

Psychology of Selling - at its most direct

Finding people shopping for a new energy-supplier is a slightly different challenge that can require finding the right locations from which to interrupt the mental mission effectively enough to gain sign up to a contract live.

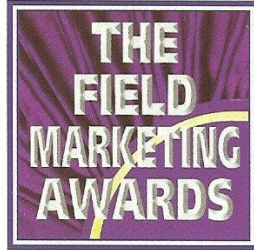
Since this year's FMBE awards, we have had more feedback about Service Innovation's work for EDF Energy than for any other. This must be because Service Innovation met their sales targets for the brand, beat the performance of other agencies on the roster and still returned more than half a million in campaign budget back to the client unspent (the saved £538,231 against budget).

Naturally the question on everyone's lips is 'how did they do that?', especially in such a competitive sector where margins for agencies are known to be squeezed.

Well, it can't have been for cutting corners. SIG used call centre activity to verify the decision to change contract to EDF with the registered householder empowered to make the change. The saving would also hardly be likely to be achieved by recruiting cheaply. SIG had

to deliver skilled face to face operators for the task and are selecting staff from the same resource pool and job market cost as other agencies that are facing this task.

The secret of this success then is in the software that co-ordinates the team, processes payment and selects the best value venues for reaching the required numbers of people.



EDF wanted more than 40,000 sign ups per agency and so the scale of the operation had to be high. And the right computing system, in

this case an Internet system called Boost, had a big scale activity from which to leverage benefits. As a consequence SIG reduced the cost per contract from £120 to £88.

The ethos behind Boost is:

- to allow all users the ability to manage their area of business with 'just in time' information
- to allow the decision making process to be made daily rather than weekly or even monthly

An example of this is the venue booking process. Boost enables an Area Sales Manager (ASM) to 'request' a venue of operation within his region. This

application is fully costed down to the last pound and submitted to a venue team. The application will reveal costs of the venue including basic pay, commissions, expenses (travel and accommodation) and calculate a true spend.

The ASM will also enter into the application the actual number of sales, by product type, that he/she envisages their sales advisors will sell at that venue. A simple calculation shows results in terms of spend and profit for the company. If the result is that the venue is not viable then the request will be denied (represented by a simple 'barometer of profit' on the left of the screen). If the venue is in profit the request will get processed for a line manager to sign off. This work is all conducted electronically via the web and so is independent of the location of the ASM.

On a daily basis Boost will provide the ASM with:-

- the ability to assess how each of their venues are performing against the target number of customers required to hit profitability
- reporting information that allows the ASM to manage on a just in time basis and by exception, targeting time and resource effectively.



Too many times in direct sales does this process get completed at the end of the operational week, or even at the end of the month, when costs have been lost and unrecoverable. Boost has revolutionised the way SIG control costs for our client, whilst at the same time providing the Field Controller and ASM's with a tool to manage their operation tightly on a daily basis, in terms of costs, compliance and sales performance.

A full list of award winners for 2006 is available on www.marketingchannel.co.uk. There is also an electronic version of the recently published award winner's publications offering insight into the methods for brand success deployed by all of the winners and finalists. This can be found in the download centre on the website.

Photographs of the awards event are also available free of charge and can be mail-ordered. Follow the link on the right hand side of the home page.



direct sales success: service innovation group