



Paul Taylor

# Sales Life

from **SolutionsforSales**

Our regular feature 'Sales Life' invites senior salespeople to give their views on key sales issues.

This quarter we talk to Paul Taylor, General Manager for Borland Software, The Open Application Lifecycle Management company.

#### **What is your job title and what do you do?**

General Manager, EMEA, Borland Software. I provide the leadership necessary for the EMEA organisation to meet its revenue and profit targets.

#### **How long have you been in your present role?**

Since April 2006.

#### **What is the top sales challenge you and your team are currently facing?**

Our number one sales challenge has to be identifying the target market in which Borland can best succeed. Then it is to understand what's in it for the individual as well as the organisation when we are selling. What is the compelling event that motivates our prospective client to sign-off on the purchase? Saying customers buy just because they save money/make money or increase productivity is clichéd and not credible. In personal terms, my challenge is establishing belief and passion in people. This unlocks the investment made in them and helps to make them successful.

#### **What is the best piece of sales advice you've ever been given?**

A Sales Manager at Xerox said, 'Always make that last call as it will be the one that matters, don't put it off.'

#### **Describe a memorable deal**

While selling Tandem Computers' Intelligent Network to Mercury Communications I arranged for the World Wide VP of Sales to fly in and meet with Mercury's CIO. Unfortunately the CIO told us we were not going to win, although he did tell us where to look for the next opportunity. As a result we won the deal for Mercury's 0800 freephone service in partnership with GPT. Our communications with Mercury throughout the first deal

proved we were credible and trustworthy and led us onto the second deal, which was in fact worth more. The moral of the story; behave honourably, stick at it and the rewards will come.

#### **Who in your industry do you most admire?**

I most admire Lou Gerstner because he challenged the perceived and accepted wisdoms within IBM. This meant that IBM could rebuild client trust. Customers matter so we must listen to them.

#### **What is the best time of day for a meeting?**

Early in the day as people feel ready to deal with challenges, are better able to take in what you are saying and more willing to make decisions. Later in the day if you want to spend your time building a rapport with senior executives, I have found them to be more relaxed and open as the day goes on.

#### **Where do you get your best ideas?**

I think the best ideas come by allowing smart people to talk openly and honestly, and by being confident enough to take on any unexpected consequences.

#### **Which do you think is most important when winning new business; technical expertise or sales skills?**

Sales skills, always. Sales is an artform that is in short supply. There are always smart technical people, but we need the salespeople to create the environment in which it is possible to show the prospective customer how they can benefit.

*Since this interview took place Paul Taylor has left Borland Software and taken on a new role as Sales VP EMEA for AspenTech, a leading provider of software and services to the process industries.*