

BT Systems Integration looks to build long term customer relationships

BT Systems Integration delivers large and highly complex systems to internal customers who operate BT's national and global networks. It operates in an increasingly competitive market place where building long-term relationships and gaining customer commitment are recognised as vital to achieving business.

Building long-term relationships

BT Systems Integration has recognised that to build long-term relationships there needs to be two-way communication between its managers and customers.

Managers have traditionally used their technical knowledge to sell their services. Technical expertise tends to lead to the 'push' style of influencing - pushing reasons why the customer should use that service or product. Huthwaite and BT Systems Integration have been working together to develop the other more effective 'pull' style of influencing. This involves asking potential customers questions which get them to think problems through thoroughly and explore their ideas

about potential solutions. As a result it is the customers who uncover their own true needs, which allows the salesperson to offer an appropriate solution rather than just push the features of the products.

Linking effective selling skills to technical knowledge

The managers at BT Systems Integration have been exploring the effects on a business of good or poor networks and systems. This has enabled them to understand the importance of using their technical knowledge, together with pull influencing techniques to explore needs effectively with potential customers. The work with Huthwaite developed greater awareness among account

managers of cross selling opportunities, evolving customer needs and how BT Systems Integration can meet those needs.

John Ames, Manager at BT Network Integration Centre described the work with Huthwaite as, "*The most formidable course I have ever attended.*"

Huthwaite's Peter Francis said, "*The most rewarding aspect of this project is seeing professional engineers taking these so-called 'soft' skills seriously. They've realised that behaviour can make the difference, in all aspects of internal and external organisational life.*"



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