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# Intelligent Engagement

## *4 Tips to Capture Your Prospects Interest*

By: Aaron Dyer

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Intelligent Engagement is not the title of the latest suspense thriller playing at your local IMAX, it is the method you should use when interacting with any potential client. Practicing this method will aid you in every interaction you will ever have, but you will see great results in the business world. There are a number of points involved with Intelligent Engagement, but the most important is this- "Cultivate an attitude of genuine interest in the other."



The focus of Intelligent Engagement is to listen to the customer or prospect, not focus on the sales process. Win the deal by talking with them about their business, not about your products/services or how you do business. Show a genuine interest about the person you are dealing with. People are aware when you are being false. Attempting to rush through a standard script of "getting to know you" questions will be easily seen and you will not gain the kind of relationship that will prove beneficial in future business dealings. You also want to engage many different people within the organization, not just your contact person. Building

these relationships translates into real connections and places you in higher esteem to those within the company. The objective is to create a buying atmosphere not a selling situation -- do not discuss the "deal" until necessary.

When a solid relationship is cultivated, this relationship will aid you when you hit rough spots in later deals. For example, price can lose importance when the deal is between two individuals who have a solid relationship. The following is a brief list of steps to take to achieve Intelligent Engagement:

### *Preparation*

Be knowledgeable about the company, people involved, the industry, and competition. Develop your call objectives. If you ask questions that could have easily been answered from reading the company mission statement or browsing the web page, you will be seen in a negative way. It will be inferred that you did not conduct the appropriate research prior to the meeting. It also implies that you did not place a high value on the client meeting as you obviously did not prepare.

### *Good Questions*

Make a list of 10 thoughtful and intelligent questions, but none about the possible transaction. Asking open-ended questions shows an interest in the other person and the company. They are also not answers you would likely be able to find upon conducting your initial background research. Some examples of thought provoking questions are:

- What led you to this career?
- What's been your biggest success in expanding your customer base (or business)? Why do you think that is? How can you replicate what's worked well for you?
- What's been your biggest hurdle in developing new clients? What's been causing these hurdles?
- If money was no object, what changes would you like to make in your business? Why?
- What is your plan to keep customers loyal?
- What does the competition do that you like/dislike?

#### *Bring Ideas*

Don't use the traditional pitch approach when giving information about yourself as this places you in the role of salesperson. People don't want to be talked at; they want to talk with you. If you hold a two-way conversation that expresses your ideas, both parties will leave the table with a better feeling about the other and the transaction. This will also place you into a more trusted and valued role, similar to an advisor. People like to hear fresh ideas, not scripted sales pitches. People will pay for ideas, but not for sales presentations

#### *Communicate Effectively*

Use industry appropriate language when speaking with possible clients and always look the part, meaning proper dress. This communicates to the other person that

you take them and their time seriously. Making direct eye contact and keeping an open demeanor will also greatly benefit any interaction.

The above points are all ways you can physically and verbally communicate your interest to the client, but make sure you follow up. A great face-to-face interaction is a solid foundation, but you need to continue the trend in writing. Create a brief overview document with an outlined proposal. Also, sending a thank you note as a follow up measure can go a long way. For the price of a stamp you will convey a message of value to the client. It shows you took the time to thank them for using their own time in meeting with you. You may also enclose marketing collateral within the thank you.

These may seem to be small suggestions, but when used in conjunction with each other, they produce a large impact. You want to set yourself and your business apart from the competition. Giving such a personalized experience to your possible client makes it more memorable for them and builds a connection that can then be a foundation or starting point for future transactions.

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#### **About the Author:**

Aaron Dyer is President of Dyer Consulting Group, a small business consulting firm that advises entrepreneurs and existing business owners on ways to grow their company's revenues and increase profitability through better strategic planning and financial management. For more information, and also to sign up for Aaron's future articles, visit [www.DyerConsultingGroup.com](http://www.DyerConsultingGroup.com)

