

## Getting the Meeting is the Easy Part

There is an unnecessary focus on getting the meeting. Sure it's a crucial part in the sales cycle and getting the meeting must be a focus of every good marketing plan. But it cannot be the only focus. Too often we are so concerned with acquiring a meeting we pay no or too little attention on what it is we want to say once we get there. And herein lies the key to success. If your product offers genuine benefits an appropriate blend of research, exposure and persistence will land you a meeting. If you get into that meeting and fail to hit the right buttons you might have done more harm than good.

So what makes an important meeting a successful one? Here are some hints:

1. Focus on Benefits - all too often we are too excited about our technology and spend a lot of time sharing with prospective clients or partners how we do what we do. They are interested in how they benefit from it, particularly in financial terms. Show how your product makes them money and you will be on the way to a very successful meeting.

2. Know the Company You are Meeting With - make sure you do enough research before entering the meeting to know the company you are meeting with, including their products, their current challenges, their clients and their goals. You can gain a lot of information from company websites and press releases. Make sure the case you are making is consistent with the needs and plans of the company. This makes you highly relevant and very attractive.

3. Sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement - too often we are intimidated by the idea of signing a NDA, particularly with a large company. Our logic tells us that we are the ones sharing a new technology and should be getting protection from them. This may be perfectly true and sound logic. Fact is, though, that you probably won't get the meeting without signing the NDA. Many companies, particularly the large ones, are required by their legal departments to have signed NDAs prior to willfully being exposed to a new technology. Their logic is also sound. They have large and active R&D departments. They don't want to risk losing their own proprietary technologies because they happen to meet with a company that is developing a similar innovation. Fact is, most large companies are not interested in stealing technology. They are able and willing to pay for new discoveries that improve their market position, enhance their products and increase profitability. So sign the NDA. It'll be seen as a gesture of good will on your part - and what better way to start a new relationship?

4. Don't Go Alone - you should always have a colleague with you at meetings so that you can focus on the dynamics of the meeting and your colleague can take notes, pay attention to the other side's body language and try to gauge their reaction. You will be too wrapped up in the meeting to perform these matters on your own.

5. Know What You're Offering - if your meeting raises interest - in other words is successful - the company may ask you what sort of agreement you had in mind. Make sure you have a good answer prepared for this question. Make sure your research has revealed some previous deals this company has done and that what you are asking for is consistent with what they have given in the past. Don't get too creative with your deal structures, it complicates matters, leads to longer decision making timetables, and can even serve to scare off the other side. Make sure you offer is fair and reasonable.

Sure getting the meeting is important. Just make sure you know what you're going to say when you get it.