping them. This can be a great internal motivator, driving you to want to reach out and connect with more people. The key to reaching out is essentially making each part of the interaction about them and not about you. They don't know you or trust you yet. Your focus needs to be on how you can help them.

When you reach out do your research (rule is: the larger the opportunity, the more research time needed). Look at their website and Li or other relevant forums where they comment or interact. What are they posting on, have they expanded or taken on a new line? Can your solution be of service to them? This way, you will be starting off with a connection between what they do and how you may potentially help – how you may be of value to them. When engaging be interested in that person and their situation, use a relevant hook to open the conversation, such as, 'I noticed abc on your website, we have xyz which may assist.'

This approach is like a 20 second or less elevator pitch. I would suggest having many pitch versions ready (and well-rehearsed) so when you start talking, you are able to 'land' this message in a clear and concise manner. Business Development people tasked with acquiring new clients need to ensure they are constantly learning from each interaction in order to improve and evolve.

As it is with all approaches, you need to have practiced so that when you reach out, say by phone, you sound experienced, considered and in control. You are calm, reasonable and rational.

You are dependable. This is a sophisticated, intelligent reach out where you are making the whole interaction about them and you are present. As you are using a related hook you are making it relevant.

What to do

Put effort into researching those bigger potentials. The one that does the homework, gets the deal. Be and act as thought leader of your field – be seen as the authority, i.e. comment on any relevant industry forums within Li etc.



6. HOW DO I GET MORE BUSINESS?

The key to a good salesperson, one who continuously drives business, is really summed up in this sentence 'Do what others will not do'.

The client says 'no'. So what? Learn, be resilient and move on – get a thick skin and heighten your emotional intelligence. The world will not stop spinning. Lessons are everywhere. Opportunities are far and wide.

When you are with a potential client you need to abandon all assumption and baggage of what they will or will not buy. You need to be present and focused on them and their situation, only have eyes and ears for them. Your full attention needs to be on understanding them.

The key to sales is quite simply down to – the more you understand them, the more you can help them. Unfortunately, most salespeople are too preoccupied with getting their own message across, without first fully understanding the client. This mistake means the client doesn't feel heard, isn't fully understood and all opportunities to serve them are missed.

Acquire an opportunistic approach, be creative and resourceful.

Be measured and calm yet make sure you are agile and responsive. So many sales opportunities are lost because the rep is too slow. Of course, they never admit 'I'm too slow', instead saying, 'the clients are tyre kickers, I called back and they won't return my call'. No Sherlock, they have already formed a relationship with Jack Smith, who called at 8am and demonstrated they were the 'trusted advisor', so there was no need to call you back. It's sewn up. Deal done. Move quicker, think quicker, be alert.

The person with the most behavioural flexibility gets the sale. That's the rule. If you are regimented in your engagement you will be running the meeting your way, missing signals and not putting the client first. Your job is to run every engagement in a meaningful, relevant way –making it about them and not about you. Adapt to them. After all, our job as salespeople is to make it easy for clients to buy.

What to do

***Practice questioning and listening, push your comfort zone.
Be comfortable with being uncomfortable.***



7. TAKE ACTION CONSISTENTLY

Most salespeople are stuck in a reactive mode and not in a proactive mode. Knowing that when you engage with more people, you will get more business. This means you have to carve off time to focus on giving the more profitable potentials more of your time and energy.

SUMMARY

Sales is a profession. To demonstrate to the client that you are professional, trustworthy and a leader in your field, you need to act likewise. Sales is an intelligent interaction where you are using sophisticated interpersonal skills and communication methods to help a client solve a problem.

Account Managers – ensure you are always aware of your assumptions.

Business Development Manager – acquire a thick skin and heightened awareness around learning.

NEXT STEPS: BUILDING ON THESE **SKILLS, WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

There's no doubt that the current crisis is taking an intense toll on some businesses. But it's equally true that others are thriving – their sales are doubling or even trebling compared to pre March.

Being able to quickly pivot in response to a changing environment will serve you well. The good news is once we have learnt a new skill, adapted and evolved, then learning more becomes easier. We continue to develop.

Be comfortable with the uncomfortable!

To learn more about how to do this from someone with 28+ years of experience as a successful high performance salesperson and international sales skill trainer, contact us.

Read more of our sales tips
and strategies on [LinkedIn](#)

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