Third edition

Expert Advice for Small Business

# Selling 101

- *Finding leads*
- *Cold calling*
- *Handling objections*
- *Closing the sale*

**Essential selling skills for business owners and non-sales people**

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**Acknowledgments**

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## Part One:
## LOCATING PRIORITY PROSPECTS

Regardless of how unique and innovative your product or service is, you can't effectively sell it to the whole world -- at least not at the start. Your time and energy, as well as your working capital, are limited. Don't spread them too thinly.

Therefore, begin by narrowing in on the best groups of prospects, and target your efforts especially on them. It's a rule-of-thumb in marketing that 80% of your sales (and profits) will come from 20% of your customers. By finding and focusing early on those high-payoff prospects, you greatly increase your chances of surviving . . . and ultimately succeeding.

Those in this primary target market are individuals or organizations that have a particularly strong need for what you offer, have the money, and that can be reached efficiently.

Others outside the target group may find their way to you and buy: that's fine. You won't turn them away, of course. But on the other hand you can't afford to waste effort on the lost cause of trying to find these improbables.

Naturally, the composition of the target markets may change or expand over time as conditions change, or as your awareness of your best markets grows. But at the start, you need to have definite prospect groups in mind, since precisely who these high-probability buyers are will likely influence the strategy and approach you evolve.

Certainly, start out with ideas on how to sell, and where to target your main efforts, but don't get locked in on those starting points.

*Chapter 1*

# *CREATING YOUR PROSPECT LIST*

## Checklist to trigger your thinking on sources of leads

### 1. Obvious or logical users of your product or service.

You probably already know a lot of prospective users of your product or service. You probably already know many of them by name. They may be people you worked with at your previous jobs, or they may be your counterparts in other organizations, or people you know from professional or trade groups.

Others you may not know personally, but know who they are by the organization within which they work, and by their job title. Or you may know that since they hold a particular kind of job, or live in a particular area, or have a particular kind of hobby, they are logical users of your product or service.

Write these names down as they come to you, regardless of how remote the chances of selling them seem now. Develop your list of prospects first, and only later think about narrowing it down. The possibility you list may trigger other ideas, referrals, and leads.

You can set up a simple worksheet to help structure your thinking. List the prospects that occur to you in the left column. Then, in a word or two, sum up in the middle column why you think they are a good prospect. Finally, extend your thinking: given why this seems a good prospect, and why they seem promising, who else is similar?

For example, suppose you have developed an automatic telephone dialer to call and remind patients and clients of upcoming appointments. You developed it with doctors in mind: they are good prospects because they don't want to have gaps in their schedules because patients forgot to come in, nor do they want to create unhappy patients by billing them for those appointments. Your system solves that problem.

But then you expand your opportunities: doctors are not the only prospects. Open up your thinking, spring-boarding from the "Why it's good?" column to other possible prospects. What other businesses or professions don't want to have clients or customers forget appointments? Then you might come up with lawyers, hairdressers, airlines, hotels, even sales people like yourself, who don't want to waste time on calls only to find the prospect has forgotten them.

This is just an example: adapt the worksheet to your own product or service to extend let the "obvious" prospects clue you to those who may be less obvious.

**2. Your contacts.**

If you're marketing the expertise you gained in your former job, then the people you met while working there -- both within that organization and in other firms -- may be potentials. Similarly, those you met through business and professional groups may be prospects for your services now, or at least may be able to suggest referrals for you to contact.

The people you know in a non-professional way may also be helpful contacts: people from your neighborhood, civic groups, church, circle of friends and acquaintances.

You may ask them for help when you see them face-to-face, or you may decide to phone them for ideas. (You could contact them to get their ideas on potential prospects. Even better, you might ask for their suggestions on your whole business plan. They will be flattered that you asked for their input, and may well have some ideas that had not occurred to you.

**3. Referrals.**

We'll be discussing the use of referrals later. Ask for referrals from everyone who buys. Even ask for referrals from those who don't buy but nonetheless seem interested in what you offer. (Although they may not have the money or need right now, they may still think you have a worthwhile idea, and want to pass it on to friends.)

To ask for a referral, simply say something to the effect, "By the way, is there anyone else you could suggest I contact?"

If they give you a name, ask, "Do you mind if I mention your name when I call them?" (If you're lucky, they may even offer to call up and make the introduction for you.)

If they have trouble thinking of names, you can gently prompt them by suggesting, "For example, is there anyone else I should talk to in your company (or agency, if it is public sector)?" Pause and wait for an answer. Then prompt, "What about your counterparts in other organizations?"

**4. Prospects you attract.**

Additional leads may come to you from actions you take including:

- Appearances at trade shows and the like.
- Talks before groups of potential users, such as civic and professional organizations.
- Articles and interviews in trade journals and local media.
- Contacts you make through volunteer work and similar activities.
- Advertisements you run.

**5. "Smoke-stacking"**

The name comes from the old days, when sales people new to a town would begin by driving around looking for the factory smokestacks, as the smokestacks usually indicated where the business in that town was. Nowadays when "smoke-stacking" you would be looking for office buildings, industrial parks, shopping centers, and other clusters of activity that may contain the offices of likely prospects.

Generally, the most efficient way of smoke-stacking these days is to find your way to the Chamber of Commerce, as they will be pleased to supply you with maps, and directories of the businesses, non-profits, and governmental agencies in the area. Most of the time, you'll be able to determine from these lists which organizations are viable prospects, or at least worth further exploration.

Check also if there are regional development agencies in the area, as they would also have directories of manufacturers and other major industries. (The names of these kind of agencies will vary with the state. It may be helpful to call your state's Department of Commerce, or even the Governor's office, as these development or redevelopment agencies or authorities often either use public money, or are funded by state bonds.)

But in some cases it will be helpful to go out and "eyeball" these business clusters, doing some on-site investigation. It may be that the directories are a year or so old, and there may have been turnover. Or some organizations' names may be too vague to tell you what you need to know.

In some cases, you can generate leads by quick "sweeps" through office buildings and commercial clusters, hardly more than poking your head into each office to see if it would be worthwhile to schedule an appointment later. We'll examine the how-to of "sweeping" in Chapter 5.

**6. Paper and online research.**

## Summary/Action Plan

Before reading on, spend a few minutes making a first attempt at a concrete action plan to structure your search for prospects. Jot at least three ideas in each category.

1. Who are the "obvious" or "logical" users of your product or service?

2 Your contacts:

- From your previous work:
- From business and professional groups:
- From civic, church, and other non-business groups:

3. Initial referrals. At the start, who might be able to help you generate lists of potential users, or make some introductions on your behalf?

4. Attracting prospects. Other than running ads, what inexpensive, feasible ways exist for you to spread the word about yourself and your product?

5. Smoke-stacking. Are there office buildings, industrial parks, and the like where users of your product or service may tend to cluster?

6. Paper and internet research. What publications, directories, membership associations and the like exist in your field that may help you find potential buyers? How can you use the internet to find other prospects?

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*Chapter 2*

## *SETTING PRIORITIES AMONG PROSPECTS*

A sure way of failing in anything, especially marketing, is to spread yourself too thin.. The whole world may be prospects for your product or service, but you can't call on everyone first. The taxi-meter is running -- especially in your first months -- so it's crucial to focus on the prospects who have enough profit potential to make it worth your while.

It’s crucial to make conscious choices of which customers are worth calling on personally, and which should best be approached by other, less costly, methods, or written off altogether.

### Criteria in setting priorities among potential prospects

In setting priorities, use criteria such as these following, or add you own specific criteria appropriate to your product and your market.

**1. The prospect's potential need for your product or service.**

In assessing whether a potential should be given high priority, ask yourself exactly how strong this prospect's need is likely to be for your product or service.

Also, is their need for your product likely to be apparent to them at the start, or will you have to develop their awareness of a need? Survival is precarious when your business is just getting started.  That's not the time to be fighting lost causes.

Don't hesitate to go for the easy sales first. it is OK to pick the low-hanging fruit.  After all, you're in business to make a profit, not to build your character through unnecessary adversity. Some initial successes will ease the financial strain, and give you success stories to use in persuading others.

**2. Dollar potential, both short and long term.**

As you work, keep the 20/80 principle in mind. from 20 percent of your customers will come 80 percent of your sales and profits. It pays to find that productive 20% as quickly as possible, and focus most of your efforts on them.

But the rule also works in reverse. the other 80 percent of your customers will yield only 20 percent of your sales. That tells you that if you manage your time unwisely, that unproductive 80 percent can eat up your days so you never get around to working with that productive 20 percent.

**3. Geographic desirability.**

In selling, time is money, and travel is time. In the time that you spend going across town to see one prospect, you could perhaps see four or five other prospects more conveniently located.

On the other hand, the overall objective is to make a profit, not just to save travel time. It may be worth making an "inefficient" trip if that prospect offers the chance for a significant return on the investment of time.

**4. "Wedge" potential.**

What are the chances that a call on this prospect will result in just a single sale, or will it be likely to open the door for several other sales? For example, it may be worth investing the extra effort to sell to one division of a company if that is reasonably likely to open the way to other divisions.

Similarly, it may be worth investing extra effort to sell to the business leaders in your area, because success with them may open the doors to other prospects.

**5. Chances of success, including prospect's reputation for innovation and for working with new suppliers.**

Especially in the early days, you're going to be short of capital, and hence operating against a tight deadline before you scrape against the bottom of your money barrel. Downgrade the companies that have a reputation for being slow to change, or for being the last to accept innovation. Experiment with them later, after you have built a reserve cushion.

**6. Buying cycle.**

Orders by government agencies and other large organizations often are substantial, but may be locked in a year in advance. In addition, there may be mandated buying procedures, such as the requirement to advertise for bids before making any purchases. If these organizations are prime prospects, talk to the contracting officer early, and do the necessary paperwork in time to get on the bidder's lists.

However, take what the contracting officers and others in the agency tell you with a grain of salt. more often than not, there are ways around the rigidities of the purchasing regulations. If you can generate enough interest among the people who will actually be using your product, they, as users, will probably be able to help you through the purchasing red-tape. (We’ll be exploring how to do that later in this book.)

## Summary

In setting priorities, use criteria such as these; add others appropriate to your market and situation.

1. The prospect's potential need for your product or service.
2. Dollar potential, both short and long term.
3. Geographic desirability.
4. "Wedge" potential.
5. Chances of success/ prospect's reputation for innovation and for working with new suppliers.
6. Buying cycle.

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## Part Two
# LOCATING AND GETTING THROUGH TO THE APPROPRIATE DECISION MAKER

The central question we address in this Part: Once I find an organization that might be interested, how do I get through to the right person there?

By this point, you have developed a working list of prospects, and have targeted from that list some priority prospects. Now you need to find the name of the specific individual or group within each prospect organization to approach.

That person or team to approach, remember, is what we refer to as the “Prospect” or "Decision Maker" abbreviated DM): that is the individual or team, working in the relevant area, and who has the Authority, Need, and Dollars to enable them to say Yes to what you are offering.

We address the how-to of finding this DM in Chapter 3. Finding the Person or Team Who Can Say Yes.

In Chapter 4. Getting Past the Decision Maker's Screen, we examine some useful methods of either quickly convincing the Screen to put you through to the Decision Maker, or, alternately, of finding a way of getting around the screen to approach the DM directly.

Chapter 5. Cold Calling -- When You Must focuses on the practical how-to for those times when it is appropriate in selling.

Then, in Chapter 6. Convincing the Decision Maker to Meet With You, we address the issue of how to quickly convince the DM to agree to invest time in hearing your message. ("Quickly" is the key: this is not the time for an extended conversation. Busy Decision Makers are reluctant to waste time, either on the phone, or in meetings that threaten to be overly-long.)

Finally, in Chapter 7. Organizing and Learning from Your Phone Calls we point out some ways of improving your telephone techniques.

*Chapter 3*

## *FINDING YOUR WAY TO THE PERSON OR TEAM WHO CAN SAY YES*

Basic rule: You can make a sale only if you deal with the person who can say Yes to what you offer.

Obvious enough. But often overlooked. Organizations are full of people who claim to have decision-making authority.

But in reality most of them have only *negative decision-making authority*. That is, they have the authority to say No to you, But no matter what or how good a deal you offer, they're just not able to say Yes.

People with only negative decision-making authority typically range from the guard at the plant gate, to the Purchasing Manager, to the Decision Maker's secretary or subordinate.

They tend to be easily accessible, so it's tempting to meet with them and get a sense that you're making progress.

But that progress is an illusion. If you do make your presentation to them, you'll generally find that nothing happens -- at least nothing positive. After all, they can't say "Yes, we'll buy." They can only say either "No," or "I'll have to think about it" -- which really means, "I'll carry your message up to my boss, the real decision maker."

Consider the possibilities. First possibility: If they say No, the sale is just as dead as if you had made the case to the right person.

Second possibility: even if they say they'll pass the word on to the real decision maker, it's almost certainly equally dead. Sure, you might be lucky. But the fact is that it's very unlikely that they'll make the kind of strong case for your product or service that you could if you met directly with the Decision Maker.

For one thing, they don't know your product as well as you, and won't be ready to explain why it is better than the competition. Besides, selling your product is not a priority to them: their other responsibilities take first call on time and energy.  If the Decision Maker says No, they aren't likely to risk their job by pushing on as you would.

## The "Decision Maker"

The "Decision Maker," as we use the term here, is the person (or team) who has the ability to say Yes to what you're offering -- whether that Yes means to buy a product, to hire you or to retain your services, or to take the next step, such as agreeing to a trial run.

In small organizations, the Decision Maker ("DM") will typically be the person at the top -- the owner of a small business, the managing partner of a law firm, the president of a company, the director of a public agency.

It may take more effort to spot the appropriate DM in larger organizations.  Begin looking for the appropriate DM early, as soon as you start your preliminary research in developing your prospect list.  As you research the company, and particularly as you talk to people both within and outside the organization, keep your antennae open for the person (or work team) who seems to be in charge in the area in which you would propose to work, and who meets the "AND" test.

## The "AND" Test

The AND test is this:  the Decision Maker is the person (or team) who possesses three key characteristics: Authority, Need, and Dollars (AND).

### "A" represents Authority

The person to whom you make your presentation must be at a level to have the authority, or "authorization," to make make buying commitments for the amount appropriate to your projected work.

Thus if your cheapest model costs $5,000, and the person with whom you meet has a $3,000 purchasing limit, then you cannot expect a Yes decision from them.  That individual, therefore, is not the Decision Maker, in our meaning of the term.  He may be a part of a team that has full decision making power.  Or he may be a "Decision Influencer" -- that is, somone whose advice is heeded by the actual Decision Maker.

### "N" represents Need

Find your way to the person (or department) with a problem that your product or service can solve. That is, find your way to who has the NEED for your product.

If your product is a janitorial cleaning tool, for instance, there is obviously no point in meeting with the head of data processing. Similarly, the purchasing manager is usually the wrong person, as the purchasing manager likely does not have a first-hand need. (We look at the role of the purchasing department later in this chapter.)

**"D" represents Dollars:**

A person can have Authority to buy, and Need for the product, yet still not be a Decision Maker because she lacks Dollars (or budget).

It may not be easy to find whether or not money is available to spend on your product or service. There is no tactful way of straight out asking if they have the money. But you can sometimes ask indirectly, by early questions such as,

*"Suppose we find that this product does meet your needs. Will it be possible for you to buy in this present budget cycle?"*

However, don't necessarily believe the Decision Maker who claims poverty: usually that's just an excuse to get rid of sales people.

## Finding Your Way to the Decision Maker with "AND"

**1. Your knowledge of the field.**

You may already know from contacts in your professional organization, scuttlebutt in the industry, and your reading of news articles and business journals who's who in the hierarchies of the potential client organization.

But caution: the person who is apparently in charge of an area may not be the person with the necessary AND to make purchases for that area. For instance, the person in charge of the word-processing unit in a firm is probably not the person with the AND to sign off on the purchase of new software or equipment.

In most cases, you may be wiser to avoid talking to that user altogether, and instead go up the chain to the person who has overall responsibility for profitability and productivity in the area relevant to your product or service.

While you could ask this person for guidance on who has Authority, Need and Dollars, there is a risk that, once you open contact with them, you may be locked into making your case to them. From that point, you would be drawn into working with them, rather than directly with the real Decision Maker, with the disadvantages we discussed earlier.

**2. Your research within the prospect organization.**

This can be the easiest way of all -- if it works. Simply phone the company and ask the operator who is the person in charge of the area that your product relates to. Get the person's name first, then the job title. The title is important, as you need to be sure that this is the manager, and not just a junior clerk.

While you are on the phone, take an extra few seconds to ask who that person reports to -- just in case the decisions are made at the next-higher level.

As you probe for this information, it's usually best not to wave the flag that you are a sales person, as the operator may try to refer you to the purchasing department. You will usually get further if the operator assumes that you are a customer.

If the operator asks why all these questions, you might say simply, "I need to talk to the person in charge of that area." Or, you could admit that you are hoping to sell to the organization, but need to first explore whether there really is a need for your product there. If you are able to establish the right rapport with this receptionist, you may get all the help you need.

Alternately, you might say, "I'm conducting an industry survey" -- which is true, at least in the sense that you are surveying the industry for prospects.

But don't tell any fibs -- because you will be back there later, and they could return to haunt you. Also, do not let the operator connect you to this person yet. At this point you are only determining who they are, and are not yet ready to talk business.

**3. Client literature.**

A brochure or other company literature, such as an annual report to shareholders, can be a very helpful source of information, as it may give you a better idea of what the organization is "about," what the key themes are there, and perhaps even who's who in the management structure. You might ask the receptionist to send this literature, or you may drop by and pick it up in person.

Actually, dropping by for literature can be a good way of doing some on-site investigation in scouting out the organization as a prospect, as well as in finding who the likely Decision Maker for you product would be.

When you go for the literature, don't go out of your way to say that you are there on a selling mission. A receptionist who assumes that you are a potential customer or shareholder will often be more generous with information. (And if the receptionist recognizes you when you back later on a sales call? Well, plans change, and who can blame you for following up on a business opportunity you chanced upon!)

**4. Your network in the organization, or in the industry.**

Those whom you meet during your early general "scouting" of the organization may be able to give you a sense of where to make contact.

Your present clients may give you guidance on who their counterparts are with AND buying authority in other firms or agencies. (They may even be willing to make telephone introductions for you, or at least allow you to use them as referrals.)

**5. Trade leads with other sales people.**

Trade leads with other sales people who work in the same general field, though are not your direct competitors. (That is, if you sell brushes, look to trade leads with those who sell paint.)

**6. Business directories and trade groups.**

Local directories, perhaps from the Chamber of Commerce may give you the guidance you need. Or, if you're working in a specialized field, determine what trade or professional societies the manager with the responsibility for this area would probably belong to. Phone that society's local or national headquarters to get the directory.

If you will be doing significant selling to those in this field, you might even consider joining the group, provided you are eligible. The time and membership fees you invest will probably pay off in access to a variety of Decision Makers in other organizations. It may also open the way for you to advertise in the group's newsletter.  It may even result in your being invited to give a talk or presentation to the group.

**7. The internet.**

*Everything* is on the ‘net (and more is to come!)  You just have to find it.

**If You Can't Identify the Decision Maker with AND**

Sometimes, no matter what probing and research you do, you still can't determine who actually has Authority, Need, and Dollars within the organization.

Rule of thumb: the person at the very top of the organization will have positive decision making authority, or at least will be able to make things happen by shifting budgets. Even if the top person refers you down, then you have at least opened a channel, so you can later ask to move back upstairs for funding.

Therefore, if in doubt, start as high as possible. If necessary, go to the very top: call the president's office. Chances are, you'll be referred downward. But then you can honestly say, "Mr. Roberts in the President's office suggested I call you."

In a large organization, the person you are directed to may not be the right DM. But, most often, the mistake will be to direct you to the person slightly above the level of the actual DM. But that is typically to your advantage, as you can again benefit from being referred downward, and being able to say you are calling "at the suggestion of" that higher-level person.

It's better to start a level or so too high and be referred downward than to start too low and be locked into a position where you don't have direct contact with the real Decision Maker.

**"Decision Influencers"**

Even if the user, or the person in charge of an area, does not have the level of Authority, Need, and Dollars to be the actual Decision Maker, they may nonetheless be an important "Decision Influencer."

Decision influencer: even though they can't make the final call, their input and suggestions are listened to with respect. They may have the Need, but Authority and Dollars reside with their boss, or boss' boss.  You don't want to offend them by first seeing them, then appearing to skip over their head.

Decision Influencers may include,

- Those who will be the actual users of your product or service. (For instance, in mid-sized companies and upward, the person who uses the computer you sell will generally not be the Decision Maker (lacking Authority, Need, or Dollars), but will probably have a significant influence, as they are technically knowledgeable, and will be living with whichever computer is selected.)

- Financial advisors such as the firm's accountant or Chief Financial Officer may be Decision Influencers: they may say whether or not the firm can afford what you offer, and may also have input on finance alternatives, such as leasing versus purchasing, and the like.

- The Decision Maker's mentor may be a Decision Influencer. That is, the person who has Decision Making Authority, Need, and Dollars, may still want to check it with the "old hand" in the company who has helped him along the way. Chances are, you won't know who that Mentor is, and may never meet them; just be aware there may be one, feeding suggestions, questions and other concerns to the DM.

- The Purchasing Manager may be a Decision Influencer. That influence may be more on the technical aspects of how to make the purchase happen within the organization's policies on purchasing. But because the Purchasing Manager may have this influence is a good reason not to antagonize him. Go around him to get to the real DM, but do it quietly and in a nice, unobtrusive way.

**When TO and NOT TO Begin With the Purchasing Manager**

Contrary to what you might expect, it is usually not a good idea to begin your contact with the Purchasing Manager. More often than not, the Purchasing Manager will have clear authority only to say No -- at least with respect to a new product, service, or idea.

In most organizations, the Purchasing Manager's role is to coordinate buying of known commodities. If you're selling copy paper, or paint, or any other kind of standard item the Purchasing Office probably is the place to begin.

But if you're selling something innovative (either because it's a new idea or new product, or because it accomplishes the job in a new way), then you'll be best to find your way to the actual potential user and create the sense of need at that level.

Unconvinced? Project yourself back a couple or three  decades, and imagine that you were selling one of the first personal computers. If you had started with the Purchasing Department, they might have said, "Well, we do have a mandate to buy a dozen Selectric typewriters, and a dozen adding machines. But this strange-looking box you're offering clearly isn't a Selectric, and it doesn't fit the specifications we've set up for the adding machine, so we're not interested. Sorry."

But suppose, instead, you had found your way to the head of the engineering department, or to someone in the legal department who had endless versions of the same form to grind out, and had shown just what your little computer could do, then they probably would have found a way to open the necessary doors for you.

That's why I suggest you use the Purchasing Department only as a last resort. (The same goes for the Personnel Department, if you're marketing your services. Instead, find your way to the person or department with the actual need.)

For anything innovative or novel, the Purchasing Manager probably lacks Authority to buy. The Purchasing Manager certainly lacks Need, unless your product happens to be relevant to the Purchasing area. And the Purchasing Manager has Dollars only within prescribed limits.

**When it may be good strategy to contact the purchasing manager**

There are some occasions when it IS good strategy to contact, or ever begin with, the purchasing manager:

- Contact the purchasing department if you cannot otherwise find the person who has AND (Authority, Need, Dollars) to make a positive decision in your field. You can generally best do this by telephone, as you are less likely to be drawn into making a full presentation of what you are offering. This phone contact should be as short as possible, generally not more than about 30 seconds. Here's a model to adapt:

*"My name is Greta Ross, and I'm with 21st Century Containers. We've developed radically new types of safety containers for shipping fragile or especially valuable items. I know that you firm manufactures computer drives, which are exactly the kind of product suitable for our containers. Who in your organization would you suggest I talk to?"*

- If necessary, further clarify as you "negotiate" your way to the proper Decision Maker: "From our experience, the shipping department is generally not appropriate, as the packaging choice is usually made earlier in the process."

- Contact purchasing if you know that the wheels are already in motion to buy what you are offering, so the Purchasing Manager has the Authority and Dollars, and the Need has been communicated from another part of the organization.

- Contact purchasing to get on the organization's approved list of bidders. (But don't sit around waiting for them to solicit you: continue taking active steps to meet with the appropriate managers, regardless.)

**Training Directors: When TO and NOT TO Begin There**

If you are selling "packaged" training products, such as audio or video tapes, or seminars in this year's hot topic, then it is probably productive to start with the organization's Director of Training, or Personnel Director, or Human Relations Coordinator (or similar titles, depending on the organization). They may have Authority, Need, and Dollars for things like that, particularly if your product focuses on areas that have had a lot of publicity, such as employee safety practices.

But what if you are selling not packaged products but rather your consulting services as an expert on this topic (for illustration, employee safety practices). Or suppose you don't think much of the packaged (or "canned") safety training programs that are on the market, and propose to develop custom training specifically for this organization.

In that case, the Training Department might be a dead end. The Training Director probably does not have the Need to improve safety -- at least in any novel way. Thus your best approach would be to bypass the Training and Personnel Departments and find your way to the manager who does have a real reason to be concerned with safety. This may be the company president, who has an incentive to lower insurance costs, or it may be the plant manager.

## What if you just can’t find the real Decision Maker

Rule of thumb. if you can't spot the real Decision Maker, start at the top of the organization, and let yourself be guided downward. When you contact the suggested person, you can honestly say it is "at the suggestion" of the president (or the office of whoever you contacted).

The time you invest locating the appropriate DM will be worth it. If you call the wrong individual (one too low in the hierarchy, or otherwise lacking Authority, Need, and Dollars) you will often be locked in to dealing with them. You could then move on only at the risk of offending that first contact, who may later turn out to have a significant as an "influencer" of the decision.

While the Purchasing Manager is usually the wrong person (or office) with which to begin your contact, there are some situations in which purchasing is the place to begin.

- When the Purchasing Office seems to be the only source who can tell you who really has Authority, Need, and Dollars.
- When the purchasing apparatus is already in motion, so Need is recognized, the Dollars have been allocated, and now the Purchasing Manager has been delegated Authority to buy.
- When your objective is to get on the organization's list of authorized bidders or suppliers.

## Summary

In finding your way to the appropriate Decision Maker for your product, look for the individual or working team with AND: Authority to make a buying commitment, Need for your product or service, and the Dollars to pay for it.

Your ingenuity is your best tool for finding your way to the right Decision Maker for what you're offering. But here are some starting points:

1. Your knowledge of who's who in the field.

2. Your research in the prospect organization. As you talk to people there, in person or on the phone, stay alert for the clues that can direct you to the person or team with AND.

3. From the client company's literature, such as brochures, annual reports, press clippings, and the like.

4. The network you develop both in this prospect organization, and in the industry.

5. By trading leads with the other sales people you meet -- those who cover the same ground as you, though with non-competing products.

6. Business directories, trade groups, the internet.

**END OF SAMPLE OF SELLING 101**