

SPIN[®] is embedded into the sales culture at **Select Business Solutions**





In a market characterised by increasingly sceptical customers, how can any software company find ways to shine? Steve Latchem, vice president of global business development and professional services at Select Business Solutions, tried SPIN®. As a direct result, he achieved 340% of his sales target.

Select Business Solutions is the Gloucester-based European headquarters of its parent company in Boulder, Colorado. The European HQ oversees in-country offices in France, Germany and Benelux, and a network of 23 distributors covering 28 countries.

Select offers software products which enable IT departments to design their systems around their business processes. For example, this includes

an application modelling tool for specifying and designing projects to be either outsourced or developed internally, and for interfacing with legacy systems.

Steve Latchem first joined Select as a technical consultant and several years later, in 2003, found himself responsible for UK and distributor sales. This was a difficult time for software vendors. The initial euphoria of technology as a new toy in the '90s had been dampened by a new cynicism. Today, 35% of all technology projects fail – and over half of the rest deliver late or exceed budget by several hundred percent.

Increasingly sceptical customers were aggressively demanding business cases from their suppliers, with clearly identified benefits-matching and return on

investment (ROI) targets. *“Solutions-based, benefits-centric selling was something I knew we had to get a lot smarter about, if we were to rise above the morass of potentially unreliable competing vendors and products,”* he explains.

That same year, the majority of the Select UK salesforce was renewed, bringing an associated decrease in the division's product knowledge and sales experience. Conscious of his need both to understand the selling process and to appoint and manage other salespeople, Steve set about drawing up a hypothetical profile of the sort of sales training programme which would enable him to meet his sales targets.

“SPIN® has made a fantastic difference to the way we work, and to our success. After SPIN®, my own sales results were 340% of target.”

Steve Latchem, vice president of global business development and professional services, Select Business Solutions



His analytical perspective made for a demanding profile. He was looking for a pragmatic, rather than academic, approach to training – based on hard data derived from real sales situations. He wanted excellent references from other clients, and he had to address the needs of both his internal and field sales teams. And rather than simply accessing a training course, he wanted an entire sales model to help him deal with the selling cycle and to structure workflows – right down to the recording of customer information.

“I wanted a fully-integrated approach to selling, that could be embedded into our sales culture,” he explained. “I’d had some sales training a few years previously, but it was only an approach, and not sufficiently benefits-centric for us to adopt it wholesale. Like our customers, we’re definitely keen on measuring ROI!”

After a period of measuring potential suppliers against his criteria, Steve chose Huthwaite, and SPIN® Selling. *“They provided me with glowing references from a variety of clients, and I was impressed with their high quality research base and training materials. Plus, I got a sense we could really work together.”* Steve was so confident he’d found the right

partner that he purchased a series of courses for his entire team, in advance.

Steve and his team – senior account managers, telesales staff and distribution channel sales manager – all undertook SPIN®. Interestingly, Steve chose Huthwaite’s Open Course route, rather than having the SPIN® programme customised for his business and delivered on-site. *“It was important to me that we mix with salespeople from other industries,” he says. “The others on our course included a security firm, a manufacturing company, and a marketing agency. The insights they gave, the lessons we learned from them and the chance to cross-pollinate ideas were all invaluable. And I wanted to see for myself that Huthwaite’s approach works everywhere.”*

During the course, Steve was particularly impressed by the quality of the Huthwaite trainers. *“I liked the fact that they are salespeople – they are practitioners, rather than educators. They’ve been there and done it, so you can respect their insights and their experience. They were even able to offer anecdotes from their own IT sales experience.”*

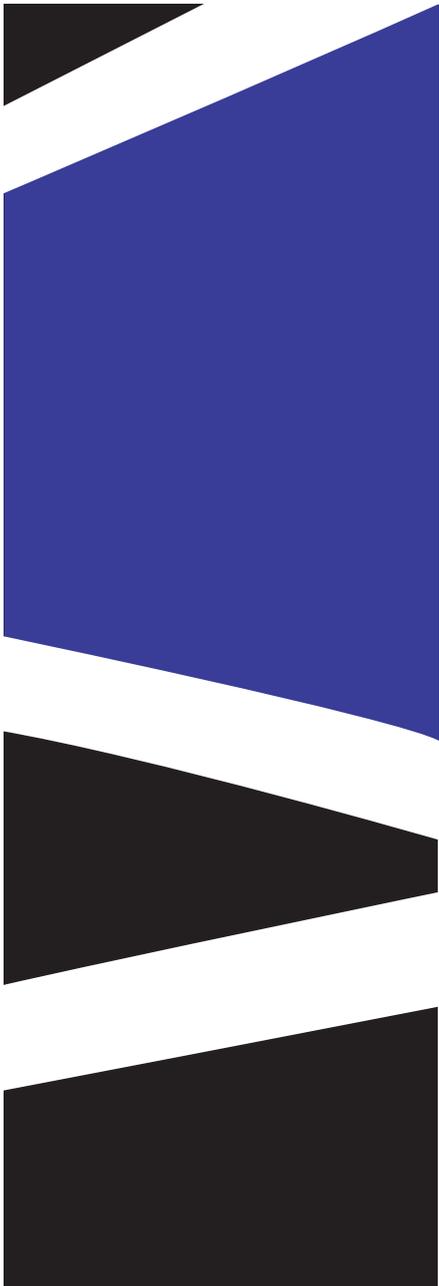
Another bonus was the course materials supplied by Huthwaite. *“This was precisely what I’d been looking for – a model we*

could institutionalise into our culture. Huthwaite supplied us with everything we needed, including templates to be used when engaging with prospects and customers over the phone, via email and face-to-face. We integrated this approach with our CRM system, so that all our records and correspondence are aligned with the way we work. That’s been a huge advantage.”

Additionally, Steve used SPIN® to develop his own templates for persuasive case analysis for Select products and services, which are now posted on the company intranet.

“SPIN® has made a fantastic difference to the way we work, and to our success. After SPIN® my own sales results were 340% of target. Since we attended the course at such a challenging time, with an entirely new sales team, it is a real testament to SPIN® that we came within 2% of the previous year’s sales performance. That proves that SPIN® has helped to flatten the learning curve, and has helped us to maintain and improve our revenue expectations.”





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