

Specification Selling

In-house programmes to develop a specification sales approach

The specification sales team is an expensive resource, but used effectively it can create demand, reduce the importance of price and transfer influence away from the supply chain to the manufacturer.

The specifier can be Client, Architect or Engineer. He or she may be employed by a Contractor or be an indirect influencer such as a Quantity Surveyor, Planning or Building Control Officer. Today, it is very rare that a single person will have full control of the decision to purchase, but many have the influence to prevent the selection of a product. It is thus important to fully understand the decision making chain, where the influence is and to ensure that at every stage of what could be a 2 year process specifiers and influencers are happy with your products.

This suite of programmes ensure members of the sales team can operate effectively; understanding the pressures and influences, using these and a range of sales tools to build relationships and close a sale.

Course Leader – Chris Ashworth

Chris has more than 30 years construction industry experience gained in management positions within European multinationals in sales, marketing and communications. His international experience covers the UK, Europe, Middle East, Far East and Australasia. He has managed sales teams selling premium priced building products to specifiers and decision makers.

Running training, consultancy and market research projects for Competitive Advantage since 1999 ensures Chris is constantly expanding his understanding of how products are specified. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and a Chartered Marketer, has been an Associate Lecturer in Marketing at Oxford Brookes University, is a member of the organising committee of the Chartered Institute of Marketing Construction Industry Group (CIMCIG) and a regular contributor to construction industry magazines and seminars.

Delivery

Programmes can be delivered on your premises or at off-site locations. Timing can be one day but 2 days is recommended to allow a more interactive learning experience. If an interactive approach is to be adopted than a maximum of 16 people is recommended. Larger audiences are appropriate where the style is more that of a lecture.

Delegates need to have a basic understanding of the sales process. Although designed for the sales team, marketing and technical staff often find attending beneficial.



Learning Outcomes

- Understand the impact of market influences and their use as a benefit
- Recognise the different contracts used and their impact on decision making
- Appreciate how the residential sector is evolving and its future industry wide impact
- Identify different decision makers and how they influence specification
- Effectively use the different sales tools available
- Develop presentation skills
- Develop telephone skills
- Sell the benefits of CPD seminars generating bookings
- Use personal strategies to manage the process

In house programmes will be developed to meet the specific needs of your company and include role play and exercises, drawing on real life situations wherever possible. We can even simulate the effect of telephone calls to an architects' practice using our market researchers who have extensive experience of how such calls are received.

A series of modules are shown, components of which can be incorporated into your programme. We can also develop new modules to meet your specific requirements.

Market Dynamics

Product selection is based not just on the performance of the product, but a series of external drivers, some of the more obvious are Planning, Building Regulations and Sustainability. Where the influence is and how products are specified is also determined by the type of contract. For example, there are significant differences between Traditional and Design & Build. This module looks at these issues and examines how factors influence the specifier and decision maker.

Market Dynamics

- Market Structure
- Future Developments
- Changing Specifier Influence

Types of Contract

- Traditional
- Design & Build
- Management
- PFI
- Prime

The Housing Developer

- Influencers
- Changing Procurement

The Specification Process

To be able to influence the specification of a product, it is first necessary to understand what a specification is and how it is created. Then the skills are required to relate to specifiers and build relationships. This module explains these processes as well as providing practical advice on specification selling to the different categories of decision maker. It reviews the arsenal of sales tools

available and suggests how these can be used to maximum effect. It also suggests practices to get maximum return from the salesman's limited time.

The Specification Process

- The Specification
- Customer and Market Dynamics
- Decision Makers

Working with Specifiers

- Questioning Skills
- Building Relationships
- Using Features & Benefits

Sales Tools

- Technical Advice and NBS
- Samples
- Literature and web site
- Sales Leads
- Technical Seminars (CPD)

The Contractor and Distributor

- Price v Value
- Using the Relationship
- Monitoring Specifications
- Switching Specifications

Managing the Process

- Customer Strategies
- Risks and Priorities
- Knowing the Relationship
- Project Management

Making CPD Work

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a requirement for most professionals and provides an ideal door opener for the specification salesman. It must be well written, effectively sold into an architects' practice and professionally presented. This programme assumes you already have a CPD seminar, or are about to launch one, and works with the sales team to ensure they get the maximum benefit from this important sales tool. It considers the offering you are making, how to be invited to present to a practice and coaches the final delivery technique.

Using CPD

- Successes & Challenges
- The Benefits of CPD
- Selling your Seminars

Phone calls

- Preparation
- Agenda
- The Gatekeeper
- The Call

Key Presentation Skills

- Confidence
- Speaking Style
- Effective Communication