

Lesson 3: Carrying on the Conversation 5m 20S

A prop is an item used to enhance a performance, it makes a scene more authentic and can help actors play their role more adequately. They make a story come alive and help activate the imagination of the audience.

A prop helps the audience understand the narrative and actors to get a feel for their role

A prop is an item used to enhance a meeting, it makes advice more authentic and can help accountants play their role more adequately. They make an explanation more practical and help activate the imagination of the client

A prop helps the client understand the recommendations and accountants to get a feel for their role

I will demonstrate the usefulness of three props:

- Invest in several copies of The E Myth Revisited
- Have on hand a copy of my 9 stage business development process
- And my Business Health Checklist

Now let's set up a scenario. I will pick another cue from the list in the previous lesson.

Your client utters something along these lines.

"I just can't seem to get good people, it's so frustrating."

Your response to commence a conversation will be

"You find good people in places where there are good leaders, and well established operating systems. Frank, it is possible you are so overwhelmed with responsibilities you are unaware the problem is not with your people, the problem is a lack of structure surrounding what you want them to do, as well as perhaps shortcomings in your leadership style."

Now from this point the conversation could head in many directions, or perhaps there will be a moment of silence and reflection.

Whatever happens, it will not be long, given what you have just said, before you will be called upon to expand or justify your opening remark.

It is a confronting moment, you can quell using props.

By the way the script I am using here is available for you to download immediately below this video. You can adapt it to best suit your style or use them as is. There is no need to memorise them, if you familiarise yourself with the content and context you will find them easy to paraphrase during meetings, which is far more natural way to go.

Handing the book across to your client you would say

"I want you to have a copy of this book. More than 2 million copies have been sold, it is widely recognised as the number 1 business book for SME's.

Now turn to page 138 of the book where you have highlighted the fifth paragraph, pointing to it, you paraphrase

“The book outlines in quite a simple way, a step by step business development process that will transform your business into a perfectly organised enterprise producing consistent outcomes for customers, staff, and most importantly owners.

In our firm, we have taken the process a little further and work with a 9 stage business development process” You now hand across the 9 stage BD process to your client.”

Continuing

“For most people this all seems a little overwhelming, and therefore fail to take action. So, I encourage our clients to chip away at the process, selecting the areas of the business in most need of attention, working to make this area function better, and then move to the next area.

Other clients have found this Business Health Checklist useful to highlight the areas requiring urgent action”

And you now hand over the third prop, the Business Health Checklist.

It will take no more than 30 minutes to go through this checklist with the client. You ask them to rate how their business performs in each of the areas under consideration.

I encourage you to meet with clients monthly or quarterly and carry out this assessment. The idea being to work in the areas rated by the client as needing attention, and over time moving to a point where the client rates all areas of the business as a 5 out of 5.

These props will give you the confidence to advise the client in areas important to the development of the business, and give the client confidence positive outcomes will result from the use of structured systems.

The props have another purpose. If you have not yet viewed the 11 minute video, Science of Persuasion, I recommend you add to the 8.9million YouTube views. There is a link to the video on this lesson page.

The video presents the outcomes of Robert Giardini’s research surrounding the science of persuasion, highlighting 6 factors influencing people to say yes to the requests of others.

The three props I have demonstrated in this lesson cover 4 of the 6 factors:

- Reciprocity – you are giving the client something of value (the book), accordingly they are more likely to reciprocate at some time in the future.
- Authority – people like to follow the lead of credible knowledgeable experts – Gerber in this case.
- Consistency – the completion of the Business Health Checklist is a voluntary active and public commitment, or admission, of the need for improvement
- Consensus - Your use of the phrase my other clients have found this approach useful, and the 2 million business owners who have purchased a copy of the E Myth present consensus to your client. When uncertain people will look to the actions and behaviours of others to determine their own.

Use of the props will, according to Doctor Giardini, increase the likelihood of your client acting in a way you would like them to.