PROSPECTING | LISTENING | COMMUNICATION | PERSUASION | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Don't walk like an Egyptian! Prospect like a Greek!

By employing the classical elements of prospecting, you'll attract all the people you need.

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Many philosophies are based on a set of "classical elements." Typically, classical elements refer to ancient beliefs resulting from the observation of nature, in particular the phases of matter. The ancient Greeks provide a good example. They observed the four phases of matter, and to each phase, the Greeks associated a particular "element." They used the element of earth to represent solid matter, water to represent liquid, air/wind as equivalent to gas, and fire to symbolize plasma.

Of course, today, we know that earth, wind, fire, and water aren't elements at all. They are a part of the world in which we live, but they don't define it. Let's not be too hard on our ancient friends though. After all, there's a lot we can learn from their precious classical elements. In this article, we don't care about the phases of physical matter.

What we care about is prospecting, the process of using principle-based communication to connect with potential business partners. And on that matter, the Greeks were right on the money.

Earth

Take earth for example. When you think of earth (as in soil, not the planet), what image comes to mind? To me, earth carries the connotation of solid, firm, and grounded; stead-fast, if you will. It's upon the earth that we walk, drive, and build cities. That's pretty steadfast, isn't it? And that's the first classical element of prospecting—be grounded.

Not every prospect will demonstrate interest in your offer. Not every prospect who does express interest, will in fact, look at your DVD, read your magazine, or listen to your sizzle call. At times, the process can be intimidating, discouraging, frustrating, or downright aggravating; especially for folks who are new to the profession. In my early days, the emotions I felt towards prospecting ran the full gamut from intimidation to infuriation.

Then I got grounded.

I started focusing on why I was prospecting. Put another way: I began to focus not on the challenges, but rather on my reason for building a team. What we resist persists. When we focus on challenges and negativity, we tend to experience more of them. At the same time that I shifted my focus from challenges to reasons, my belief began to mature.

Personal development and associating with the right people, both helped to ground me by nurturing the roots of my belief; both in myself as well as in my opportunity.

> **When I got more grounded, I became more productive, especially in my prospecting endeavors. Think of a fruit tree—the healthier the root system is (grounding), the more fruit the tree produces (new team members).**

Wind

The second classical element of prospecting is the element of Wind. In nature, wind is a powerful force, and yet it remains completely invisible.

We can see the effects of wind (palm leaves swaying gently on a beach, or entire trees tossed around by the violence of a hurricane), but we can't see the wind itself. This is the essence of Wind as a prospecting element.

The best prospectors are laid back, calm, cool, and collected. They move through a conversation with minimum effort and maximum purpose. The entire conversation is warm and gentle like an early summer's breeze. And **if** it makes sense to extend an offer of opportunity, the direction of the conversation shifts ever so slightly in that direction. This shift takes place imperceptibly, invisibly if you will, just like a summer's breeze.

It took a long while for me to latch on to this concept, but once I did, it transformed my prospecting results. I learned how to practice sincere compliments and polite manners in order to demonstrate respect. I learned how to use informal, laid-back language to keep the conversation light and relatable. And I learned how to express genuine interest by asking powerful questions in a non-threatening way.

And it made all the difference.

Wind is a powerful element of prospecting and when it's used properly, it creates positive results for the prospect and for you (notice how the prospect comes first). You'll know you're doing it right when all you can see is results.

Just try not to be a blow-hard.

Fire

Next, we have the element of Fire. In prospecting, Fire represents your enthusiasm and attitude. Enthusiasm is contagious—if you keep it under control. Don't turn-off your prospects with unchecked high-energy attitudes. Enthusiasm and a frantic pace are both examples of attitudes that can be off-putting if not reigned in. Intensity is another one. In my early days, I was turning off prospects for the simple reason that I was simply too intense; they could not see themselves with the same level of intensity, thus they concluded that they could not do what I was doing.

Learn from my mistake—keep high-energy attitudes under control. An out-of-control fire often constitutes an emergency.

Not all fire is dangerous though. Not all attitudes are either. Sincerity, integrity, congeniality, and humor are examples of powerful, positive, and productive attitudes. Once I learned how to communicate with these attitudes, I saw another dramatic increase in my prospecting results.

Much of what I do in these areas is accomplished through small things. Sincerity is conveyed by tone of voice and body language. It can be emphasized, but not faked. Demonstrate integrity by avoiding exaggeration and by honoring your word (e.g., calling on the agreed upon day and time). For humor, keep it light and direct the humor either at yourself or at the current situation; never at the prospect.

In prospecting, there's no substitute for Fire. A little bit of controlled heat can really add warmth to a conversation. That's worth striking a match for.

Just leave your flamethrower at home.

Water

Finally we come to the final element of prospecting: Water. In nature, water assumes the shape of its surroundings. Pour water into a glass and it will assume the shape of the glass. Pour water on the ground and it will flow in the path of least resistance. Water is a crucial element of prospecting.

The better you are at creating rapport with your prospects, the more results you will enjoy. There are a number of ways to enhance rapport. You can mirror and/or match body language and mannerisms. You can match speech patterns by using the same kinds of "sense" words (visual words: see, clearly, bright; auditory words: hear, sound, loud; and touch words: touch, push, felt). You can also match the prospect's behavioral style (aka, basic personality style: D/red, I/Blue, S/Yellow, C/green).

All of these mechanisms are powerful rapport-building tools. Each one requires you to modify your own natural behaviors in order to be more like the prospect. The more you are "like" the prospect, the less the prospect will have to "translate" your message.

In other words, you are creating an environment in which true

communication can occur smoothly and naturally. Your intent is to take full responsibility for the quality of the communication that transpires between you and your prospects.

Done correctly, and with a motive of generosity, these tools demonstrate genuine respect for prospects.

Water, as a prospecting element, represents the fact that you take on the "shape" of your prospect. Doing so maximizes rapport.

And that truly is the path of least resistance.

There they are—Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water—the classical elements of prospecting. Stay grounded; work calmly and invisibly; be warm and under control; and follow the path of least resistance by assuming the shape of the prospect. Master these elements and you'll be able to prospect anyone, anywhere, with little or no effort, because prospects will choose to be part of your success.

By employing the classical elements of prospecting, you'll attract all the people you need. Keep in mind, you're not building a pyramid with slaves; you're building a business with volunteers. The ancient Egyptians didn't build the pyramids to house living people, and they didn't do it with volunteers either. When it comes to prospecting, the ancient Greeks provide a much better example.

So... don't walk like an Egyptian—Prospect like a Greek.

Russ McNeil is the author of *Prospecting Rules!*, a highly acclaimed book focused on the in's and out's of situational prospecting. A number of respected trainers and team leaders, like Doug Firebaugh, Michael Clouse, Jordan Adler, Robert Butwin, and Jane Deuber have enthusiastically endorsed the book. To read the foreword by John David Mann, to hear a clip from Russ's interview with John Milton Fogg, or to subscribe to Russ's complimentary 'how-to' newsletter, "Prospecting with Purpose", visit www.ProspectingRules.com

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