Points from “Let’s Get Real or Let’s Not Play”

The key to success in sales is, according to Mahan Khalsa and Randy Illig, authors of *Let’s Get Real or Let’s Not Play: Transforming the Buyer/Seller Relationship* (Portfolio: 2008), helping the client reach their goals, that is, putting the client’s success first.

Nice, but hardly a novel sentiment.

We’ve all read dozens upon dozens of books telling us that we must put the client first. Nothing new here.

The problem with all those other books is they haven’t given us a workable way to deal with the unspoken but paramount issue separating clients and sellers and preventing us from truly putting our client first—fear. The client’s fear of being taken advantage of and our fear of losing a sale.

Creating a way, a path, for us to work with our clients in a format that eliminates the ingrained fears of our clients and ourselves is the primary contribution of *Let’s Get Real or Let’s Not Play*.

The authors begin their journey in creating a process that will allow us as sellers to really seek our client’s success first and foremost by outlining their 5 key beliefs:

1. Consultants (sellers) and Clients Want the Same Thing.
2. Intent Counts More than Technique
3. Solutions Have No Inherent Value
4. Methodology Matters
5. World-class Inquiry Precedes World-class Advocacy

The authors argue that these five key beliefs set the groundwork for a process that will allow sellers to deal with prospects and clients in an honest, straightforward manner where we can work with them to really discover their issues and needs, gather the hard information we need to create a solution that puts our client’s success above all else, and we can do these without the fear of wasting our time and resources pursuing non-business.
Khals and Illig devote almost half of the book to discussing how to qualify an opportunity because the qualification process sets the stage for remainder of the process. As sellers, we must make sure that we are pursuing a legitimate business opportunity. We cannot afford to waste our time and energy pursuing non-business. Consequently, we have to qualify based on Opportunity (is it worth pursuing); Time (reasonable and adequate); People (who does what and is it the right mix); Money (can the client afford it); and Decision Process (who, what, when, and how decisions are made).

Exploring each of these areas reveals whether or not we should go forward. Naturally, getting a green light in each area means we go forward. A red light in any area means there isn’t a viable business opportunity now. The real key is looking out for and understanding how to handle yellow lights—situations, questions, and issues that must be fully and honestly investigated to determine whether they are actually red lights or can be clarified into green lights.