



## It all comes down to RoI

Shark Finesse is not a client of Huthwaite's. Nor vice-versa. So why do we want to talk about them?

The short answer is that there is a marked change of behaviour afoot among buyers today, and sellers need a corresponding change of their own. If there is one question a mid-recession or post-recession buyer asks a seller today it is: "how do I justify this purchase in terms of Return on Investment?". A seller's behaviour today, must incorporate a level of comfort and authority when handling this issue.

Now ROI is a much-abused term, and one that few buyers or sellers (unless they are also MBAs or accountants) ever bother to define very clearly. But Martin Southern has not only defined ROI, he has founded a company that can help a seller to demonstrate it, in front of a customer, in seconds. His company's software tool, the Shark Evaluator, runs every capital investment proposal, in all its detail, through a rigorous set of criteria to establish what it will mean to a buyer in terms of Discounted Cash Flow, Net Present Value and Payback Days. In a sales call, one minute the seller is asking the buyer for key cost/benefit data, the next, he is demonstrating why the proposed solution is such a good investment. It certainly enables a seller to make a compelling financial argument, and it gives the "sponsor" inside the customer company a powerful means of making his or her case to the board, when the seller isn't there. After all, the facts and figures can speak for themselves.

### What has all this to do with Huthwaite, and with behaviour change?

Huthwaite has realised that there are several stages in the selling and sales process models we have developed, where the more specific we can teach people to be, the greater the chances of success. Similarly, while Shark Finesse trainers can teach people how to use the Evaluator software, they don't pretend to be experts in how, when, and where in the cycle such a potentially powerful tool can be used to the greatest persuasive effect.

Anybody who knows the more common Huthwaite programmes, such as SPIN<sup>®</sup> Selling, Account Strategy or Negotiation will recognise at once how a Need-Payoff Question or Benefit Statement could be sharpened immeasurably if it incorporated a precise ROI statement. Similarly, anybody who understands what we mean by Resolution of Concerns strategies will know how to categorise the "I love your product but budget is tight and my board wants proof that the money will be well spent" response. A clear, confident and precise proof statement would be powerful at this stage. And finally, anyone familiar with Huthwaite preparation and planning models for negotiations would know at once how and when

to deploy a tool that can vary many economic elements of the proposed solution to calculate what we call "cost of concession".

There is no formal partnership agreement in place between Shark and Huthwaite; no formal cross-endorsement of each others' solutions. Just a recognition by both parties that we can probably achieve a great deal by co-operation. Many companies who are about to deploy a Huthwaite solution will find it more powerful if they add an ROI software tool to their new-found behavioural skill set; while many companies who use Shark Evaluator will deploy it more tellingly if they combine it with the sales success models that have given Huthwaite its leadership position for over 30 years.

With people like Microsoft, Equant and Acterna already putting the Evaluator tool in the hands of their sales teams, the market, it seems, is looking to Shark for similar leadership.

For more information on how Huthwaite and Shark together can make your sales message more persuasive, contact [msouthern@sharkfinesse.com](mailto:msouthern@sharkfinesse.com) or [dfreedman@huthwaite.co.uk](mailto:dfreedman@huthwaite.co.uk) or call David Freedman on +44 (0)1709 710081.