

Inside

BUSINESS

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The Canterbury Sales®

The dual nature of the business developer

By Andy Gole

The famous toast to the American Revolution – “Liberty to those who have spirit to assert it” – reminds me of the unique case of the business developer – how he is distinguished from both the entrepreneur and the employee, embracing elements of both.

The business developer has a dual nature, which leads to unique challenges in both sales management and the structure of the sales department.

The Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur has the “spirit to assert liberty” and takes full responsibility for:

- Designing and maintaining the entire business system, including the product/service, the control systems, advisors such as accountants and lawyers, etc.
- The results, which most importantly include payment of all bills.

The entrepreneur is on a fully loaded do-or-die basis, encompassing all elements of the business. The buck stops here.

Consider the business developer, by

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contrast. He or she is not responsible for designing and fulfilling the product/service and rather takes these and all the control systems as a given.

However, the business developer is on a do-or-die basis, as well. She must bring in enough business to pay for herself. She creates business and is essential to the success and future of the business.

In this regard, the business developer has the “spirit to assert liberty,” as well.

The Employee

The entrepreneur (or manager) designs and administers the company’s systems, then hires employees to “do the job.” In general, a condition for employment with a company entails following company policies and procedures. This includes being a team player and doing the paperwork, properly documenting transactions.

Most salespeople abhor paperwork. They say, “Do you want me to go out and sell or fill out forms?”

The owner’s answer is: both.

And herein lays the rub – the challenge of the dual nature of business developers.

They have “the spirit to assert liberty,” given a business set up by the entrepreneur. They work on a do-or-die basis. However, often they don’t want to do the part of the job associated with being an employee – being a team player and complying with systems, including paperwork.

There is nothing to stop the business developer from going out and starting his or her own business. If they remain an employee, however, they should

recognize the:

- The positives – someone else conceives of and runs the business
- The negatives – being compliant to the system

What to do about it?

The dual nature of business developers is a universal problem, afflicting many, if not most, companies. What should entrepreneurs and managers do about this challenge?

First, there needs to be a clear upfront conversation – during the hiring process – about this dual nature. Expectations need to be set and there need to be consequences for non-compliance.

Next, management should evaluate whether some of a business developer’s administrative work can be reasonably delegated. In one case where I trained a team of business developers, the highest performer was able to more than double his sales. Viewing him as a business unto himself, from a systems perspective with the setup that was in place, he couldn’t double his scale. When we gave him an administrative person to allow him to focus on opening and closing, he could.

The dual nature of business developers permits a win/win outcome if we acknowledge it, discuss it, then establish and stick to reasonable policies.



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Andy Gole has taught selling skills for 17 years. He started three businesses and has made approximately 4,000 sales calls, selling both B2B and B2C. He invented a selling process, Urgency Based Selling®, with which he can typically help companies double their closing or conversion ratio. Learn more about Andy’s method at www.bombadillc.com or by calling him at 201.415.3447.