

# DON'T BLAME THE FISH



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This white paper addresses the importance of having a compelling Value Statement when presenting your products or services and further considers the significance of Value Statement delivery.

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## **DON'T BLAME THE FISH**

### The Importance Of Value Statements

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**W**hen I was a young boy, I lived near a river in a small town outside of Chicago. The river was an exciting place to go to for any kid because there were turtles, bridges to cross and of course fish to catch. I used to love to go fishing in that river because it was exciting to me to see if I could catch a fish and then proudly take it home to show my Mom! I didn't always bring home a fish though; sometimes the fish just weren't biting. No matter what I did they just wouldn't bite. I would change bait, change spots, wiggle the pole, hide behind a bush *in case they could see me* or whatever....still no bites. It was frustrating because I was convinced I was good at fishing. After a long day and with my 'stringer' empty, I remember reeling in my line while saying..."stupid fish!"

Now, here I am in a high level selling career and yes I'm still fishing, but of course a little differently. Today I fish for new clients that I can share my passion with. I'm supporting organizations that are interested in building top line revenue! Often times I end up on calls where I have a set telephone appointment so I can present our proposition and by the end of the call the client may say "NO." It's a reminder again that the fish don't always bite. Again, it's frustrating because I think I'm great at selling and have an amazing revenue driving solution.

The other day I was on a call with a new prospect, I asked questions and listened, the prospect asked questions and listened. I believed the call was going pretty well since I thought I delivered my proposition with clarity and professionalism, then the client said NO! At first I thought....NO! Are you kidding!?! I couldn't believe it; I did a great job and the prospect still says NO! What's wrong with this guy? Then it hit me. As much as I wanted to blame the client for "*not getting it*", I remembered my fishing experience. If the prospects aren't 'biting' I get to look at *my offer* rather than hang up and blame the client.

If you're in sales and you prospect regularly, here are a few thoughts that may help you take responsibility for the results you're generating from your *value statement* or *strategy*. Rather than blame the prospect (the fish so to speak) you get to look at your value proposition and how it was delivered. Here are a few considerations that may sharpen your selling skills and ultimately your results:

**#1: RETHINK YOUR VALUE STATEMENT:** Like me, you probably feel your value statement is excellent. Most salespeople do. I have no doubt that you spent time developing it, your training department may have directed you and ultimately your sales manager weighed in on what you should say. So when you deliver it on one of your prospecting calls it should go over pretty big, Right? Remember this; it's the fish you're trying to create interest with, not someone in your company. Just because YOU believe your value statement is compelling, doesn't mean the prospect does.

**#2: FISH BITE ON WHAT THEY ARE INTERESTED IN – NOT WHAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN:** So it's simple, all you have to do is figure out what the prospect is interested in, determine if your organization offers a solution that aligns with the client's interest and there you have it! In order to understand what CEO's are interested in you simply have to look for clues and those clues are on every firm's website. The formula for finding the clues for large enterprise accounts is **R+CI+C+D=VS**. Research + Corporate Initiative + Connectors + Differentiator = Value Statement. Take a look on the website of a company under "about us", then look at "leadership team", then click on President/CEO and then search for "Annual Report" or "letter from the President." This will lead you to the firm's *Corporate Initiative*. Tip: The Presidents *Corporate*

*Initiative* is not the same as the organization's *Mission Statement*. They are significantly different. The Corporate Initiative is what the President is focused on NOW. It may be to increase revenue in a vertical industry or enter the market with an entirely new product. Either way, once you discover the *Corporate Initiative* you can then determine if your firm has a *differentiator* that can support your prospect to achieve their objectives.

**#3: SMALLER FIRMS:** To discover what smaller firms are interested in (B2B) you have to understand fundamental B2B pain. Their situation may be quite different than that of the enterprise account. You may not find their corporate initiative on their website; instead you can look for "indicators" of *corporate initiative* or *vision*. As a common denominator, you can make a fair assumption that most small firms are focused on 'cash flow'. It's a common pain point. As a result, you can determine what your firm offers that will help your prospect generate revenue. The formula for small firms is **CP + I + C + D = VS**. Client Pain + Indicators + Connectors + Differentiator = VS. (Note: *Connectors* are simply anything that you discover about the President or company that you have in common. Then they become talking points sprinkled in when dialoging. Indicators may be considered the 'light' version of a Corporate Initiative.)

**#4 DELIVERY:** Mechanics is one thing, but how you *deliver* your message is another. Remember when I said I was fishing and sometimes I had to 'wiggle the pole' to entice the fish? It wasn't just the bait I had on the line, it was the presentation of the bait and the same holds true when delivering your message to your prospect. Prospects may respond to your proposition with a resounding NO because your offer wasn't interesting or the way you delivered your offer didn't resonate. (Remember, it's not about the prospect)

**#5 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY:** It's not always easy, but if you can learn to accept 100% responsibility for generating a NO on your prospecting calls then you will have an excellent base from which to be introspective. By accepting responsibility (not blame) for the NO's you get, you'll be able to move from *frustration* to *creation*. Every new prospecting call that didn't go the way you wanted it to will provide you with the opportunity to re-tool your offer. You move from *blame* to *gain*.

#### Authors note

This article is not intended to denigrate selling by referring to prospects as 'fish' or a salesperson's value statement as 'bait.' I respect selling and simply wanted to share an analogy.

**To learn more** About Value Statement Construction & Delivery

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