
SOCIALLY INTELLIGENT SELLING

**THE GROUND-BREAKING WAY TO
CLOSE LESS AND WIN MORE**

JAMIE SUMMERS

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I dedicate this book to my husband.

Your inspiration runs through every page.

Life has no meaning without you.

INTRODUCTION

At the centre of every sales team you'll find one or two consistent top performers. The ones who stand out from the crowd. The ones who are admired by peers from afar. The ones who are used to people saying they're naturally good at selling. The special ones.

You'll probably have worked with people like this or know some of them in your network. They're one of a kind.

Salespeople like this are highly valued in business because:

- They consistently bring in repeat business
- They have the highest referral rate in the team
- They have the highest conversion rates in the team
- They are perfect for cultivating new sales performers
- They just "get it"

People like this stand out from the crowd for other reasons too. It isn't a coincidence that they're naturally

inquisitive about other people, that they're remembered for being charismatic, that they ask great questions (and wait to hear the answers) and that they seem to be much more interesting than most people.

These people are **socially intelligent**. So, what is social intelligence?

It's a person's ability to effectively navigate and negotiate social relationships and environments.

It's this ability to interact in social situations that makes us who we are. According to psychologist Nicholas Humphrey, writing in the *Journal of American Science* in 2015, it is someone's social intelligence rather than their quantitative intelligence (their IQ) that makes them human.

But social intelligence is much more than an ability to hold down a simple conversation. In his 2006 book, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*, Daniel Goleman asserts that social intelligence is made up of two things: social awareness (which includes empathy and receptiveness) and social facility (which includes connection and influence).

When social intelligent people work in sales, it's a recipe for huge success.

Gone are the days when people accepted pushy salespeople. We don't stand for that any more. Times have changed and we have changed. We've become more aware of how we feel when we interact with others. We have entered an era where we're much more likely to part with our money if someone has made us feel good. The product is almost secondary.

A saying by the wonderful author Maya Angelou forms the basis of this book:

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Each of the training modules in this book is designed to ensure that you become aware of how you are making people feel. After all, that's what you'll be remembered by.

This brings me to my story.

When I was twenty-four I applied for my first sales job as an estate agent in Manchester, England. I told them straight that I was no good at sales, but if they wanted me as a receptionist then I would be perfect. To my surprise the owner offered me a sales job there and then. Fast forward a couple of years and I was

headhunted to open the most prestigious estate agent that Manchester was yet to see. From that, I worked in increasingly high-profile sales roles until the ultimate job came along – teaching people how to sell at Apple Retail in London.

After spending my time working for other people I decided to capture my methodology and start sharing it with others through training. In 2013 my husband and I set up The Skills Farm, where we teach men, women and teams across the country how to be the ultimate salesperson.

The great thing about my methodology is that it's so simple. It's about learning how to be human again, how to be interested in one another, how to ask powerful questions and how to show respect by actively listening to what the other person has to say. In this book you will learn how to strip back old habits and rediscover the true salesperson in you.

You may need to read this book more than once to squeeze every last drop of value out of it. Because when you put into practice what I am teaching you, you will be astounded by the increase in your ability to sell.

The easiest way to know if you're getting it right is to examine how you feel. If it feels like you're not selling, you've cracked it.

Being able to tune into your social intelligence is the key to being an outstanding salesperson. Let me show you how...

CHAPTER 1

CASE STUDY – FUSIONTECH

Located under railway arches in a trend-setting area of South London, FusionTech has a small sales force, complete with an onsite repair shop. It specialises in retailing well-known brands of computers and sells GoPros and drones, the latest gadgets and computer accessories. They are the go-to place for the latest tech goodies. FusionTech not only survived the recession but also expanded by opening two more units. But in the last year the sales figures have been disappointing, and this is threatening the company's ambitions to open premises in Manchester. The CEO, Andrew, needs growth to fund the expansion plan but the numbers are simply not adding up. Every new and costly sales campaign the outgoing sales director, Simon, implemented proved successful for a while – but these only got FusionTech to a certain level of success. By mutual agreement, Simon was allowed to

go and Adrienne was headhunted from a mobile phone company, where her sales results were outstanding.

It's been exactly two weeks since Adrienne was recruited to replace Simon at FusionTech, which opened for business in 2007. It's Monday morning and Andrew has arranged a 9am meeting with Adrienne to hear her plans to increase sales. Andrew has arrived ready to talk business. At times, he can be abrupt and terse, and he tends to dominate meetings. He responds best to facts and figures, and today it's all about the figures. He hasn't had much contact with Adrienne since she started. She's been settling into her new role and finding out what's gone wrong in the sales division. As he hands her a coffee, he looks her in the eye and says:

“FusionTech's come a long way since 2007. None of us knew what was about to happen when the market crashed. Nobody saw it coming. But I wasn't going to let that stop me. Quite the opposite, in fact. It made me more determined. As soon as I opened those doors, I began building it from nothing to where it is now, with a £6m annual turnover.”

Adrienne nods. “I know. I've read articles about you in the trades. How FusionTech bucked the trend, despite

all the odds; how it went from strength to strength.” She flatters.

Andrew leans back in his chair. It’s obvious he’s proud of what he’s achieved.

“That was down to me. Every quarter I set the targets for growth and every quarter we hit them. And each month our customer database grew. In year three we opened King’s Cross and in year five, Shoreditch, bang on plan. But ever since then, that lot out there can’t seem to sell. All I see is our competition going great guns and us stuck in the mud. So I’m assuming you’re going to tell me what you’re going to do about it. What’s your plan?”

Adrienne has worked with several CEOs like Andrew, who are traditionally task-driven and focused on the numbers. Each CEO has proved to be a challenge, but Adrienne has a different set of leadership skills, which often bring her into conflict with the board. She is much more people-focused in her approach – she makes a point of asking questions and listening before she acts. CEOs like Andrew, in her experience, don’t operate that way. The pressure they’ve experienced in their roles has hardened them and they’ve lost touch with their people

skills. She opens up the company brochure she has brought with her.

“It says here that the company’s vision is to be the most trusted IT and gadget retailer in the UK.”

“Correct.”

“But we only have fifty-five staff. Which isn’t a lot if we want to cover the whole of the UK.”

“Which is precisely why we need to expand – but we can’t do that unless we get the sales figures up.”

Andrew’s tone is tetchy, which is what Adrienne expects. She presses him.

“Why Manchester in particular?”

“We considered Birmingham but it’s already too competitive there. Manchester business rates are lower and we can still distribute product there easily enough. If that’s where the northern powerhouse is going to be, I want us to be there too, right from the start. It’s an opportunity, which is why you need to sort out our sales problem.”

“When I started here, you told me we need to increase sales based on a five per cent margin if the business is going to expand.”

“Correct.”

“But that’s not going to happen until we address the underlying issues that have created a barrier to increasing sales.”

“What underlying issues?”

“We need to understand what’s changed, Andrew – why they’re not hitting their targets. It’s pretty much the same group of guys doing the same job as they were two years ago, but they’re just not achieving these new targets. We *know* they can sell, up to a limit: the figures speak for themselves, as you said. In all honesty, the sales figures aren’t that bad —”

“They’re still not good enough.”

“Because we’ve reached as far as we can go, that’s why. We’ve hit that glass ceiling.”

“Oh, that old chestnut. How do you think we can smash through this glass ceiling of yours?”