



## ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF EVENT

### DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

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We live in a world where it is more and more difficult to know who really is the decision maker, influencer or frankly the person who sells your solution to the end client because it could be neither of the others.

There is still the belief that one has to engage with the boss/owner or someone with an impressive title who is “Le Grand Fromage” as the English would say.

So don't let titles, age or even in some cases, gender, get in the way.

Getting appointments is hard enough and harder still in some markets. Take the UK. Years ago when Manuel flew into the country on a sales week, then that was reason enough for securing the appointment. Now that has changed. Quite often it is down simply to Lady Luck. You happen to be in the right place at the right time when someone has a need for a Manuel.

Having got the appointment, treat every attendee as today's buyer, or certainly tomorrow's. In Brazil there is a very mobile work force and you may present to Eugenia today only to find out she has popped up at another agency tomorrow. However the work has been started as she knows you and hopefully she has taken that memory with her.

Always thinking the more senior the person the more likely they will buy from you is, again, a myth. I always want to talk to the people at the “coal face” as they know best what the day to day realities are. The mine owner may know better market conditions but in most cases they don't write the proposals or present the detailed solutions (Small SME's may well buck this trend).

I came across a recent example of a supplier being terse with what they perceived to be a “junior” because the business cards did not have corresponding titles (“don't you know who I am” scenario). However, this particular “junior” was in fact the one who issued briefs which is what all of us seek.

I have also seen situations where knowing the top person can be counterproductive. I came across one large agency where the relationships with some suppliers were so strong at the top that the suppliers started to become arrogant with expectation of the business. Not engaging with all within the company can leave you isolated with the team using other suppliers who value them, each equally, irrespective of title or job function. Is this business, “people buy people” and not the job title or position?

One of the fascinations about our industry is culture and business etiquette and I have always remembered the former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl who said, “You can buy from me in any language you like but you only ever sell to me in German”; wise words indeed. Certainly something you need to apply in a number of markets.

So don't judge a book by its cover without researching the author. Consider all contacts as potential buyers until you have met them and then you can decide whether the book cover and the contents stay in the library of best sellers (customers who deliver profitable business)