

How do you become a Successful Architectural Sales Representative?

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The key ingredients to be a successful architectural sales representative in the tile and stone industry are to be knowledgeable about the products you represent, knowledgeable about industry standards, and knowledgeable about what products are suitable for your clients' intended uses. You need to be dependable and reliable. The information you provide to the architect must be accurate. You must do what you commit to in a timely matter. As I always told my sales reps, "It's easy to talk the walk, but you have to walk the talk." You must reply in a timely way when someone calls you, you must have a timely response to requests for samples or information, and you must follow-up with your clients in a timely manner. You must be a skilled communicator and develop relationships with architects by attending their AIA and CSI monthly meetings. You must give informative and impressive box lunch presentations. You must utilize a project lead service to identify, qualify, and target key projects, and be persistent on following up on those targeted projects.

I was a distributor architectural sales representative for over ten years and then I was a manufacturer architectural sales representative and sales manager for seven years. I successfully generated specifications and received the order on many large projects over the years. There were many tile exterior veneer office buildings, Las Vegas Casinos, Food Processing facilities, airports, hospitals, high-end residences, and other high use tile projects.

The key to my success was I had the attributes described above and was first

perceived as a consultant to the architect, and second as a sales representative. What this did for me was the architect would bring me into their specifications in the early stages of the project to consult with them to help determine which products and installation systems would be suitable for their intended applications. I wowed them with my knowledge, my prompt responses, my timely follow up, and my ability to write MasterFormat specifications as I was a Certified Construction Document Technologist (CDT) through CSI. This created loyalty with the architect and gave me the first shot at having my tile and installation products specified in what we called a "Bulletproof" specification, meaning resistant to value engineering and substitutions.

I took my many years of experience and collaborated with Vince Moiso, who has many years of sales experience, and we created a new UofCTS Online course called "The Complete Guide on Developing Tile & Stone Specifications with Architects." This is an online course available through UofCTS, NTCA, CTDA, Fuse Alliance and TTMAC that can be completed within 10 hours over a two-week period. The course teaches how to write "Bulletproof" MasterFormat specifications, how to develop relationships with architects, how to get your products specified, how to track and protect your specifications, and how to develop communication skills and strategies. It is a complete guide to learning how to be a successful Architectural Sales Representative. Visit www.UofCTS.org for more information.