

# Credentials Rik

Well, its hard to boast about ones own skills when you are Belgian, we are cursed/blessed with being overly modest that's why the whole world thinks that french fries are actually invented by France and not by Belgium. Even without effort our chocolate, waffles & beer, etc has gained some global recognition but we prefer others judging our qualities, so this is hard for me but I ll give it my best shot.

I did math/latin during high school, afterwards finished a Masters degree in applied economics at the University of Gent and then decided to go into sales and since it was crisis at that time I took a job doing cold calling sales but directed to employees of organisations/institutions/school/businesses.

The company was situated in Brussels and was mainly French speaking ( we have 3 official languages in our 11 million people small country ) so it gave me an opportunity to learn to speak French while getting some experience and earn money. But the essence of the job was pitch your narrative in something between 5 to 10 minutes tops and make the person essentially do a lot of work for you selling the product to his colleagues without you being able to really compensate hin for that. It's a challenge I soon mastered to become the best of 30 sales people in.

Then I started working in 1992 with CompuGuide, which was a sort of digital version of the Yellow Pages ad started on 12 discettes; we then switched to floppy disc, CD-Rom came in 1998 and internet was for 2000.

Now we had a boss not really interested in managing but just taking out profits, we were with 3 sales people who started using publicity to grow solely by win win deals and collaboration.

You want a laptop ? Sure find someone and exchange for publicity ? You want a new conference room ? Find a win win etc...

For 7 years we grew steadily but then managed to set up a launch of 1 million copies of the CD-Rom distributed with the biggest computer magazine at that time in Belgium ( paperoff course )

We managed to secure partnerships in win win with 7 of the biggest names in their fields at the time, and some still are like : Graydon for the data, Ogilvy for marketing, PC Magazine ( was part of the Roularta Group ), etc...

So everything was set for the 1999 launch on CD Rom followed for the online guide in 2000, but the one thing the owner had to do was invest in a good new software program. He engaged a hobby dev and we actually had no program to distribute that year.

After that I sold in all sorts of business organisations, from start-ups to multinational ( Electrolux, Colt Telecom ), but always hampered by the very small size of the limited Belgian market, with not only competition from other brands but also from the bigger markets by colleagues.

I have become a specialist in finding the win win, just curious what I can do on a global market.