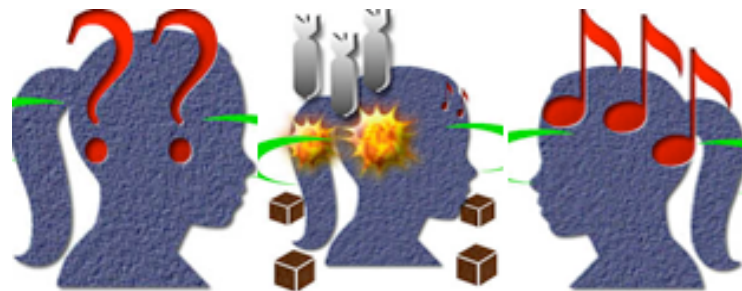


The Perspectives of the Buyer and the Seller

Or why it's not possible and not necessary to fully understand the buyer.

Excerpt from the E-Book "Stop Selling! Accelerate Your Business in Asia"

By Charlie Lang, Managing Partner @ Progress-U Limited



One of the premises of the Consultative Selling approach is that the seller should try her/his best to fully understand the buyer's situation and needs in order to offer the right solution for the buyer.

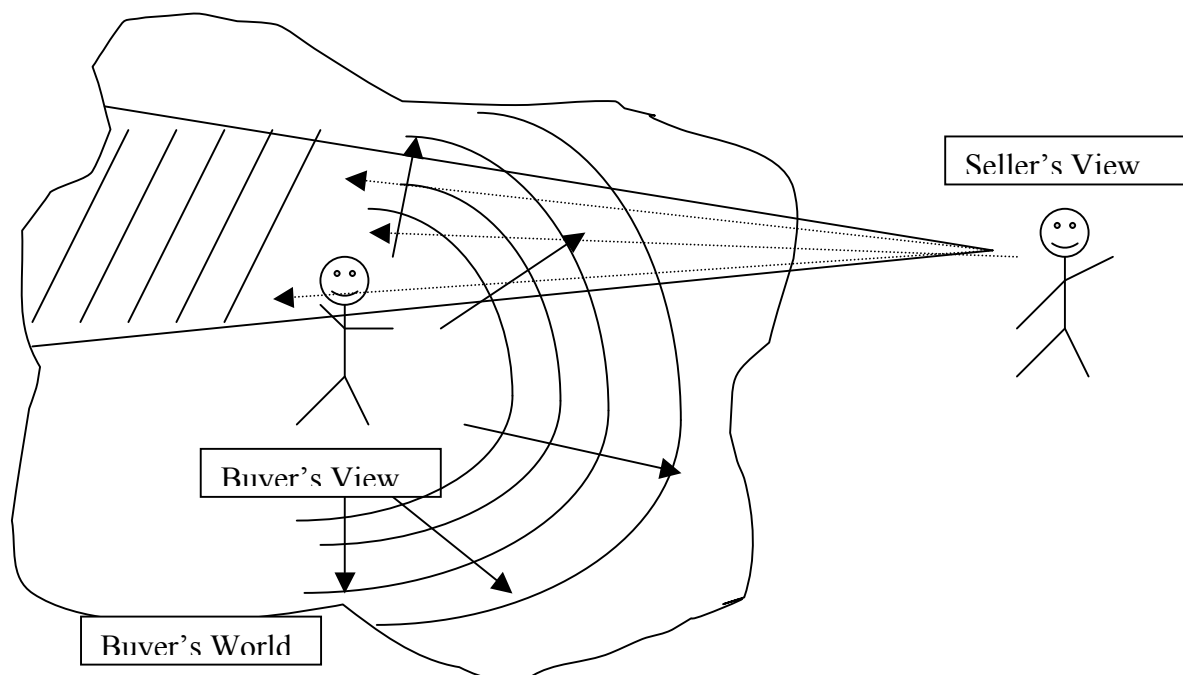
What seems to make sense from a seller's point of view turns out to be actually impossible if we have a thorough look from the buyer's perspective. The problem is that every buyer lives in her/his own complex world which he himself often enough find difficult to understand. Moreover, this world is changing every day, so there is no way for any seller to ever be able to fully understand the buyer's situation.

Luckily, a full understanding of the buyer's situation and needs is not necessary to get more business faster. Of course, the seller will need to develop a good understanding of the buyer's problem so that the seller and buyer can jointly develop a meaningful solution. However, the buyer will need to understand more to make a buying decision than just that. In every buying decision there is a set of other criteria that the buyer must consider. These are factors which are not directly related to the product, such as:

- Who else will need to agree to the new solution?
- How will the new solution disrupt the status quo?
- What other contingencies must be considered?
- Etc.

No matter how experienced the seller or how well the seller knows the buyer, at the end of the day it is the buyer who needs to know and manage these factors adequately.

Though the seller doesn't need to know everything the buyer needs to know in order to make a decision, the seller can add value in a different way. This is by offering his unique outside perspective to guide the buyer through his/her decision-making process. Although the seller gets to see only a small fragment of the buyer's world, s/he might see parts that the buyer can't see because of the different perspective. The following sketch illustrates this:



There is a potential area inside the buyer's world which can be seen by the seller but not the buyer. For example, let's assume the buyer is Tom, the IT manager of a bank who is considering to buy an automatic cheque processing system. Based on his experience and the input he received from operations, he and his team developed a detailed specification for vendors of such systems.

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Linda, one of the potential sellers, sees that the specification doesn't include a complete interface to the bank's existing account management system. Consequently, some manual interaction would be necessary before any cheque could be credited to the client. Obviously, something Tom overlooked in his own world. Since Linda has considerable experience in this kind of systems, she could see what Tom did not see and thus add value to the buyer.

Interestingly, the seller may even be able to help the buyer in the decision-making process around criteria that both can't see yet by acting as a coach to the buyer. You will read more about how this works in Chapter 6 of this e-book. Before we get there, I will introduce to you the key tool used by practitioners of the Stop Selling! approach: Coaching the buyer!

Chapter 4: Key Learning Points

It is impossible to fully understand the complex world of the buyer as even the buyer himself has difficulties getting a good understanding of it.

There is a set of criteria that the buyer must discover and consider before being able to make a decision.

The seller has a unique perspective which he can use to guide the buyer in the buying decision.

To buy the complete e-book (only 19USD), visit <http://www.progressu.com> and



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Charlie Lang is the founder Progress-U Limited, established in 2002. His mission is to assist his clients in becoming excellent leaders for the benefit of all stakeholders. He is a passionate executive coach and mentor, public speaker and trainer, and author of books and over 100 articles related to leadership, change management and innovative sales.

His book "The Groupness Factor" (see <http://www.progressu.com.hk/Groupness-book.htm>), published in August 2005, talks about corporate success culture through first class leadership. Charlie's articles appeared in Human Resources, FZ Magazine, Banking Today, SCMP, Effective Executive, A Plus, and Career Times.