

Theories of buying and selling

Science



Jan Bronowski is a salesperson for Packard Bell (a computer company www.packardbell.com) and works exclusively in PC world (www.pcworld.com) a retail company selling personal computers, printers, software and ancillary computer-related equipment. Working on a one-to-one basis, the job involves demonstrating the functions of hardware and software packages, answering any questions the prospect may have and solving problems by matching the appropriate products to the customer's needs. At the point of purchase, the prospect is 'handed over' to someone else who deals with payment, credit arrangements and invoicing.

After six months, Jan has been relatively successful. He has worked hard and believes that his confidence, the ability to strike up rapport with prospects and his ability to 'read a prospect' have contributed to his success. The company have decided to promote him to their direct business division, selling to local firms. As part of his new job, Jan has contacted by telephone the office manager of a local company which produces chemicals and employs 60 people, 12 of those in office and administrative positions. He is excited at the prospect of making his first sale.

The office manager was interested in his products and has asked Jan to call and see him the following week. Prior to his visit, Jan has been asked to post the relevant details of his products to the office manager. He has also been requested to bring some of the equipment to demonstrate to the office staff who would eventually use any such equipment. Thinking about his forthcoming visit, Jan is apprehensive; his background in retail has been with relatively inexperienced customers, and he is unsure of his ability to explain the product in these new surroundings to a more technical audience.

He is also worried about demonstrating the product to the office staff since one of the advantages which will become apparent at any such demonstration is the potential staff savings of the equipment. Meanwhile, back at the chemicals company, the office manager is trying to convince his managing director of the wisdom of his decision because of the capital outlay required. The purchasing manager is upset because he has not been consulted about the proposed purchase and rings Jan directly to complain of his annoyance at being bypassed, telling Jan that he is determined to block the purchase on principle.