

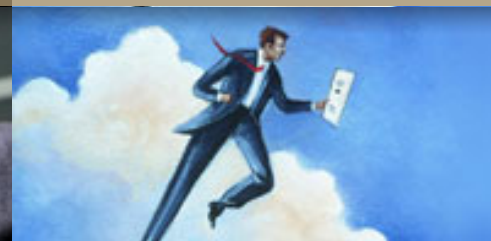
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Integrated Supply Consultants, LLC



June 2007 Newsletter



Welcome to Integrated Supply Consultants, LLC

Dear David,

One of my favorite quotes showed up again at the recent [DMIA](#) Technology Conference: "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place" from well-known writer/ author George Bernard Shaw. This was from Carolyn Valiquettes' (EVP, MindFire, Inc.) presentation from [MindFire Inc.](#) We may think we've reached our customers, but we haven't.

Carolyn stated that the corporate website was never intended to be a marketing response channel. And that's correct. In today's cross-channel marketing world it's hard to get your voice heard as you try to reach the customer. Once the customer responds to one of your marketing messages or comes to your website, you must be able to take them down a path that leads them to their solutions and your sales. The end user is in the driver's seat and will choose which channel partner they will do business with. And who and how they choose to provide information. Are you ready?

I hope to see many of you in Savannah in a couple of weeks for the [eQuantum Client Conference](#).

Good Selling.

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Make the Ordinary Extraordinary

Let's face it: selling office products is not rocket science, nor should it be. If we make it too complicated, we confuse ourselves as well as the end user. Selling business consumables (i.e. office products) is a transaction-nothing more, nothing less. Whoever presents the best solution for the consumer's procurement process wins the business. It's that simple.

What Does My Customer Want?

We don't know enough about our customers. How can we learn more?

At the recent DMIA Technology Conference in LaQuita, we learned of some very advanced and targeted marketing techniques from MindFire, Inc. Refining a message to the consumer that uses previous responses to marketing questions is the key to this technology. Use of personalized URLs presents a more refined message pertinent to the customer each time they respond. Automatic response tracking and follow-up creates personalized pages that lead to high close rates for products and services. And, it's measurable. This method points to an old sales maxim that still holds true: sell the customer what they want, not what we think they need. Understanding the customer is something that leads to integration between reseller and end user vs. interface. It's also how we create customers for life.



So, what's to sell if everyone carries the same products? In a 10-line order, the things that matter are fill rate, quality of goods, and timely delivery (when the end user needs it, which is different from next-day delivery). You must have enough of the correct inventory and make very few mistakes (or none) when filling the order. You need an efficient distribution partner to get the product to your customer when they need it.

Why doesn't anyone meet higher expectations for office product order fill-rate and order quality? Maybe they don't want to because they can't. But, if a business could consistently deliver high (>99%) order quality, why not market it? Anything that enables higher fill rates and the best order quality is good for the reseller and the end user. And quality reduces the expenses associated with errors. It's not rocket science, but it makes good business sense. Make the ordinary extraordinary. It's a nice way to stand out from the crowd.

Inquiring Minds Want to Know



Why are we afraid to ask questions? For starters, it makes some of us uncomfortable, and it's always easier not to ask.

A sales person needs a natural curiosity about their customer and an on-going desire to know more about how they operate. On the surface, a customer may say,

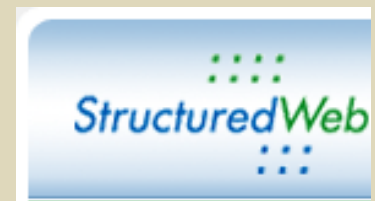
"everything is OK." "All of my office product vendors are wonderful and never make mistakes." That should be a clear signal to ask questions. Improved quality starts when everything is OK.

You can use open-ended questions such as "How can we-?" "What if we-?" "If you could change this-?" Draw the customer into detailed responses.

During this discussion, you can gather information that might not have been volunteered without gentle probing.

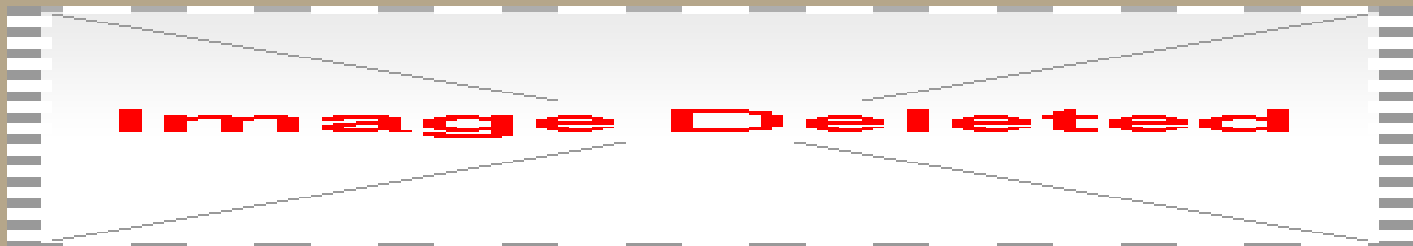
Good listening skills (my life-long challenge) reap great benefits. Customers will tell you what you need to know to create a customized solution to their problems. If you listen, you will pick up on the clues and close the sale. As you interact with customers, develop your questioning skills. This does not need to be "The Inquisition." Develop a genuine curiosity about everyone you meet, and tailor your approach and techniques to the situation.

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