

Winning New Business by Richard Denny, Kogan Page (2007), 176pp., £12.99.

This is a book written by a trainer for an indeterminate class, rather than a targeted personal tutorial. *Winning New Business* panders to the fear of rejection which underlies most individuals' attitudes to selling, and even ends with a poem 'Failure Isn't Fatal'. In fact, much of the book is about self-management, rather than winning business. One of its few references is to Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* which remains a best seller - personal insecurity is endemic in us all!

Winning New Business has thirteen chapters, covering the eight following relevant topics:

- The Quick Wins;
- Making a winning presentation;
- How to meet decision makers;
- How to win when you're not the cheapest;
- How your customers will become your ambassadors;
- How to make an appointment;
- How to beat the competition;
- Providing excellent customer care.

The book is primarily aimed at 'non-sales people', and much of the advice given will not be new to experienced executives. But it covers the agenda fully, and there are 'golden nuggets' to be mined, including:

- Be 'pull' not 'pushy' – give the initiative to the prospective client;
- Offer a money-back guarantee (take the perception of risk away from the prospect client);
- 'Walk a mile in my shoes' (think of the proposal from the client's standpoint);
- Study body language (there are 750,000 indicators; focus on key ones e.g. pupil dilation);
- Never negotiate across a table; sit obliquely (less threatening);
- Body language is 93% of communication – forget the words!
- A website is essential to attract attention;
- PR is a key multiplier, e.g. by creating press releases to send to clients;
- Focus on benefits to the client (chairs 'make people comfortable in their homes');
- Try to get client to visit you (implies greater commitment);
- Try to turn needs into wants (individuals are committed to wants, not needs);
- The listening/talking ratio should be 2:1 (2 ears, 1 mouth);
- Deliver proposals in person and offer to discuss them to ensure suitability;
- 'No' can mean 'later' (it may take several years, but persist);
- Build long term relationships ('No, not now' can start the process);
- Presentations should start with deliverables, then price, before detail and guarantee;
- 25% buy the cheapest; 4% the most expensive. 71% seek 'value for money' (in their terms);
- Customer care should deliver service beyond expectation;
- Welcome complaints, they can generate new business if well handled.

These 'nuggets' may be synthesised into the importance of building a long term, personal relationship with a balance of benefits and mutual trust. The key chapters focus on how to begin, by targeting, researching and approaching prospects and winning a meeting with the

decision maker - it is probably their personal agenda that will make winning new business possible.

Winning New Business is a frustrating book and the author breaks one of his own rules by pushing his own products – but although it is not convincing, some of its messages may have more impact in a training context.

Adrian Davies, AHTDAVIES@aol.com