

Introduction

Hi,

Ethan here.

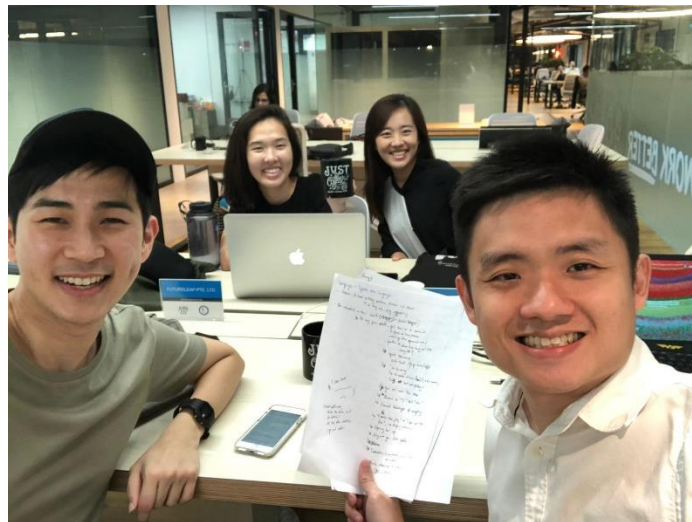
I've always believed that the best kind of insights about your industry are found OUTSIDE it.

Which is why I like to meet different people to hear about their insights.

As I serve salespeople and managers, one of the challenges they face is to serve the affluent clientele.

Because most do not interact much with this market, they are unsure about how to approach them. Also, there are tremendous misconceptions about them too.

So I asked Reinald to sit down and tell me how he does his business.



Reinald has over 10 years' experience in the luxury market, working in Prada, YSL and Dior. He has served high profile clients from celebrities, CEOs, MDs of known brands, ministers and more.

He's even witnessed the stories of the real Crazy Rich Asians (live fireworks in Sentosa for a gender reveal party, anyone?)

I believe Reinald has a lot to share that might be valuable for you – especially if you are client-facing, or wish to move your business upmarket.

The 6 Things I Learned from Reinald

To begin, I asked him to share with me tips about how he engages his clients, and he prepared a highly comprehensive response for me.

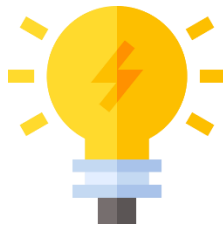
1. Language: - Speaking their language



- a. Choice of Tone: There are two types of affluent – one who is steady professional, nice, rarely scream or shout. And the other type, which is aggressive and can be difficult to deal with. Use the appropriate tone for each.
- b. Be interested in their world.
- c. How to? Reinald gets his staff to do homework on their clients – for e.g. if they know the client likes spirits and wines, he ensures his staff reads up a little about it. They don't have to be an expert, just know the gist about it.
- d. Learn about their profile – what they like and what they don't like.
- e. Sparking that interest – Engaging them is about 'lighting that fire'. You want to get them into a mood to buy. To do that, you need to spark that fire by talking about their interests. Once that fire dies off, you have to go another big round to get it back.
- f. *(At this point I asked him to give me a demonstration about how to spark their interest. Unfortunately, I can't show you via PDF. You can come for the live sharing if you want to experience it.)*
- g. You are not the star. Don't make it about yourself. Negative example: "You've been to Austria? How was it? Ohh... I have been there myself too" -> Do NOT do this. You've ended the conversation by 1) making yourself Equal to your client 2) Changing the focus back to yourself.
- h. Remove the "I" and "me" from your comments and conversations. *(Asked Reinald again to show me how: How to add value or give comments without saying "I"? "For example, don't say 'I think Peru is very far.' Instead say... 'wow.. very far.')*
- i. Have a general knowledge of everything – politics, economics. Just a little or everything so there's something to talk about.
- j. "Catch their joy" -> "Light up that fire" once you see it. Reply instantly, and open them up slowly. It's like peeling onions.

- k. Whatever you learn from their sharing should be added to your client profile (*this is how you build rapport and fact-find!*)
- l. Build connection – like a good friend or lover, constantly want to know more about each other. Don't just go in for the sale.
- m. The regulars bring in 80% of our revenue. Therefore, build relationships to last.

2. Energy



- a. This is difficult to teach, better shown.
- b. First technique is to mirror and harmonize.
 - i. If their natural energy is low, match them. These are the no-fuss clients that don't want you to be gimmick or try to be too friendly with them.
 - ii. Fluctuate your energy level around the clients'. For example if the client is showing about 65/100 energy, vary yours around 60 to 70.
 - iii. If you keep the energy the same with them, it's gonna be monotonous, and the client will soon want to leave.
 - iv. If the client is high energy, say 80/100, then you have to match them and go even higher at 90 /100.
 - v. These types of clients like a party – so usually the whole store would 'celebrate' their entrance. (Hi Mrs Ho! Wow! It's so great to see you again!")
- c. Second technique is to contrast:
 - i. If they are usually high energy but their energy is down at 5PM, probably after a day of appointments, then contrast.
 - ii. If they are doing 30/100 energy level and it's dropping, impute energy to them. Go at 70 to perk them up a bit.

3. Dialogue



- a. Ask open ended questions.
- b. Continue on non-stop, until you want to stop. This is dependent on client's time with you. For example, if you know the client needs to leave to fetch their kid at 7PM, make sure you start closing the deal at 6:30PM.
- c. Use "How". The other 5Ws are a little overrated.
- d. Sense the openness of the client toward engaging with you.
 - i. Observe their openness – if they are busy on the phone and looking like they're clearing their work, don't intrude in that space because you want to engage them. Ask them questions like "Mr, I'll get you your usual champagne?" to show your consideration toward them. When they finally put down their phone, it means you have done well and they are ready to give you time and attention.
 - ii. Respect their space. Ditto as above. Don't intrude if they are not ready to give you their attention.
 - iii. Find the Rhythm of Conversation. (*Asked Reinald again to show*)
 - iv. This process happens throughout the whole appointment.
- e. When you are ready to move to the sale, it's time to 'rein' the client in with leading questions, or close ended questions.
- f. So we do open ended first, then closed ended when we want to 'bring in' the client to the intended goal.
- g. The leading questions should lead them to want to buy something. (*Reinald says he will share in a separate session with me.*)
- h. There's a certain format, structure or flow.

- i. At times, we have to manage the client's energy, then we employ close ended questions. If they spend all their energy on open ended questions – they will probably be too tired to want to buy or engage with you regarding the sale.

4. Trafalgar (or Surprise and Delight)



- a. What are the bonuses you can offer them?
- b. Don't make the appointment predictable for them – if possible, surprise and delight them with unusual gifts or bonuses for them.
- c. Do it occasionally so that it doesn't become expected.
- d. Make it personalized with their names. A trinket tray, for a example, is one of the gifts we gave.
- e. Use products / special invites to exclusive or niche events so they feel special. After all, they've earned the right to be.

5. Other Tips



- a. Be presentable – make sure your breath from your spicy mala cannot be sensed from your breath. Sometimes we can sense the 热气 from our mouth.
- b. Don't put yourself on the same level with them, you're not at the same level (yet). Put yourself below their level. E.g. grave mistake would be treating them like your buddy.
- c. Have broad exposure to world affairs – just the gist would do.

- d. Don't every say "No" -> No is a deadly word
 - i. Find another way to say no. *"E.g. It's a slim chance to get this item as there are only 5 in Asia. We will inform you if we get it."*
 - ii. Find alternatives. There must be alternatives.
 - iii. Always make it happen for them.
- e. Play your cards well like poker. If you have a surprise, seed first before the big reveal. *(E.g. At the beginning of an appointment, let the client know that at the end, you have a special surprise for them. That got the client so excited about the appointment.)*
- f. Even if you gotten the hard-to-get handbag (only 5 in Asia), don't tell them immediately, slowly unveil it.
- g. Work very hard. Never rest on your laurels. Let your work speak for itself. If you need to make a self-introduction, work until you don't. Work until someone introduces you.

6. Bonus: Treatment of Clients and Service Recovery



- a. Treat them like Kings and Queens. They are, after all, the leaders of their industry.
- b. BIG CAUTION: However, don't spoil them.
 - i. There are things you go out of the way for them, but sometimes are simply not in your job scope.
 - ii. *(Shares story of colleague who had to buy milk powder and what not for super big Chinese tycoon wife, spends about a million a year)*
 - iii. In such cases, need to negotiate a 'middle ground' so the client also knows their boundaries e.g. *can you ask your maid to come to the carpark and we'll drop it off with her?*
- c. Honour them, lead them (in events), value their time and respect them.

- d. (In context of events) walk beside them or slightly in front of them.
(*Reinald proceeds to show me how to usher them*)
- e. Their time is more valuable than their money.
- f. So, the appointment with them must be meaningful. You must be ready at all times, even when the client calls you at the last-minute. (*Shares story of how he ran from lunch for a client who gave a 10 minute notice – we must be ready to make a great appointment at any time, client doesn't need to know we rushed*)
- g. Each appointment must value add to the client in some way.
- h. Take note of their preferences (*Do they like tea? Are they allergic to wool? Proceeds to share story about how he impressed a client's tycoon husband by skipping over wool products*).
- i. Pay attention, don't forget. The clients are nice about it, but it's a big plus if you can remember all these little things.
- j. Note their priorities.
 - i. For many of them, children are their priority.
 - ii. Value their time -> They still will want to pick their kids from school, even though it is the chauffeur that is driving.
 - iii. Value add -> Get their chauffeur and PA's number. Arrange for chauffeur to drive down once the appointment is ending.
- k. Genuinely care for them.
 - i. Story of injured client
 - ii. Added value by telling them about not eating red meat while being injured.
 - iii. Also, followed up with a text to check on them week after that.
 - iv. Of course, do this only for big customers.
- l. Service Recovery – NEVER give a non-perishable product for an apology. If you do, they will remember what you did FOREVER every time they describe the item in their house to their friends! Buy them a dinner, or give them consumables (wine, exotic chocolates) instead.
- m. Give your gift when they are cooling down. Not too soon when they are still angry with you, and not too late, when the giving of your gift triggers the memory of the bad experience again.

- n. Text or call to apologize first. Don't meet in person too quickly as it may be awkward.
- o. Show open gestures (*Reinald shows me how to do it*). Be careful of using touch inappropriately.