

## **Seeing Sales through the Dating Lens**

The first time I saw B2B marketing and sales in action was at the bar. I may not have realized it at the time, but yes, my first glimpse into the world of slick games and closed deals was demonstrated right in front of my eyes by a master pickup artist.

Johnny boy was the best pickup artist I'd ever seen. With no wingman, no looks, and nothing to shout about, he slipped up beside me at the bar counter to order a drink.

That was a Thursday evening some twenty years ago and I was a broke college student nursing a broken heart. The bar was relatively empty that night and the few people who were hanging out there in groups of twos or threes didn't look like they wanted anyone butting into their conversations. And that suited me just fine.

It was an extremely subdued night... The nights before Fridays usually were, and that was how broken-hearted people like me preferred it, anyway.

"Bet'cha a twenny that chick over there goes home with me tonight?" Johnny boy whispered suddenly as he took a sip of the negroni he'd just ordered.

He had pointed to a young, blond-haired woman across the bar who looked barely eighteen. She was surrounded by two guys who looked to be hanging onto her every word.

"A fifty," I croaked in my drunkenness. "Bet you a fifty you get punched tonight."

Johnny boy sniggered as he began making his way across the dance floor. I wasn't entirely sure what transpired that night, but before long, Johnny boy was walking by my seat at the bar with said blond-haired girl clinging onto his arms.

"Keep the fifty," he chortled as they swaggered out and disappeared off into the night.

To put it mildly, I was stunned. Here I was, a loser and all, and someone just had to come along to prove me right.

But that was that. If the hook up taught me one thing, it would be that closing a deal was a process that could be learned. It doesn't matter how polished you look or how empty your sales pipeline is. You just have to know how to work it.

### **Find a Good Lead and Close the Deal**

Your number one priority as a sales and marketing person is to get your message out to as many prospects as possible and eventually close a deal. But sometimes, just like the relatively empty bar on a Thursday night, there just aren't enough people to pitch your products to and your sales pipelines dry up.

The problem with focusing too much on just one lead too is that said lead can change his or her mind at the last minute and sign the deal with a competitor.

So what do you do? In your desperation, you start cold calling blindly. But cold calling random prospects often results in few qualified leads. It's no wonder your number of rejections are piling up when you don't have a good game plan.

In order to get yourself high-quality leads, you can't solely rely on how good-looking you are or positive word of mouth since there will always be someone out there who offers a better deal.

And that's why the first thing you need to do is to understand your target audience. People expect to get picked up all the time in bars. That's just how it is. Likewise, CEOs and decision-makers get pitched to all the time by sales and marketing people. There's nothing you can do or say that hasn't already been said and done before.

In order to turn a cold prospect into a hot lead, you need to show the people whom you're pitching to that you're offering them something valuable. Incidentally, your prospects are bored with mindless sales calls. Anything that seems too rehearsed,

too planned, and too boring shows them how little effort you made on your part to understand their needs.

Your prospects don't value your message because there wasn't anything special in the way they met you (via a telephone call). Think about it. Find out what interests these decision-makers you're trying to reach out to. What's their favorite basketball team? Who are the people they network with? Find an edge and work on it before you make that first call.

As for the story of how Johnny boy managed to hook up the hottest girl at the bar that night... When I think about it, the young lady did look like she was needing a fix. Perhaps Johnny boy had slipped up to her and offered her a crack. And that, my friend, was perhaps all he needed to do to seal the deal. He offered her what she desperately wanted.