**Selling Books to Business Buyers? Think Small.**

**Brian Jud**

Some authors do not sell to non-retail buyers because they are intimidated by the corporate marketing professionals. If that is the case with you, start small. Begin your non-retail selling journey by calling on small companies.

These represent approximately 80% of businesses in the U.S. and they have the same needs as their larger-corporation brethren. Your content helping them retain and motivate employees will be thankfully accepted (and purchased). They also need other benefits of employee engagement: increased profitability, greater customer satisfaction (and loyalty) and reduced absenteeism. And they want to increase sales and find new customers. Start by showing them how your content can help solve their problems, then move up to larger companies as you experience success and gain confidence. Here are a few of the major advantages of starting small.

* **Learn how to make an effective pitch**. Making a successful sales presentation takes practice. You can try different presentation styles on small companies before you make a major presentation to a large corporate buyer.
* **Make mistakes that don’t impact large orders**. Mistakes will happen and it’s better to make them when the consequences are not significant. Learn from your mistakes so they do not occur with a large corporate buyer.
* **Discover the common objections and different ways in which you can handle them.** There are many reasons why buyers will not purchase when you want to sell. Similarly, there are many ways in which to handle objections. It’s good to practice those when the pressure is not as great as when trying to close a large sale.
* **Learn how to read buying signals**. There are usually four possible responses to your presentation: indifference, skepticism, objection, and acceptance. As you learn to read the different body language of these responses you will become more successful in handling the situation.
* **Deal locally**. You may have to travel to meet with a corporate buyer, thus increasing the time and expense of making the sale. You can probably find small businesses locally, and call on them personally.
* **Uncover (then solve) problems**. The essence of special sales is to solve a buyer's problem with your content. Learn and practice asking questions that will reveal the problems and lead to a discussion on how your content can solve them. An example is to ask, “If you were to hire a person today, what would you need him or her to accomplish in the first 90 days?”
* **Reduce stress**. While nobody likes to fail, it is better to lose an order that is not a major blow to your income. And since the pressure is off, you are more likely to experiment with different sales techniques.
* **Meet directly with the decision maker**. There is less red tape and fewer layers of management in the small-business decision process. When calling to make an appointment it is more likely that the decision maker in a small business will pick up the phone and talk with you. This can reduce the time it takes to make the sale. In addition, large corporate orders may require a presentation to several functions of management (HR, marketing, purchasing, etc.). When calling on a small business buyer you are probably dealing with the decision maker and can often close the sale on the first call.

Selling your books to people in small businesses is a good way to learn the ropes of special sales. Once you gain skills, confidence and momentum you can move on the buyers in larger corporations. However, you may also find your niche in this enormous segment and continue selling to these buyers.

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