



## **Is your customer going to pull the Trigger?**

Trigger Event Definition.-Event or occurrence that results in an individual or organization taking action.

Often overlooked, the power of understanding Trigger Events is enormous. As a salesperson, being able to answer the questions:

“What is the trigger event that occurred that launched executive level commitment and action for this project?”

“Why are they taking action?” and finally

“What is the impact if they do nothing?”

Without a Trigger Event there can be no buying process. Each of us has been in situations where a proposal has been requested or a demo has been done—we as the selling organization have launched into our selling process—but without a senior level commitment to resource allocation, both human and financial, there is no true buying process taking place. We have become the entertainment-wind up the rep and watch them spin!

In many cases, the buying influences themselves may not realize that there is no true buying process. They may see what they are doing by early engagement with vendors, as “research”.

So how do we avoid this vendor trap?

Positioning your organization with senior management of the customer organization can help you to identify if there truly has been a Trigger Event or to assist you in creating one.

A VP of Sales from a software client of ours described a situation that he ran in to lately.

One of his reps had been working on an opportunity with a manufacturing company for some time. It seemed as if the company was moderately interested. But, they never took any definitive action to advance the sale. As a result of a conversation between the VP of Sales and the rep, it was decided that they need to decide whether to “continue to fish or cut bait”.

The VP of Sales agreed that one key action they needed to take was to get a meeting with the CEO of the manufacturing organization. They had not previously met her. The purpose of the meeting was to determine, if indeed there was a Trigger Event.

At first the CEO was closed and not willing to share a lot of information. As the meeting progressed, she loosened up a bit and talked more personally about her company and the goals that she wished to achieve. Towards the end of the meeting, the CEO looked at the VP of Sales and said. “You know, my brother died of a heart attack two years ago. He died in his chair at the office. He had no quality of life. Right now, I have no confidence about the information that I am getting from my people. I feel I need to be here twenty-four seven. I need to change how I manage this business. I need my life back or I am going to end up like my brother. I am going to do something about this immediately.”

Until the CEO recognized that she need to change from being hands on and micro managing twenty-four seven, there was no Trigger Event. Once she communicated to her people that mandate, the sale was completed within two months.

Understanding the Trigger Events of senior management in your customer organization gives a professional salesperson unique insight into the minds of the buyers.

Not sure if your rep knows the Trigger Event? Ask them to explain to you what event happened that made the executive team decide to take action on this now. But, be careful, an expiring contract or service agreement is not a Trigger Event unless senior management commits to action. This is the critical coaching point.

Good Luck and Good Selling

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