

Buying legal services – Field Seymour Parkes

In this Reading University Tender there may well be a need for the *technical and service* GENIUS of FSP to be demonstrated.

I think that Field Seymour Parkes should be

- gathering PROOF that you do what you say you will do
- devising a Unique Selling Proposition and
- making it difficult for Reading University to come up with any objections that you haven't already answered in the Tender Document

In general these are the reasons that people buy.

They are consistent reasons. It always pays to review them before any call, letter, or presentation.

Reasons people buy

- ✓ **I like the seller**
- ✓ **I understand what I am buying**
- ✓ **I perceive a difference with this company**
- ✓ **I believe the seller**
- ✓ **I have confidence in him**
- ✓ **I trust him**
- ✓ **I feel comfortable**
- ✓ **The price seems fair**
- ✓ **I perceive this product will increase my productivity**
- ✓ **I believe it will increase my profitability**
- ✓ **I believe this sales person wants to help build my business so he can build his**

The more that Field Seymour Parkes can think like a client (TLC) and understand and act on these reasons the more your services will be in demand.

FSP should not have to sell. FSP should get the prospect into a position where they want to buy what FSP offer. There is a difference. And people love to buy but they hate being sold to.

The prospect will usually have a number of other legal firms lined up alongside FSP. (14 in this case)

(Unless it is a referral or recommendation or response to some pull marketing, in which case his mind may already be made up despite the tender process).

Therefore you have to understand the process he has been through to arrive at the final shortlist to choose from. You have already cleared stage one. The Tender will outline what Reading University wants.

However, a buyer may show this type of thinking when making a choice to hire you or not.

If it's group think of a committee then it is likely most of these thoughts may surface;

1. I am not sure which of these three legal firms to choose. They all seem pretty much the same to me. They could all do a good job for me. But is one of them a genius I cannot do without? **(How can FSP demonstrate GENIUS?)**
2. I feel threatened because I'm supposed to be an expert but I need outside experts to do my job. This is difficult for me to accept. **(How can FSP put the client at ease and explain the reasons for doing things by involving them?)**
3. I am also at risk because I am no longer in control. **(How do FSP keep your client in control?)**
4. I want to get this situation sorted. I am down to the last three I am ready to make a quick decision because it has taken me a long time to get to this point. **(How fast can you get a team on this?)**
5. New people always change things, that means that I have not been doing the right thing up to now. I am worried what other people will think. **(What ways of working do they want to keep the same i.e. Blandy and Blandy and which do they happy to change to improve?)**
6. I am going to be exposed when I tell these new people what they want to know. That makes me feel uncomfortable. **(Are you trained in finding out information in a non-threatening way by asking great questions?)**
7. I don't know if my problem is simple or complicated. I feel stupid. And it's in their interests to make it more complicated than it really is. Isn't it? **(How do you keep things simple? Do you get a non-lawyer to read over things before you send them? Do you explain the reasons for doing things, checking for understanding and agreement before doing them?)**
8. I could be left hung out to dry. I mean these people always make promises and how do I know they will keep them? **(What guarantees and evidence is there that you will do what you say you will do?)**
9. I am concerned that they will sell me a one-size-fits-all solution that doesn't suit my situation. **(How can you assure Reading University that they are special and demonstrate it?)**
10. I am suspicious because they might be the typical lawyers ; that charge for every call, that promise partners and then send juniors, that are hard to get hold of, don't keep people up to date, don't explain what they are doing and overcomplicate things. **(What are your service guarantees, can you demonstrate it?)**

Because this is what a buyer feels like he is looking above all to TRUST you.

He is not just buying a pair of jeans. He is buying a relationship in which he must have total confidence. And you must earn his trust and confidence before he chooses you.

Some clues a buyer may be looking for when he is talking to you;

- 1 I need to like you because I don't want to work with someone I don't like. **(Will RU like dealing with FSP and why?)**
- 2 I want to have something in common in with you. Because I like to work with people like me. **(What do you have in common with RU?)**

- 3 I have already checked out the facts about your company. But my decision is going to be an emotional one. I'll use the facts to back it up in my own mind. **(Do they have all the facts they need?)**
- 4 If you haven't prepared properly then you are wasting my time. **(Will you be thoroughly prepared? Will you know about and research all the decision makers?)**
- 5 I am not interested in hearing about you. I am interested only in what you can do for me. **(What can you do for RU and can you demonstrate it in advance of working with them?)**
- 6 Tell me something that is valuable. Give me something without expecting anything in return. **(Can you offer something of value before tender process is completed?)**
- 7 See our meeting as a relationship builder not as a must sell session. Make me think that I want to know you, even if I choose not to hire you today. **(Position yourselves as long-term experts – always leave the door open).**
- 8 Don't just tell me, show me you do what you say you do. **(Testimonials/case studies/number of clients/size of transactions/variety of work/)**
- 9 Don't patronise me by telling me what my industry should do. Suggest things that we might want to do based on things you have seen in your experience and ask me my opinion. **(This demonstrates your proactive nature rather than just reactive – what have FSP done for large landlords?)**
- 10 Understand what I am thinking, how I am judged, who I report to and what I want from our relationship to make me a success. **(How do their internal systems work and what will you do to fit into their systems? Can you deliver weekly reports in the format of their choice and not yours? Can you do them a weekly update of work? Call recordings? Audio Update?)**
- 11 Listen to me. (Two ears one mouth).
- 12 Don't be too direct. Because it is difficult enough knowing I have problems without being grilled about them. Ask me indirectly. Things like, "What is it you don't ever get round to?" **(Don't tell anyone they are wrong. Suggest things and let people see it is a good suggestion – what good suggestions could you make?)**
- 13 If you do get me to reveal my problems demonstrate you have the experience and familiarity with them to solve them. **(Proof Proof Proof)**
- 14 Convince me that my problems are big enough for me to have to pay you to solve them. Ask me "how valuable would it be to solve this problem?" **(Do you know the size of their requirements, what can you save or solve for this size of problem they have?)**
- 15 Listen to me and talk less.
- 16 If I ask about the way you work, don't tell me that "the way our firm works is like this" if that's not the way I work. Demonstrate that you can be flexible and give me the options. **(Make it easy for them to say yes. Just because it is not what you usually do it does not mean you can't do it).**
- 17 Don't rush me into a sale. I told you I'll buy when I am ready. Remember it's in for a penny in for a pound. If I give you more information, visit your offices, attend a seminar then you are reeling me in. **(What is your long term marketing sequence for this client whether you win or lose? Can you get into an early lead now? What happens if you win, what's next for this client from you? And who can you target like this client with the same process?)**
- 18 I may ask you for a proposal. But really it will justify what I have already decided – that's that I am hiring you. So just keep the proposal about what we discussed. **(Don't assume a level playing field. You can influence people outside of the tender process perhaps).**
- 19 If I want you to present then let me interrupt. Answer my questions. Answer them well so I can see how you perform. **(Is there a feedback mechanism in the tender document for RU to clarify things if they need to? Likewise are you completely clear on their Tender Document?)**

- 20 Don't challenge my objections. Really I prefer it if you answer them before I've even asked. **(Can you list all possible objections RU have to working with you and come up with a solution to each one of them? Because you want them to have lots of small yeses when they hear you talk or when they read your document)**
- 21 I know you have the technical skill. Many others have it too. Show me you have a sincere desire to help me. Do everything you can for me. **(How can FSP serve me unlike any other legal firm?)**
- 22 Listen.

Technical skills are a pre-requisite for success. But the really successful law firms are those who see things as the client does, can empathise with them and ultimately gain the trust of the client.

There are plenty of technically competent lawyers. There are fewer that are service quality competent.

Take your own experience. Have you dealt with a professional recently? Did they do the following?

- Understand the unique nature of your business?
- Listen carefully to what you had to say?
- Explain what they were going to do and why?
- Help you understand the reasons behind what was going on rather than just telling you what was going on?
- Keep you informed when you wanted to be?
- Avoid jargon?
- Make sure they were accessible when you wanted them to be?
- Keep their promises?
- Keep to deadlines?
- Involve you in major points of the work?
- Show an interest beyond the work at hand?
- Be helpful beyond the task for which they were paid?

Because very few referrals are based on technical competence and the vast majority, (90%) are related to the issues above it makes sense to know if you are consistently good at all the above. That's for another day and for the Partners!

These may be the areas to have ready answers to for all clients, but particularly Reading University

| Technical | Service |
|---|------------------|
| Departments – match requirements | Accessible |
| Case Studies – Madejski/GP/Sackville/Landlord/Tenant | Flexible |
| Personnel – Key Staff | Tailored |
| Local Knowledge - Benefits | Proactive |
| Experience – Preponderance of Proof | Straight Talking |

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Testimonials | Speedy |
| USP - Partners | USP Guaranteed - subscription |

And the subscription model guarantee could be a great USP for you.

Field Seymour Parkes Promises To Reading University A Single, Low Price, Fixed Monthly Subscription For All Its Property Work All Backed Up By Your Exclusive Guarantee.

If You Are Less Than 100% Thrilled With Our Service In Any Month, Just Pick Up The Phone To Our Managing Partner, Say The Word Refund Three Times, And You Will Receive 100% Of Your Money Back For That Month And FREE Legal Help The Following Month!

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