

Profile: Human Predictive Technology™

As big organisations start to sign up to a sharp new business sales science, ACQ talks to its inventors, Mark Palmer and Scott Solder.

The next time you find that you've been well and truly sold to, without feeling like you've been pressured into parting with your cash, make sure you don't underestimate how that may have happened. There's a whole new science behind it and, apparently, it works.

Mark Palmer and Scott Solder, directors of You Need This Ltd, created Human Predictive Technology™ specifically for business. Reassuringly businesslike themselves, they're cagey – unlike other trainers – about who is using it. 'Of course I'm not telling you who our clients are', Solder's tone is considered but firm, 'that would be wholly inappropriate and a breach of their confidence. Suffice to say that HPT sales is definitely on your local high street, wherever you live. You can find it within businesses at the more progressive end of the spectrum. It's even on your television and radio.'

Palmer's willing to go further, 'Let's just say we're currently training staff at a major international mobile phone company, at big media groups in the UK and beyond, as well as in local government.' No real clues there then, but it sounds like the rumour (if you're one of those who have heard it) about that big new mobile phone sales programme is indeed true. 'And by the way', they both chorus when prompted, 'it's not just about sales: it's anything to do with influence and persuasion, like public speaking, showing real leadership and getting real results for your business.'

So what is it? 'Do you want the business explanation or the pub explanation?' is their (obviously rehearsed) response. Let's go with the business one first, 'it's a fusion of three key communication disciplines' says Solder, 'human compliance psychology, NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) and media presentation.'

Palmer explains 'It's about moving people's mindset into a position where they're most likely to be receptive to you. Throw in some smart persuasive language techniques and the sort of stuff Trevor MacDonald et al use to create their massive audience loyalty and you can transform your performance and revenues almost overnight'.

It's a good sales pitch, but then, frankly, it should be. That joke is not lost on them. Both men are in their thirties, certainly intelligent and personable. 'Look, of course we're going to be good salesmen', says Solder, suddenly earnest, 'so ignore us and just look at the results of HPT. It works and we're proud of it. We have a repeat business rate of a hundred per cent.' His last word is uttered with a good natured wink, 'Period!'

Persuasion technique? HPT in full swing? Almost definitely.

Every minute in the company of these two is spent half wondering what techniques, if any, they're using on you. They are subtly persuasive, giving you the impression that their brains are at least a step ahead of you and processing the conversation about twice as fast. It should be unnerving, but somehow it feels fine. When challenged on that, the reply is simple, 'of course, isn't that the mark of a good salesperson?' Good point. Damn

Human compliance and NLP, though, surely that's all about manipulation? Palmer agrees that there are 'dark forces' out there who try all kinds of sinister tricks. 'This is emphatically not what we're about' he says, frowning his brow slightly, 'HPT is about ensuring people are in the right state to respond as positively as possible to what they really need. We're here to help sales people, or presenters, do exactly that and to communicate their message with maximum effect'.

By way of examples, they get you to think about why you often change lanes, without thinking, just because the traffic in front of you has done so; why you feel like you actually know and like your favourite broadcasters on a very personal level; how you can develop your instincts when they tell you, in a nanosecond and often in vain, that you inexplicably 'click' with one person, or don't quite get off to the right start with another.

Hang on, though, what was the pub explanation of all this stuff? 'Oh that one's much shorter' laughs Palmer, 'Derren Brown is quite good at some of this, and he uses it in showbusiness. We just do the business without the show'

You might want to be the judge of that. **ACQ**

