

Expert advice and guidance from the
Communications Sector

MAKING EFFECTIVE BUSINESS PITCHES

MEET OUR EXPERT

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KAMBridge helps businesses become much more effective at sales and customer management.

All businesses need to engage effectively with their clients or customers, but very few understand what best practice is and what should be done to make this essential and (often) costly aspect of their business work to its best. As a result sales are not made, customers are not retained, and transactional value is sub-optimised.

KAMBridge work with a wide range of clients across B2B and B2C sectors supporting leadership and sales teams in change programmes or in running training workshops to improve performance.

Please get in touch at www.kambridge.org

Would you like to get involved with our Communications Sector? Do you have ideas for future events or expertise to share in a guide like this?

Please get in touch with Helen Bosett, Sector Co-ordinator at Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce on 01733 370809 or email h.bosett@cambscci.co.uk

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Making effective business pitches

In a recent study, 39% of buyers rated the skill of the salesperson as more important to their decision-making process than price, quality or service features. In another, sales people estimated that they spend only 41% of their available time actually with the customer – the rest was spent preparing or in internal meetings.

Put those to stats together and is it any wonder that productivity is low or that many organisations are dissatisfied with their sales performance? Of course for many organisations, especially in B2B, there is a poor understanding of how to make a good business pitch as one of the core skill areas for both individual sales people and the organisation as a whole. Here we share some tips on how to improve your chances of winning the next business pitch you make.

Top tips for effective sales pitches

- 1 Lead with a brief 'insight' to hook initial interest**
This isn't simply about grabbing attention. It is about demonstrating your expertise and showing you know something that could be of value to your client or customer. Consider sharing recent trends, research or product developments that maybe relevant and interesting to them.
- 2 Remember, it's all about them not you**
Get your client talking about the issues that they need to fix. Ideally, aim for a balance of them talking about them first and push talk about you to the end.
- 3 Focus on asking gentle probing questions**
Try to get a deep understanding of what they really need by asking questions that really get to the heart of their needs and then try even harder to listen powerfully rather than think about what you are going to say next.
- 4 Clearly articulate what they're getting for their money**
Many organisations find it really difficult to simply communicate what the client will get for their money, especially in service-led companies. Being up front about what's included (and excluded) will avoid any misunderstanding further on in the sales process and demonstrates you are someone who is honest and trustworthy.
- 5 Same core message whatever the medium**
Ensure the pitch can be expressed by you in a two minute corridor conversation, but never more than a 10 page PowerPoint deck. Anymore means it's not honed enough.
- 6 Build confidence in you**
Provide re assurance by referring to a relevant case study or client testimonial where you've provided a similar product/service, or offer up in conversation someone they may wish to contact to vouch for the quality of your work.
- 7 Be really clear on what the financial viability is for you**
Consider using an O (optimal), D (desirable), and E (essential) planning approach so that you can understand all the variables and how changing them in a negotiation can impact on the bottom-line. If you employ sales people, you need to work hard to ensure they really understand the value drivers of your business.
- 8 Close on what the next steps need to be**
Demonstrate your confidence, competence and ability to make the buying process easy for them by setting out what happens next. This can often alleviate client's concerns when typical issues arise later on.
- 9 Make the right impression**
Crucially, ensure any materials you use as part of your business pitch look professional. A well-polished proposal or slide deck, with correct spelling, grammar and formatting is essential in making the right impression.
- 10 Consider all potential client concerns**
You may find it useful to have a standard preparation template that will prompt you to cover all areas of potential client concern such as risk management, key contacts etc. This is normally required in formal Invitations To Tender (ITTs), but is a good discipline to ensure you have considered all potential client concerns (we can supply one of these).

