

About this Blog:

This blog starts as all things commercial nowadays - as an attempt to get the Buyingtime website up the Google rankings.

Suffice to say that I'm now rather looking forward to spouting forth about sales... after 20 years of success and failure, fear and celebration, nerves and large cheques (and small / no cheques) I have quite a lot to offer as a life experience.

Moreover, I'm a convert to the idea that most sales activities are better carried out by non salespeople... in fact I'll go further and say that for most services companies I've never seen a successful model where a full time sales resource really adds value. That's why Buyingtime exists!

Don't worry, it only took me 15 years to work it out, and 5 years on we've tried and succeeded at it several times (failed a few too). I'll try to explain it a little in this first blog - then we can crack on and talk about other more interesting things.

OK, so my sales career involved 5 years in publishing ad sales at various levels (from SOHO tech magazines to a Director role in New York looking after European magazines), full time sales makes perfect sense as the people writing the articles and doing the tech stuff are not presentable and are actually pretty anti-money most of the time... so full time sales made perfect sense.

Next I worked in distribution for 2 years as my new employer floated on the LSE and we tried to educate a room full of call centre types about technology and sales tips so they could sell more... the housewives of Aldershot mostly did £20-30k per day each... so much for sales training, flirting got them their targets far quicker!

My 3<sup>rd</sup> job was 5 years in a technology ad agency (see the pattern?), as chief rainmaker and

account director. We grew quickly and profitably, but the MD didn't want to give me any control of stock, and managed me through fear whilst paying out large sums of money to me every month (the agency's big client was mine all mine...)

Finally, my last job was Sales and Marketing Director at a (pretty much) startup software development company, which we dragged to about £2.5m turnover within 2 years... again managed by an Alpha male MD who thought that sales was owned by the sales team, even though we built bespoke code for web-based clients.

So to my epiphany...

On September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 I sat in our offices as the CTO from a potential client came to visit - we had been closing gradually for about 6 weeks. As he sat with our head of development I watched him make his decision, and it wasn't me who made it happen... it was Dave Gordon who drew a diagram about how the application would be architected, and the client relaxed - I know we had a new customer.

That evening I realized that with the right level of structure and handover you could really grow a services business without needing full time salespeople. By giving the principle leaders the right amount of sales training, removing the grunt work (discovery, nurturing & bid writing) and creating very focussed sales propositions it would be better all round for companies trying to move from £1-2m to turnovers of up to say £10m when the extra profit acquired by not paying commissions and sales salaries would be very useful.

And so Buyingtime was born...started in May 2003 and growing still.

Don't worry, the next blog will be less tedious!