

How to sell Knowledge Management



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Introducing myself



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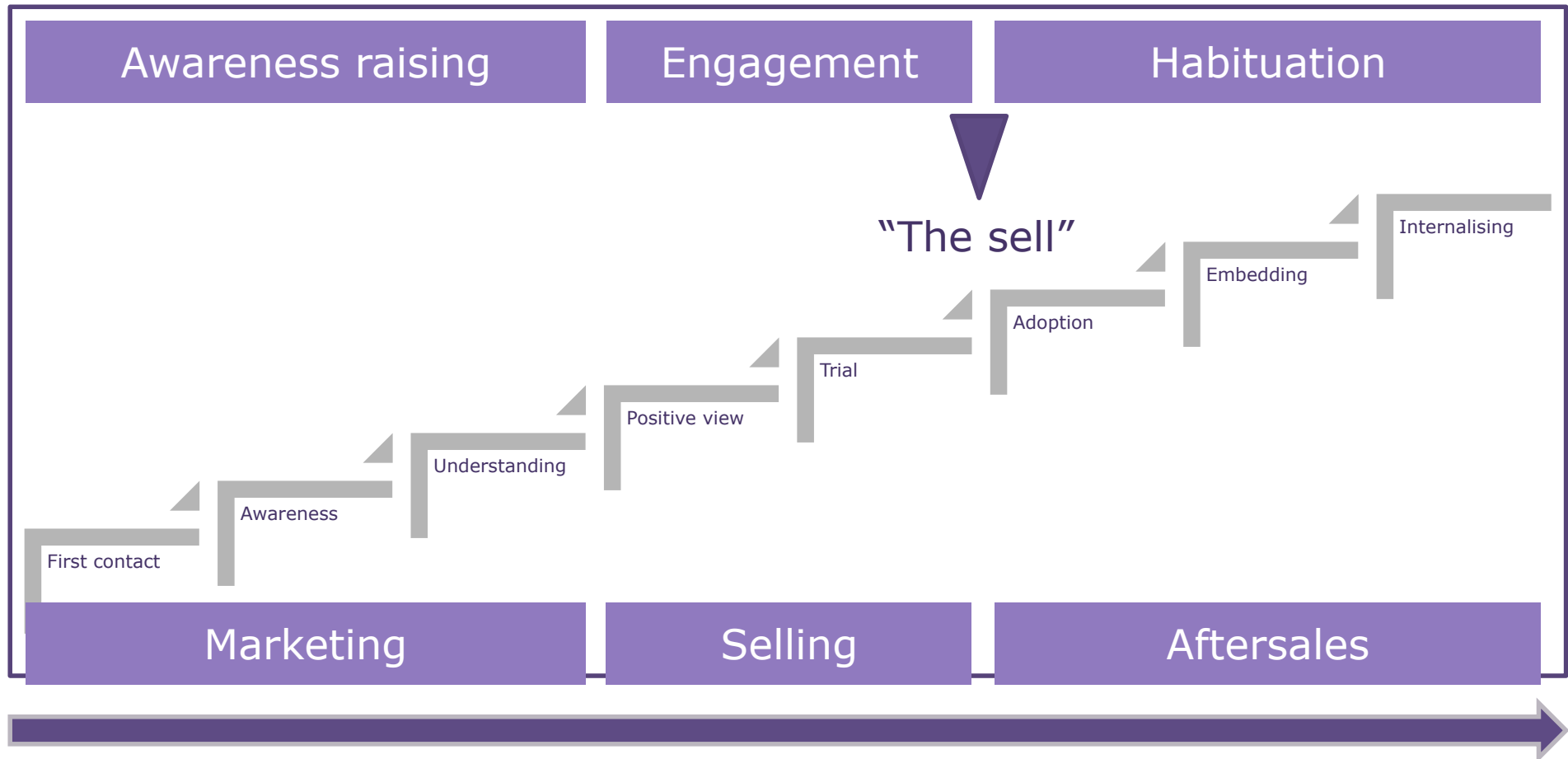


The knowledge manager as salesperson



Image from <http://insertmedia.office.microsoft.com>

A commitment-centric view of Knowledge Management



Increasing level of buy-in

What are you selling?



Image from wikipedia

“People don’t want a
quarter-inch drill – they
want a quarter-inch hole”

Theodore Levitt

People don’t want
knowledge management –
they want the benefits
that KM can bring



Move from Product Focus to Customer Focus

Sell based on customer interest (you only really know what they want through research and listening).

Avoid “Feature-dumping” - going on and on about the features of your product, without really knowing what the buyer really wants.

- If you find yourself talking about tacit v explicit –
•WRONG!
- If you find yourself talking about SharePoint, or Wikis –
•WRONG!
- If you find yourself talking about shorter time to find documents –
•WRONG!
- If you find yourself talking about the customer’s issues –
•RIGHT!

Know the “Cost of Lost Knowledge”



Finding knowledge better

- Saving waste time looking for knowledge
- Faster better search
- For documents and people
- More successful search
- Making people more efficient

Easy to estimate

Relatively small value

“Time spent searching (daily average):
47 minutes

Information is found:

Always: 5%, Sometimes: 32%

Key source for information:

Asking colleagues: 84%”

Finding better knowledge

- Finding solutions to problems
- Repeating best practice
- Eliminating defects
- Eliminating repeat mistakes
- Avoiding rework
- Making people more effective

Harder to estimate

Much larger value

“We found that poor KM is one of the top 3 causes of rework. Just this element is costing us \$100 million per year”



But - people buy on emotional need rather than logic

- "KM will soothe my pain"
- "KM can help get me out of a hole"
- "KM will reduce risk and exposure"
- "KM will help us join the big league"
- "KM will help us beat the competition"
- "Choosing KM will make me look smart"
- "Knowledge is an un-monetised asset"
- "Our customers will like it"
- "It's different – it will differentiate us"
- "Everyone else is doing it, why aren't we?"

The three Buyer Questions (the basis of your elevator pitch)



- What's your point?
- What's the benefit for me?
- What do you want me to do?





The pitch

- "We are losing work worth millions because our bid teams don't have good enough access to the knowledge they need to land the client. I think we can fix that, and in quite a simple way. Can I have 10 minutes of your time this week to explain in more detail?"
- "Did you know that we will lose half our experts through retirement in the next 10 years? That's a loss of 60% of our experience: a big risk, but there's a way we can cover that risk. Can you give me half an hour in front of the management team to talk it through"?
- "Our latest strategy is to expand overseas, but all our knowledge base is in head office. I know how we can make that knowledge and experience available to all staff, anywhere in the world, and so accelerate growth. Can I prepare a briefing paper for you?"



ANSWERING THE COMMON OBJECTIONS

"KM won't work here – we're different"



Image wikimedia commons

"Yes, our context is unique.
So let's talk about how
people use knowledge
within this context, and
when it's important to
them?"

(They're unique, just like
everybody else)

We do this already

“Yes, we certainly do many elements of KM already. It is, after all, common sense.

“Let’s look and see if we are getting the value we need from these elements, or whether there’s still something missing that means there is still value we haven’t touched yet”



Image wikimedia commons

We tried KM – it didn't work



Image wikimedia commons

"That's interesting. Tell me what we tried?....."

"Yes, that approach is a high-risk way to do it and usually fails. Let's look at the way successful companies approach KM, and the benefit it gives them"

It will take too long. We need results now.



- “We can have both short term and long term.
- “Let’s think of some business issues where we can apply KM right now, and save significant amounts of time and money.
- “At the same time work towards the longer-term culture change which delivers the step change in performance”.



Image wikimedia commons

Our people are too busy for this

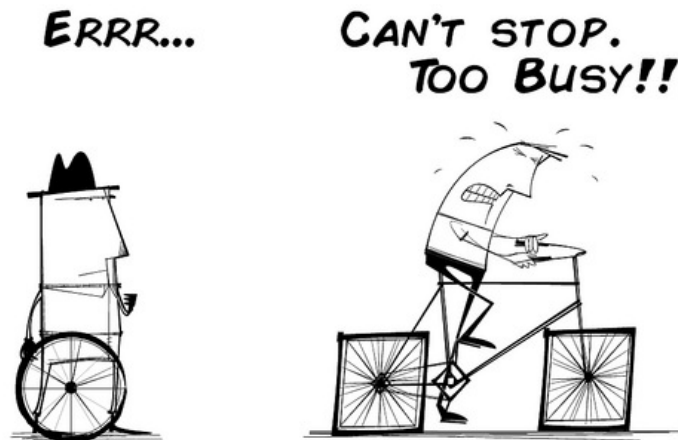


Image Alan O'Rourke on Flickr

"Yes, they're certainly busy!
Often too busy to go find
the knowledge they need
to become more efficient.
This is the busyness trap.

"Shall we talk about how
they could be less busy
but more productive, and
how we could shift to this
new model?"

It's simple - let's just do it

"Great! Let's make a start as soon as we can.

"It certainly is simple, but it's not easy, so let's do a bit of groundwork before we begin, to find the right place for the first step. Can I meet with your directors next week to start the planning?"



Image from rebloggy.com

Final words of advice

- Know your product, know your customer
- Sell benefits, not features
- Listen. (Telling isn't selling)
- Be confident, be positive
- "No" can mean "not yet"
- Be one of the 25% that persevere

Questions, comments, KM sales experience to share?



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