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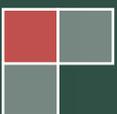
Information Technology Peddler Quiz

A Self-Administrable Test To See If Your IT Company Is A Fungible Vendor Or A Respected Industrial Authority

A Business Development Knowledge Product For Privately Owned
Information Technology Companies and Solo IT Professionals

By Tom "Bald Dog" Varjan

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Dear IT Business Owner,

In the age of unprecedented buyer scepticism, cynicism and suspicion, it’s a good idea to know how your business is positioned on the market. Is it regarded as a fungible, replaceable vendor, making your salespeople dreaded peddlers and your products/services lukewarm technical commodities that can be haggled over?

Or is your company regarded as a sought-after industrial authority, making your salespeople respected experts and your products/services unique, one-of-a-kind solutions to specific business problems.

The difference is pretty drastic.

As a fungible vendor you have to chase after the market, while the market tries to run away from you.

But as a sought-after authority, the market chases you and you can cherry-pick who to do business with.

Imagine that there is a continuum with fungible vendor at one end and sought-after authority at the other end.

The 33 inspection points in this table helps you to define where your company is on this continuum.

“Raise your sights! Blaze new trails! Compete with the immortals!”



P.S.: In the meantime, don’t sell harder! Market smarter and your business will be better off for it.

Fill in the quiz by putting “R” in the left-hand middle column or an “F” in the right-hand middle column.

<u>R</u>espected authority and trusted advisor	R	F	<u>F</u>ungible vendor and dreaded peddler
1. Our marketing collaterals – white papers, free reports, webinars, etc. – are informative and educational in nature in order to aid the buyer’s decision making process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Our marketing collaterals are full of self-aggrandisement, information about us, our capabilities, a list of our services, our clients and our prices.
2. We regularly create valuable content – white papers, free reports, webinars, audios, teleseminars, etc. – for our	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. We’re so busy serving existing clients, pounding pavements and dialling for dollars for new business, that we just

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<u>Respected authority and trusted advisor</u>	R	F	<u>Fungible vendor and dreaded peddler</u>
market in order to inform, educate and shift the way our market thinks about our industry and services.			don't have time for this "content" stuff. We want to bring in money, not giving away our expertise.
3. We conduct regular business reviews with our clients and always revisit their IT strategies to make sure they are technically in top shape, and no technical disaster can come and cause them major harm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Once a sale is made, it's done. We finish what we've agreed and then move on. We have no capacity for ongoing babysitting clients. If they have a problem, they can call us, pay we solve their problem.
4. Our website talks about qualitative and quantitative business improvements that our clients have achieved or can achieve with our help and support. It also explains why perfect buyers should hire us instead of the competition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Our website, similar to our marketing collaterals, is full of information about us, our capabilities, list of our services, list of our executives, partners and investors and our prices.
5. Our website furnishes us with preponderance of high-quality sales leads. generates multiple new leads and opportunities every week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Our website is like a vasectomised husband: Great appearance and lots of activity but no bankable result.
6. When our market types our services or other relevant keywords into Google, our company comes up in the top three listings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Our website is so carefully hidden that it would be the eighth miracle of the world if Google could find it.
7. We have minimum 8-12 educational case studies on our most profitable services, showing how we helped our clients to improve their businesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Our case studies describe the type work (list of tasks) we performed for clients.
8. We have a process that helps us to demonstrate the value clients derive from our services, so we hardly ever experience price/fee objections on our products/services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Our salespeople are flying by the seats of their pants and do their own unique magic to land clients.
9. Our marketing is solely focused on building our credibility and to support our sales.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Our marketing is about branding. It's focused on talking about us and our services.
10. We stay in touch with our market through our newsletters, blog posts and other educational materials regarding the latest advancements in technology (server room stuff) and how that	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. We contact prospects only when we smell the signed and authorised purchase orders in their hands, so we know they are ready to give us money... right away. We hate wasting

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technology ties into improvements in business results (boardroom stuff).			time on non-ready tyre-kickers.
11. We have a systemised sales process that enables us to convert 80% or more of our prospects into paying clients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. It's up to individual salespeople to land clients in any way they want to.
12. We have a marketing programme in place, with at least five (orchestrated referral plus four) lead generation channels, that consistently and predictably lands us perfect prospects based on our perfect client profile.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. It's the salespeople's job to do their own prospecting and find leads for themselves in any way they want. That's what we pay them for.
13. Client acquisition is not a numbers game, but a strategic game. The smarter you position yourself, the more you sell.			13. Client acquisition is a numbers game. The more you hustle, the more miles of pavement you pound, the more numbers you call, the more you sell. Simple.
14. We wouldn't even consider responding to RFPs and competitive bidding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. We acquire most of our clients through RFPs and competitive bidding.
15. When discussing business, our people meet only real decision-makers with authority and budgets.			15. Our salespeople work mainly through purchasing agents and lower-level skills who relay our offers and proposals to real buyers.
16. We reinvest at least 10% of our revenue in our marketing and client generation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16. We spend a pile of money on branding, but client generation and its cost is up to each salesperson.
17. We accept only those prospects that match our perfect client profile. Our marketing system disqualifies everyone who is less than a perfect prospect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. We accept anyone and everyone with a signed and authorised purchase order. We can't afford to be picky at this stage of our operation.
18. Our marketing differentiates us from our competitors, and when asked, all our people can clearly articulate in what way we are different from our competitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18. Our marketing is the marketing department's job. There is no point in burdening others with marketing stuff. They have their work to do.
19. Our people use the phone only to take incoming calls from pre-qualified prospects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19. Our salespeople are required to make a set number of cold calls every day.
20. Our company has virtually zero attrition. People join our company,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20. Our salespeople are constantly coming and going. One joins our company,

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love the way things work around here and stay.			stays a little bit and moves on to one of our competitors.
21. Our marketing is systemised and automated such that it does all the heavy lifting of qualifying and pre-selling our solutions. Most of our time is invested in working on existing projects with paying clients. Besides that, we meet only those prospects who've already jumped through multiple hoops of qualification.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21. Our marketing presents our image to the market, but qualifying prospects is up to our salespeople. Marketing is marketing. Selling is selling. And we prefer keep the two separate.
22. We have a waiting list of clients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22. We have a waiting list of subject matter experts; waiting for new work
23. We have a multi-step qualification process, and the smallest non-compliance with either the process or the criteria instantly disqualifies prospects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23. Our qualifying criteria are pulse beat and wallet.
24. We have no sales force. Our subject matter experts, using our systems, land new business and then do the work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	24. We have a large sales force. It's up to our salespeople to do whatever they can to land new clients.
25. All our people, just like all professionals, are paid salaries and bonuses based on long-term company-wide performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	25. Our salespeople are on a small base salary plus commission based on short-term individual performance.
26. Our people are farmers and diagnosticians. They "grow" clients and then facilitate the decision-making process by diagnosing prospects' situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26. Our salespeople are hunters and closers. They hunt down new deals, present our solutions and close the sale.
27. Not closing a sale is part of life. We respect our prospects' decisions and don't even bother to handle objections.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27. Our salespeople make every effort to close the sale. Otherwise they can be reprimanded and even fired for losing prospects.
28. Our subject matter experts provide prospects with unique project proposals with 3-4 value levels and high-ROI investment options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28. Our salespeople provide prospects with competitive price quotes.
29. Our project fees are based on our clients' perception of the value that	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29. Our price quotes are based on our time, effort and materials that take to

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they can derive from our solutions.			complete projects.
30. We build long-term relationships with the cream of the crop of our market.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30. We “hit” on the prospect, make the sale and start chasing the next prospect.
31. Some 80% of our marketing is inbound. That is, buyers find us on their own volition and request our help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	31. Some 80% of our marketing is outbound. That is, we reach out and find buyers who are ready to buy from us right away.
32. Our business development crew is a tiny cohesive team of farmers and gardeners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	32. Our business development crew is a large group of individual hunters.
33. Our people wait for prospects to request appointments, and, if they like what they see, prospects have to ask for the purchase. And if they qualify, we accept them as new clients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	33. Our salespeople proactively seek appointments and ask for the sale. Then they use everything in their power to convince buyers to have us as a new vendor.

And now count how many “Rs” and “Fs” you have. There is no need for evaluation. You’re smart enough to see where your company stands and what needs improving. Hope it helps a bit.

About The Author



Since 1998, after a 16-year industrial stint as an electronics/computer engineer, project manager and technical buyer, Tom "Bald Dog" Varjan has been working with privately held information technology companies and independent IT professionals to market and sell their complex, high-ticket and hard-to-explain IT solutions to high-end, sophisticated clients.

For Tom’s free white paper, “More Brain Less Brawn: High-Leverage Client Acquisition Strategies For Privately Held IT Companies In The Knowledge-Based Economy”, go to <http://www.varjan.com>