

Even when you are new to a market, investing in good sales processes can bring desired results.

These days, it's not just cost control which is a boardroom issue. Most organisations in the private and public sectors are under increasing pressure to improve their "green" credentials and reduce their carbon footprint. Enter Sabien, manufacturer of intelligent control systems which reduce gas, oil and electricity consumption and carbon emissions in commercial boilers and air conditioning systems by up to 25%. Sabien build, test and install the systems in the UK, the USA and soon mainland Europe. The intelligent "retrofitted" products optimise the efficiency of existing boilers and air conditioning units reducing gas and electricity consumption.

"We opened for business in 2004, so we are still a relatively young company", says Geoff Newman, Sabien's Marketing Director. "It has been a challenge to build business even with "green" products which generate real cost savings. [The problem was to identify the right decision makers, communicate the right messages, get them to agree to meet us and then sell to them. No two buying teams are the same and so the sales process had to be well thought through.](#)

Even then, decisions by the customer, to run a pilot or to place an order took a long time. We needed to find ways to communicate effectively with the right decision makers, sometimes to help them through their own procurement process. We needed to shorten our sales cycle, especially in what had become a challenging business climate."

[Newman and Operations Director - David Bakst introduced Conceptual Selling™ to provide a framework for planning and discussing sales calls even before the phone was lifted.](#)

"Originally, we used simple KPI's around making X number of calls to get Y number of visits and then hope our hard graft was rewarded with a sale," says, Newman, "but we really needed a more structured approach. We had heard of Miller Heiman and David had been on a programme before in a previous role." The whole sales team, and everyone in the office has become familiar

with the Conceptual Selling Green Sheets. As the weeks passed the Sabien sales team have developed their own Valid Business Reasons and Core Messages for each and every Buying Influence involved in the purchasing decision. "This gave us a way to understand what each of them wanted to accomplish and what problems they needed to fix or avoid," says Newman.

"We soon learned what questions to ask to get doors open and move the buying process in the right direction. Now everyone knows the importance of creating a really good Green Sheet before critical sales calls and to obtain an action commitment from the customer. We are not making the quantity of calls we used to because the quality has definitely improved"

What results have been achieved? Conceptual Selling has been in place for about 12 months and helped the team to properly identify key buying influences and develop better quality sales calls. "Just as our new sales process started to show promise, the banking crisis triggered the global recession. This slowed us down but we stuck to our new process and gradually built our sales call strategy. [Even in tough business conditions, Sabien's average order size has risen and interest from prospective customers is higher than it has ever been. Our sales funnel is filling with orders,](#)".

Even better news is that Sabien's products have passed a rigorous technical assessment in the USA, a main distributor has now been appointed and a huge increase in orders is anticipated. Sabien is now looking to Europe for future expansion. Not surprisingly, the executives dealing with distributors have also attended Miller Heiman's Channel Partner Management™ programme in order to build strong channel strategies. Newman comments, "To achieve fast growth in new markets, it is essential that we select the right distribution partners and build strong relationships with them."

"Channel Partner Management™ and Conceptual Selling™ when combined together are a potent combination, helping us to build strategies that benefit our customers, our channel partners and ourselves."