



Getting Face Time with Decision Makers

There is an old saying, "If you want to catch fish, fish where the fish are." This quote directly applies to building strategies that enhance contact and communication with decision makers. So just how do you find 'fishing holes' that provide introductions to the power buyer, the economic buyer?

The most powerful tool for connecting with decision makers is building strong referral networks. Unfortunately, many sales professionals don't understand the last four letters in the word network---work. Our instant gratification society doesn't lend itself to building solid relationships. Relationships are built on investment of time. A person must invest time with potential partners to make sure business and personal values are aligned. It takes time to discover if your potential referral partner is a giver not a taker. Building strong networks is a lot like building a successful financial portfolio. You must invest time and energy before enjoying a return on investment. Investment of time means picking up the phone and making a call of introduction versus saying, "Tell Charlie I told you to call." Investment of time means keeping your referral partners informed of the outcome of the introduction. Investment of time means looking for opportunities everyday that will help your partners grow their business.

Membership in associations can be a good or bad investment, depending on your qualification of the association and personal involvement. Sales professionals join associations to meet referral partners and/or potential clients. If the association doesn't have either one, you are 'fishing' at the wrong place. Once you've selected the right association(s), get involved. It's a well known fact that people with influence and connections are on committees and/or lead committees. Don't fall into the trap of just showing up to meetings, eating lunch and listening to a speaker. The only thing you will build is your waistline.

If you want to catch fish, go where the fish are with the right 'bait' in hand.

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