

Sales Coach Series

First published in Infomatics

First meetings: should I PowerPoint present?

First published on 01/12/2000

The Dilemma

I was taught to make a PowerPoint presentation of my company at a first meeting with a prospect but I think I only succeed in boring the prospect and myself.

The Coaching

Why are you making a presentation? Chances are it's to inspire confidence in your company but until the prospect is interested in buying, company facts and figures are largely irrelevant. In any case, how do you know which aspects of your company's profile to focus on?

Think how you might feel if you were made to watch a presentation on BMW's business before you could test drive the car at your local showroom? You might be interested in the company, its market share and service credentials - but most people want to know if the car meets their requirements first. The same applies to your IT prospect.

For the first meeting concentrate on learning about their business, their IT systems and their requirements. Maybe just using one visual, provide a thumbnail impression of your company - just enough to show you're a serious player:

- This is what we do
- This is who we do it for
- This is what makes us good / different

You are more likely to build confidence - and rapport - by demonstrating personal competence through the questions you ask and your company's credentials through describing reference customers for whom you have supplied similar solutions to similar problems.

Once the prospect thinks you have something to offer they will want a closer look at your business. Until then concentrate on building their confidence in what you can specifically do for their business through two-way conversation