



Establishing (reforming) meeting of APPG for Professional Sales,

Portcullis House: 6:30pm Tuesday 11 February 2020

Officers:

Mark Pawsey – Chairman

The following VCs were duly appointed:

Jim Shannon
Robert Courts
Martyn Day
Jack Lopresti

Action: Need to recruit a Labour MP as another VC, possibly Peter Kyle.

Attendees:

Mark Pawsey, Rachel Maclean, Jim Shannon, Jack Lopresti, Andrea Jenkyns, Robert Courts, Martyn Day, Nigel Mills,

Supporters, in addition to the above:

Sr John Hayes, David Duguid, Giles Watling, Damian Moore, Andrew Bowie, Mary Robinson. Ben Bradley, Ian Murray, John McNally, Andrew Selous, Eddie Hughes, Rob Halfon, Peter Kyle, Jamie Stone

Discussion items:

1.

SK Need to take the recommendations of the first inquiry report (SME sales capabilities) to ministers and officials. Particularly BEIS (productivity) and Education and Skills (professionalising, educating and training)

Action: Mark Pawsey and Jack Lopresti ask for a hard copy.

Robert Courts and Rachel Maclean would like a link to the online copy.

2.

BEIS select committee is taking bids for topics of investigation. Need to see if something on sales could be supported by them.

Action: Stephen Kerr to make inquiries.

3.

JL said this APPG could do well to have a clear objective our outcome being sought during this parliament. For example, General Aviation APPG was to get the law changed.

3.

SK Brexit provides opportunity to reform public tenders procedure, to allow SMEs to better compete for government work.

Rachel Maclean suggests pushing apprenticeships in sales.

JB suggests ensuring sales is on curriculum for Technical A Levels (see letter from campaigner)

All agree with primary importance of selling to business

Lament snobbery of universities re teaching sales

Mark P refers to different skills of finders (hunters) and keepers (farmers)

Ben G (Toshiba sales director UK)

Debate on how to proceed

Getting action

Mark P suggests asking for a short inquiry on the back of the APPG first report: building evidence

Cautions against waste of money of APPGs where business leaders vent their concerns and a few MPs turn up, drink wine and drift off.

RC suggests persuading friendly MPs to lodge Westminster Hall debate, as this will require a minister to respond with the help of civil servants

SK suggests a dinner. MP cautions that you can end up just attracting people who are already sympathetic to the cause.

RC says most APPGs do very little, just talking shop. A few are very good eg general aviation. Very large, highly organised, paid staff. Aim to change the law, not just to raise awareness.

First year achievement was standards framework was changed to promote safety. RC suggests deciding on short, defined, achievable, solid objectives, do a report on them, get it introduced in Westminster Hall debate.

MP says he's happy to table a Westminster Hall debate.

Recruiting

MP suggests that Guy goes through the backgrounds of the 160 new MPs (Wiki search), find ones who have had a sales role and invite them. SK says he has written to the 109 new Conservatives.

SK: MPs like to eat and drink. A very few, very targeted events that involve dinner.

Invite Sir Graham Brady, John Penrose - people with names who will be sympathetic.

Written parliamentary questions and oral questions. Look at order paper, draft questions, and have a core of people who are prepared to ask questions.

Look at new ministers and identify people we can work with.

There were 600 APPGs in the last parliament, and with 60 supporters the Sales one was one of the bigger ones. SK adds however it's about quality of members, not quantity.

Suggested short inquiry:

British business readiness to sell to the world.

Conclusion: we're not that ready. Likely to be good to get headlines.

Or:

- Simplifying government procurement processes.
- Value of professionalising sales

Key people in the Lords to target for profile-building: Sir Alan Sugar. Lord Heseltine. Michelle Mone.

SK suggests surfing the boredom factor for new MPs in a government with an unassailable majority. APPGs that offer an alternative select committee experience will do well. And creating events that offer personal wins for MPs.
