

10 Ways
TO DOMINATE
YOUR COMPETITION

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What You are Supposed to Do to Sell

If you ever get too many rejections in a day, here are probably some of the excuses that you tell your boss:

1. The price is too high that's why they are not buying.
2. The consumers do not find our product trendy.
3. They like the promo of our main competitor better.
4. Those customers are such a tough crowd.

When you think about it, salesmen who talk and talk the entire day until their feet and throats start to kill them are those who see nothing happen good in a day. At the same time, they always find that the customers are always the ones wrong in the scenario. What they fail to understand is that their customers are perfectly fine – if you fail to sell something, there is no one to blame but yourself!

You may think that there is something wrong with the customers that you are dealing with, but they are perfectly fine. Everybody that you are dealing with would know what they are looking for, but they are just not seeing it with the way that you are presenting your product. However, you can improve the situation by understanding that you are capable of improving your performance at your job.

You are the Ultimate Commodity

At this point, you have to understand that people throughout history have purchased items without even knowing what they are for, or when they can use it. However, the merchant has always been the one providing the information and creating the necessity for the consumers. That means that salesmen like you have always had the ability to sell anything to anyone!

However, modern merchants felt that the competition has toughened up the game, and because there are just too many players in the market, selling ideas and products has been such a pain. But the thing is, you do not have to feel that the market is saturated. All you need to do is to understand what makes your customers want to buy. When you think about it, you need to understand that the buyer first buys you before they buy your commodities. I have said for years, it isn't what you sell it's what you stand for. Is your value proposition so great that the competition pales in comparison?

How Consumers Behave

Here is what you should always remember – no matter how much your customers love your product, they will not want to buy from you if they do not like you in the first place. They would rather settle for something else that is similar to what you are selling just to make you feel that they do not need you. There is only one point your customers want to get across: they want to remind you the rule that customers are always right. The only way to build a sustainable business that includes repeat and referral business is to make the experience all about the customer. Yes, I said “experience”. Transaction based selling is dead. Customers want and expect more. In a very competitive market if you're not willing to go the extra mile someone else is.

When I launched FIAT brand back to the US in 2011 I knew we had an uphill battle. My dealership was in Austin TX, the land of SUVs and trucks. This micro car had left the country 20 years prior with the reputation of “Fix It Again Tony”. I knew we couldn't compete at many levels. What I did know is that if we could provide a shopping experience that “wowed” the customer, that inspired the early adopters and creative class to come out and at least give us a chance against some very formidable competitors such as Mini Cooper and Subaru that we would have a shot. The car was cute, well priced and 40 MPG in a 5.00 a gallon gas market.

I decided to locate the dealership in an upscale, aspirational, high end retail space. We had neighbors such as Neiman Marcus, Tiffany's and the Apple Store. I then took it another step to enhance the experience. I built a 30,000-dollar runway in my showroom floor. Why? Because what is the best part of a fashion show?

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The finale of course! So, I implemented a “finale delivery” experience. The car was put on a rotating circular platform and driven down the ‘runway’ to the customer after the paperwork was completed. Why not make the best part of the car buying experience the best? You see we set out to disrupt the automotive buying process. You will learn later about the success we encountered becoming disruptors!!

Customers behave this way because they need to feel that they are important. I used to have a sign on my desk “Customers are not an interruption of your day, they are the reason for your day”. Once you authentically adopt that mind you’re your business will start to radically change for the better. They need to feel that they are in control of their choices, and that they are the ones who are in charge. After all, they are the ones that allow you to make a living.

They will all boil to one thing: you must make it all about the customer. It’s not about you and your needs. Now, let me show you how to truly “Crush the Competition”

What is Neuro Linguistic Programming?

Neuro Linguistic Programming is one of the techniques that are commonly practiced in sales and in human resource. It is basically the approach that makes people get in control of how they communicate and develop themselves. With the help of this approach, people would be able to get the right mindset for them to be aware of the latent skills that they have. Learning how to use NLP in sales would allow you to discover that you have the confidence to achieve your goals and that you can influence other people. The key to a successful and fruitful sales career will be how you master communication. NLP is a proven system that if used properly will help you dominate the competition.

Here are the reasons why NLP techniques are great for sales:

1. People receive information immediately.

People do not need to be aware that they are taking in information without being aware that they are being influenced already. People are able to get information rapidly and they subconsciously react to their environment. Since the absorption of information happens so fast, the mind groups every piece of new knowledge together slowly. When you think about it, your intuition is really based on how the information flowed through you unconsciously.

2. The subconscious can be influenced.

You may think that you have no power over what you think – that it is not true. You can train how you think and how you react towards certain stimuli. That means that you can have the power to control how you think about your past experiences, not the other way around.

3. You can influence the subconscious of others.

Here’s what you should remember: everything that you do and say influences the minds of others. When you read the sentence “Stop smoking cigarettes,” you automatically think about smoking and cigarettes. With the use of words alone, you can make people bypass any resistance that any consumer may have for you. At the same time, you can also influence how other people think about what you offer!

4. Any mental activity comes before behavior.

Any thinking process comes before any action, and when you think about it, one’s thinking directs how one would behave. People often think that they should buy a new dress because they think that their appearance would improve when they do that. Ladies want their hair cut in a certain way because they read somewhere that they would look better if they do so. However, they have already made a decision before they are aware that they are making a decision.

With these things in mind, you can easily see that there is a way for you to influence how people think about you. More importantly, you have a way to change the way you think about yourself and your ability to sell.

What You are Failing to Do

Even if you think that you have been following instructions that your boss has been telling you to do to get a sale, you feel that there is something that you are missing. No matter how many tricks of the trade you have learned, you may have been neglecting the same things over and over again. Successful sales people set up a process and they NEVER deviate from it. If you had a successful process, why would you? The key is to systemize what works, develop your process, and NEVER, NEVER deviate.

If you're not seeing the results you're looking for, here are some action items that could be missing within your process. Carefully study what I have found have been holes over the years. Just by understanding the value of communication in your sales process it could make the difference of tens and thousands of dollars to your paycheck every year.

1. Your customer did not get your message?

People are bombarded with a lot of messages in every possible occasion. Imagine the amount of information that they get whenever they are online, or whenever they watch TV or listen to the radio. You have to realize thought that people are able to tune in to the information that they want to pick up. You may realize that when you are listening to the song – even though the sounds you hear are the same, you would be able to focus on the bass line or the lead guitar.

However, it is up to you to find a way to enable that person you are trying to influence to pick up on your message. All you need to do is to make them aware that you are trying to convey a message that would enable them to realize a goal. The days of leaving long drawn out phone messages are over. I have found the greatest success in short and to the point texts. Remember a text is not an email, treat it like a tweet 140 words or less. People appreciate short, action driven messages.

2. Your messages do not fit your customers.

People listen to things that they are familiar with, just like how you react to the English language. Imagine being forced to listen to a conversation in a foreign language without any visual aid for you to understand it – it sounds like gibberish, right? That is the same way that customers feel when you fail to convey the message in such a way that it would fit with how they understand the world.

For this reason, you need to convey your ideas in such a way that it is comfortable for them and not force them to accept whatever you want to express. While you may think that you like the way you say your sales pitch to your customer, it may not register similarly to them. Many industries have their own internal sales jargon. Stay as far away from that when communicating with a customer as you can. It's great for sales meetings but it's a HUGE turn off to customers. It appears as slick and disingenuous. Instead of thinking what you may possibly like, you may want to think of what would appeal to them instead. When working with a customer for the first time take note of their communication style. Are they analytical? Then a longer more drawn out answer is acceptable, but if they are short and to the point, they will avoid you and your communications if they feel like you're going to over communicate. It's critical you know and respect these lines of communication.

3. You are saying something that does not compel them to take action.

There are some messages out there that are simply not made to make a sale. They are just made to create an image for a product, or simply to convey information. Now, with the use of any action words, you can imprint a message to your audience's mind that what you are offering can be bought. However, it is common mistake that salesmen do to think that if they feed all the information to their customer about their product, they would be able to get that sale. This is tricky. Most people don't want to know how the clock is built. They really just want to know how your product solves a problem for them. You can give someone so much information that they leave confused and are paralyzed about the buying process. Your job is to solve their problem. Once you have identified the problem, what your solution is then don't be shy to ask for the sale.

Your job is to ask for the sale. Don't be shy, embarrassed or back down from a final negotiation. I promise you your customer is expecting you to ask for the sale. If you have done your job properly then then you should be able to move through this process painlessly.

Characteristics Of Highly Successful Salespeople

Selling cannot take place on its own. It always needs a salesperson that would make it a good or a bad sale. Effective and successful salespersons aren't trained in a day. I believe the most successful salespeople are not born they are built. The one thing that they must possess is a love of people. They hone their skills out of experience and their innate study of customers' tendencies. Here are 10 attributes of the most successful salespeople I know.

#1 Determined

A great deal of persistence and determination is needed to be a good salesperson. There would be plenty of instances where you might have to face severe criticism or rejection. During such times, only determination will keep you afloat. The great ones continue to find ways to overcome objections and find solutions for their customer's needs.

It is not easy to convince someone to buy anything even if it just costs a few dollars. It certainly takes a persevering mindset.

If you want to be a high achiever, don't just give up easily. A good salesperson will not just take no for an answer and will be amazing at ensuring that at the end of the negotiations, the customer is delighted. They turn that customer into a raving fan.

#2 Goal Setters

Nothing works without an aim or goal. Expert salespersons devise short as well as long term goals to meet success. They have clarity over what they want and work strategically towards it. They remain focused towards their goals and work against time to meet them. Ask any good salesperson to show his professional planner and you would see each hour of the day and every day of the week being pre planned to meet certain targets. How do you arrive at a destination without a well-planned route? Sales is not any different. You must be intentional about success. Your goals must be measurable and actionable.

Each time you are talking with a prospective buyer, you should have a goal in mind, as this will even give you the motivation to convince the buyer that they need to buy what you are selling.

#3 Inquisitive

A good salesperson always has questions running through their minds. They remain aware and ask prospective customers intelligent questions. They ask questions to know more about the customer's needs so that they can know how their products and services come into the picture. They are also smart enough to endorse their products through their inquisitiveness. Remember to be successful in sales your product MUST solve a customers problem. So the better you are at asking questions, the more successful you will be in solving the customers problem and making a sale.

#4 Good listeners

Successful salespersons are good listeners. They don't believe in using their own gab to sell their products. Rather, they gently persuade their customers to speak about their needs and then present their products or services in the same light. There is a reason that everyone has two ears and one mouth. They first listen carefully and then summarize what their customers have told them. For example: You say, "Mrs. Jones, I hear you telling me that the car you are driving is too small and not fuel efficient. If I could you a larger car with better gas mileage would that be what you are looking to accomplish today?"

If you want customers to buy from you, you need to listen to them so that you can know what their needs are and thus be better placed to show the customer how your product comes into place.

Characteristics Of Highly Successful Salespeople

I would personally not want to buy anything from someone who just bombards me with the different benefits of a particular product or service without knowing whether I am interested in those benefits in the first place. Where benefit selling comes in is AFTER you have done your fact finding, figured out the problem you or your product solves THEN you talk about the benefits of your product as they pertain to the customer's needs.

#5 Passionate

Being passionate is crucial if you want to be a successful salesperson. I have told sales professionals for years "Do what you love and love what you do or don't do it!" You have to be passionate about the product or else your selling will remain hollow and bleak. Good salespersons remain confident in their products. Authenticity is the number one way to earn a customer's trust and most importantly earn their business. I will caution you even though you are passionate about your product or service your customer may not be there yet. So go easy in the beginning. Nobody wants to work with a zealot. Take your time with the customer and bring them along for the ride. Take time to give them real life examples and testimonials as to why you are so "sold" on the product. Tell them your story and why you got involved with the company or product you represent. Remember authenticity goes a long way in the sales process.

#6 Go-Getters

Successful salespersons cannot afford to be laid back otherwise; they would miss the leads and lose their contacts. They have to be always in close contact with potential buyers' base even on a personal level. Apart from the sales pitch, they remain in touch with the customers to find out how the products they bought are functioning as they should or they are experiencing any challenges. They follow up to know if the services the customer bought are suitable or not. They even call customers to know if they require certain products and services that they may have bought a while back. The fortune is in the follow up. Don't fear rejection and abandon your follow-up process.

A good salesperson will not sit and wait for the customer to ask about a particular product but will send reminders as well as more information about current products and services as well as new product and services being launched so that the customer can know what to expect. You are the expert on your product or service. Customers expect you to keep them in the loop. I have seen many sales lost because the sales person didn't keep a customer in the loop about a product launch, rebate or upcoming sale. There is nothing more disheartening for a salesperson to find out their customer bought the same or similar product from someone else. Nine times out of ten it was because of lack of follow up.

#7 Confident

If you want to be the best salesperson, you have to be confident, persuasive and self-assured as rejection is a common feature here. If you are truly bought in on your product or service confidence comes off as natural not arrogant. Successful salespeople must not lose their heart after hearing a 'no'. Rather, they should be able to convert 'no', 'if' or 'but' into the affirmative conversation. No usually means you have not met the customer's needs, solved their problem or they don't feel comfortable dealing with you. It's your job as a professional to try to get to the objection and work through it. I recommend saying "Mrs. Jones I know when we first met you seemed excited about our product. I am curious what has changed? Does the product fit your current needs? Are there any questions or concerns I have not addressed? If the answer to all of those is no, then the next question should be "Mrs. Jones would you feel more comfortable working with someone else on this sale? My ultimate goal is customer satisfaction and I would be happy to refer you to either my boss or teammate." As hard as that action is to take you very well might secure a sale for your company, a partial commission and a customer. Don't let ego get in the way of success. Not everybody is a match and that's ok. It's better to have half of ten deals than all of none.

Characteristics Of Highly Successful Salespeople

#8 Patient

Successful salespersons do not rush into any deal, as they know how suicidal that can be. They handle their customers patiently and do not throttle them with their non-stop chatter.

It's said patience is a virtue. Well that's hard to wrap your mind around sometimes at the end of the month. I have found that customers who are pushed to hard either run the other way or make buying decisions they regret later. That's not good for long term business or referrals. Try to get to the heart of what they need quickly, show them products or services that solve the problem. Stick to exactly what they need so not to confuse them with too many decisions and that will organically speed up the process.

#9 Adaptable

Successful salespersons are flexible and adaptive to deal with all kinds of situations and customers. If nothing is working, they quickly alter their strategy and shift the pivot. The trick is to sell whatever you are selling in a language that the prospective customer understands. Blessed are the flexible when it comes to sales. You may be in a situation the product or service your selling is out of stock, discontinued, has a recall or a million other things. You must be able to show your customers something comparable and not lose your enthusiasm. The greatest salespeople I know can shift on a dime and still make a sale.

#10 Show Empathy

Empathy is simply the ability to identify with customers to feel what they may be feeling and thus make them feel respected. You need to empathize with a customer and the challenges that they may be facing; hence, their need for your product. Once you can identify what they may be feeling, it is very easy to demonstrate your product or service in a way that the customer can feel comfortable with. Show genuine concern for their needs and desires. Listen and feel what they are saying.

Additionally, a salesperson that is able to empathize with customers is likely to gain trust and build rapport with customers, which is crucial if you want to always be making a sale.

Making Introductions

After learning the basic principles, time to draft the sales script. It always starts with making introductions. This sets the mood of the entire sales script. This is also the sales representative's chance at making a good impression and engaging the person at the other end of the line.

In the phone introduction, the following elements are essential:

The name of the caller and the company. It builds trust and rapport because even while they can't see the sales person, at least they have a name to keep in mind. The sales person knows a lot about the prospect and the giving a name is sharing information, making the transaction look fair. Also, it makes the conversation seem more personal. While talking, there will be less awkward moments when the prospect customer does not know how to address the sales representative.

“Hello. I’m Jenny Hickory of Daily Company.”

Professional greetings are the best way to go. Refrain from just saying a quick hello and then immediately launching into the rest of the sales script. Take a breath, pause and allow the other person to join in. Also, it's best to start the greeting on a formal manner instead of a simple hello.

“Good morning Mrs. Ambers. This is Grant Green of Catch Company.”

You can always adjust if the other person wants a less formal conversation. This can be a way of drawing in the prospect client into the conversation. For instance, if he says, “Just call me Hank.” This is a cue that the other person is already interested to hear you out.

Pique the curiosity. Introduce yourself and the name of the company but do not mention the product yet. For example:

“Good morning. I’m Sandra Burns with the FGC Company. We are a local company specializing in helping local businesses such as yours.”

This will pique curiosity as to how and what services and products are available that can be used for their own business. Notice that no specific details were given in order to avoid this response:

“Oh, we already have something like that. Thanks anyway.”

Expressing gratitude is another valuable element in the introduction. What should you thank for? Thank the potential customer for giving time to hear you out. Then give an assurance that you won't keep him/her long.

“Thank you for taking this call. I know you are busy so this won't be very long.”

Avoid using the word “take a moment” or “take too long”. “Taking the call” is OK because it was them that did the taking. But the other lines, it insinuates that you will be taking something from them, which will immediately put them on the defensive.

Stating the purpose of the call is very important for several reasons:

The person at the other end of the line will know what to expect

They do not have to interrupt your sales script just to ask what the call is all about

There are lesser chances that the prospect client will cut you off or hang up while you are in the middle of your sales script.

Making Introductions

You can do this just giving enough information to get them to listen. Some of the best salespeople state the call's purpose through a question. Again, this can be a means to get the prospect saying "Yes" to the little things, which will make it easier for them to say "Yes" to the bigger things.

"If we tell you that we have ways to help improve your current financial situation, would you give time to listen?"

"We have a way to help you grow your business. Are you interested to find out?"

Once they say "Yes" (which is highly likely), you can now really start to sell. But, notice that at this point, you are selling what the service or product can do for them, but not yet the actual service or product.

Tips when making introductions

Smile. Yes, even if the person at the other end of the line cannot see the sales person, the smile on the face is transferred to the tone of the voice. Try sounding cheerful with a frown on the face. It's virtually impossible. Best to put on a smile first before dialing. Consider keeping a mirror at your desk. Sounds silly but you need to glimpse at your facial expressions now and then. A smile and bubbly conversation goes a long way in getting through your sales pitch without someone cutting you off or hanging up.

Try not to sound too pushy or too desperate to make a sale. At times, sales people that appears not to care if they sell or not. The conversation takes on an atmosphere of a courtesy call and not some aggressive sales talk. This gets the prospect client's confidence easier, which increases the chances of ending in a sale.

Introducing Yourself

The first few minutes of ANY sales interaction is crucial to the rest of the sale. You have about five seconds to make a good impression. There are a few key rules for this initial introduction that may be quite different than you are used to hearing, but have proven to dramatically decrease the amount of time wasted with your prospects as well as highly increasing your closing percentage. As the old saying goes, it's all about the set up.

Rule #1: Don't talk about yourself.

Rule #2: Don't talk about your product or service.

Rule #3: Don't recite your sales pitch (or often referred to as an "elevator" speech)

Now obviously, you want to introduce yourself by telling your prospect your name and the purpose of your meeting (or phone call). When stating your name, don't provide your life story with it, just simply "Hello, I am ...". And don't give in to the urge to answer any or all of their questions up front about what you are offering, because they haven't asked any yet. You do not even know yet if your product or service is of any use to your prospect at this point.

You need to genuinely become interested in your prospect at this stage. Ask them questions about their lives. Learn what they like and who they are. Do they have a family? What do they like to do for fun? Remember, their answers are not there so that you can tell stories about yourself. Don't have a hidden agenda or ulterior motives while asking your questions. If you are not paying attention to what they are saying and only thinking of the best timing or approach to inject your offer or opinion so you feel like you're not just silently standing there, you won't be able to truly understand what their issue is and how you will be able to provide them with the best solution with your product or service (we will get deeper into this later in the book). It's OK not to talk. You can still lead the conversation without actually talking more than your prospect. If you are asked a question, make sure you answer it briefly and very direct. This isn't about you. It's about your prospect and if you are right for THEM. I highly recommend taking notes during introductions. Either in person or on the phone. If in person your prospect sees you have a genuine interest in their needs and by phone you can record facts that might help you later make the sale.

Making Introductions

Now during this introduction, you should be doing two things. Asking them questions as stated above and listening to their responses (get to know them as best as you can with a few select questions you will learn later), but also pay attention to their body language. This will eventually lead you into qualifying your prospect.

Does your prospect seem to be in a hurry? Does he or she seem agitated about something or upset in any way? Make sure you ask them if it is a good time to talk. Don't be so concerned with what you are going to say next that you forget that you are talking to another human being and they are as much involved in the conversation as you are. It's OK to offer to meet another day to discuss your product or service. What you definitely DO NOT want to do, is to provide them with what is considered to be a partial presentation. If you get too far down the sales process and you have provided only some of the information, but never got to what you really needed to tell or show them, your likelihood of getting another chance at closing the sale will be very slim because in their mind they were given enough information to make a decision. And usually with partial presentations that decision will end up being no. (you will understand this better once you get further into this book)

Before you begin your introduction to anyone, you should know the "pain points" of your product or service. I'll provide you what this is if you are unfamiliar. You can't have the mentality that you are selling your product or service. If you do this, you will not experience the sales results you want. You have to look at what you have as a SOLUTION. In order for there to be a solution, you have to have a problem. Let's say you are a doctor. You would sit and ask specific questions to your patient to identify the specific problem until you felt comfortable providing the right solution. To identify the problem (without just blurting out every question you can think of), you would ask certain questions like "what hurts?" or "what do you feel when I do this?". These are some pain point questions in this scenario that let the patient tell you their most concerning issue, just like in sales when done correctly. Knowing YOUR pain points for your product or service will allow you to ask certain questions to help identify what problem means the most to your prospect. This brings us back to why we listen so intently and don't jump into anything too quickly. They may provide you a small problem right out of the gate, but still continue with your questions and get to know them in case there is something that is more bothersome that your solution could fix than what they initially stated.

Qualifying your prospect is extremely important if you want to save yourself a lot of time and effort on people who are just tire kicking so to speak. Time is one of the things money cannot buy, so don't waste any if you don't have to, yours or your prospect's. Make sure you are qualifying with QUESTIONS, not with statements. What I mean is (and I know I am repeating myself), don't attempt to "sell" your product or service to your prospect. It is of vital importance to identify the problem (if there is one) so that when it is time for you to offer them your presentation, it will be offering them a solution vs simply selling your amazing product or service.

Keep it simple.

If during your initial introduction you did not identify the problem, just ask them. "What is the problem you are looking to resolve?" "What made you decide to take the step forward for a solution now?" "If you found the right solution, do you have a budget allocated for this project? If not, when do you expect that you will?" These are just a few examples of simple and direct questions that will get you direct answers. In most cases of life, I believe the responsibility of communication and understanding lies with the person communicating (and does for you as well while you are talking or explaining things), but your prospect is always the exception to this rule. YOU have to really pay attention and identify what issue they are having that you will be able to provide your solution for, and they may not be very good at getting that across to you in a simple way. That is why I will always tell you to be direct with your questions and answers. People are busy and distracted. It's critical to get to the point in a way as to not seem pushy or anxious. Time is valuable for both you and your customer. They will appreciate a straightforward approach.

Making Introductions

Asking these series of questions and getting to know the individual will save you a lot of time overall throughout your career. Before you get into the details of the problem that you are going to help them resolve, you want to make sure they are a qualified prospect. The more prospects you talk to and practice this very quick initial relationship building, the better you will become at it and the quicker you will be able to qualify future prospects. Your time is very valuable and you want to make sure you don't waste it. Time is money as they say. Don't expect to perfect what I am teaching you on day one when you finish the book. It will take a little time (depending on your level of sales) to FEEL the difference mixed in with your style, but it won't be long before you start noticing big results even before you "master" the art of connecting and closing as you will learn throughout this book

Presentation

Now it's time for what you have been building up to, the presentation of your product or service. Remember, this presentation you will be giving will have the same essential formula (I will get to this shortly), but will be different in it's approach and content - all dependent on what you have learned so far from your introduction, qualifying, and identifying phases of your process.

Basic principle. Each of your presentations need to have this specific yet basic principle (ex. if you are selling drills, the basic principle would be how good of quality the holes it makes are) regarding your product or service, regardless of how your presentation is going to start or end.

People today do not like or want to be "sold" anything. You can lead them down a path to make the decision to buy your product or service, but don't try to sell them. Lead them down a path where your product or service will come out as the incredible solution they need to fix the issue they are wanting/need resolved. Don't sell the drill, sell the hole.

Let's say for example you were selling drills and have identified and qualified a prospect. If you attempted to sell them your drill, you would be doing much more harm than good. What do I mean by this? Well, if your prospect REALLY knew about drills (or how to fix their underlying issue that ended up with them talking to you) then they would not need you and would be able to find exactly what they need online or in a store and purchase it all by themselves as what is referred to as a transactional purchase. So providing them with ALL of the information you were trained to know will just end up confusing the situation and your prospect. What you should have identified is what kind of hole do they need? That's right. They aren't really looking for a drill to hang on their wall, they need a hole! The drill you offer is simply the solution to their issue and will help them achieve what they are wanting or needing. In this scenario, to make a hole.

Now, don't make your presentation "salesy". You want to present your solution, again based on what you have learned so far, but you want to do it without the old sales pitch mentality that has been drilled into your head so many times before. Make it a regular conversation. If you need to, pretend you are talking to your good friend or family member. They want to FEEL your passion and know that you are fully confident that what you are offering is the best solution for their want or need and you would feel confident selling it to your child if they were in a similar situation.

That brings up a good point on the belief you have in your product or service. If you do not think what you are selling is worth purchasing (if you would not buy it yourself), you will immediately create a major uphill battle to convince someone else that they should purchase it. People want to feel your enthusiasm and energy about your product or service. They want to know why YOU chose to not only believe in what you're offering, but why you have the confidence to offer it to them as a solution and benefit to THEIR life.

Making Introductions

This applies with any product or service in any industry. I'm not saying it will be impossible for you make sales if you don't believe in the product or service you are selling, but if you think the drill is cheap and ugly, why would you want to attempt to convince someone else to love the drill? Integrity means a lot to people and they can feel it based on your passion if you are pretending.

On the flip side, remember to be clear and direct. I have seen the opposite so many times where someone who is so passionate about their product or service that they oversell. It is actually quite common. Don't get caught up in "pitching" your product or service. Instead, pride yourself on explaining the concept quickly, clearly, and in a very simple way that even a young child could understand.

Keep your confidence high (regardless of your level of expertise with your product). I was given an example once that made perfect sense. If you took an entry level-one dance class, and you were talking to someone about dancing who had never taken a dance class before, YOU would be the expert. And they are going to expect you to be that expert. So be it and know that you are educating them on your product or service. They probably didn't do as much research as you think (if any).

Another big point is always keep an abundance mentality. If you have what is referred to as a scarcity mentality while you are offering your solution to your prospect (meaning you are worried that you don't have many other prospects and feel you NEED to make the sale), your prospect will pick up on it immediately and that can cause a big roadblock in their decision-making process. Regardless of what people say or think, individuals make buying decisions emotionally. They may require some information and have some logical questions, but the actual decision to purchase is emotional and the information will mainly be used later to justify their purchase to their friends, family, or coworkers. Don't make them feel like you are desperate to make a sale. No one wants to feel like they are one of very few people who have purchased any product or service. If they feel that scarcity mentality, they may question why and assume you don't sell too many. Guess what, if they don't really see value at that point, it will turn into a no. Keep an abundance mentality always.

Be direct. Don't elaborate too much on your solution. Make sure you point out the highlights from what you learned from their needs and stick with them closely. Don't answer any unasked questions so to speak. What you don't say during the sales process is as important as what you do say. Keep on point and don't stray off and lose their (or your) focus.

Solving A Problem

The next step in making a successful sale is to find a need. People only buy something if they find it a need. As a sales person, it is your responsibility to help potential clients see your product as something they need. This is where fact finding becomes essential. Talk to your customer about what problem they are looking to solve. Become a solution expert, not a salesperson. That will set you apart from the competition.

To do this, the salesperson must know what the company offers. You are the expert when it comes to the solutions you offer. To truly crush the competition you must be diligent about knowing the competition as well if not better than you know your own product. That way when a customer throws out an objection and wants to shop further you will be able to answer their concerns, and possibly avoid them leaving to shop the competition.

For example, the client is a small local business, say, a bakery. Your company is selling different baking equipment and supplies such as large mixers, sacks of flours from different grains, trays, tins, mechanical rollers, etc. When you make that call, you should know every equipment and supply your company offers. This way, you can offer something for very need that the client may present. Also, a thorough knowledge can help you in giving better options or suggesting a few more things to amp your sales. For instance:

Baking equipment: large or small? Countertop or industrial size?

Mixers: Stand or Hand-held?

Dough rollers: Counter-top or larger?

Pasta rollers: basic, modern, traditional?

Baking supplies: organic, regular, specialty?

Flour: white, organic, gluten-free, whole wheat, bleached, specialty?

Cocoa: dairy-free, pure, 70%, organic?

And so on. The more the company offers, the more there is to know. To make things more efficient, get a list. Read through it before taking any calls to be familiar on what the company offers. Have this list handy in case you need to refer to it during the call. Being familiar with what the list contains is very important so that when you do have to consult it, you won't be wasting too much time scanning through it. Keeping a potential client on hold is hugely decreasing the chances for a successful sale. It is also helpful to have the price list handy but never say the price immediately. for instance, never do this:

Client: Well, I think my bakery would need some upgrade on the equipment. What do you have?

Sales: We have heavy duty stand mixers starting at \$299. We also have the newest dough rollers starting at \$350.

Price is not very important, especially if one is buying a need. It is more of the value. It is better to highlight benefits of the offered product because price can be really cheap but will still be unattractive for the prospect client because he/she does not see any value for it. This same client can easily place an order for the most expensive equipment available if he/she sees that it will be a valuable addition for his/her own venture. A good salesperson explains the ROI (return on investment) when it comes to product sales. If you can show the client the income potential the initial investment or shopping the competition becomes less important.

Sales: We have a wide range of baking equipment from stand and hand-held mixers to large convection ovens. Each of these is made from high-quality material, incorporating the latest technology. We also offer warranties for these products.

Solving A Problem

Then go into details about each product. It may be useful to ask at this point what the client has in mind. Or, better yet, use your background information on the client and offer something that might be of interest. For example, the bakery is gaining popularity or seeking to expand its own baked products. Offer larger equipment or offer packaging machines. Once the client has chosen an item, then you can give the price.

Essential information

As has been previously mentioned, sales people must know and handle the following basic things:

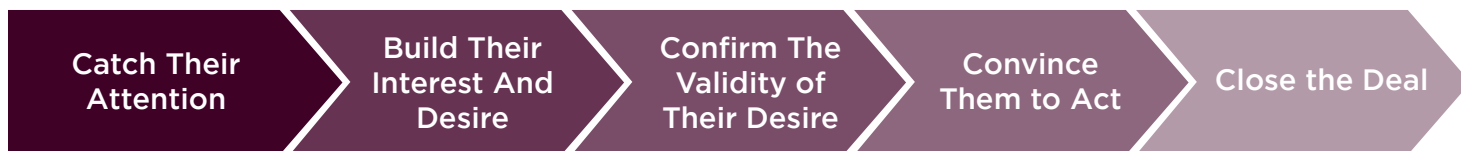
- Sales orders
- Inquiries about the merchandise or available services
- Schedule of services or deliveries
- Service calls
- Follow up calls
- Policies on returns and/or exchanges of services or products
- Complaints
- Other customer service concerns such as follow-ups, replacements and price adjustments

Aside from these information, an effective salesperson must know these basic things that might come in handy during any phone sales conversation:

- Copies of the company's advertising and marketing ads and promotions
- Copies of ads by competitors, just to make a personal comparison or at least to be informed and not be caught off-guard when the prospect client mentions something like this.
- Order and Shipping forms
- Credit card forms
- Scratch pads and calculators
- Pricing guides
- Availability and schedules of services and products
- Legal disclaimers
- Company policies

Develop your Own Sales Strategy

Every client is unique, so there is no template to follow. There is, however, a general guideline that can be followed for selling a product. To sell anything use the flowchart below for a broad overview of what to do while filling in the specific steps with your own uniquely developed sales persona.



Engaging the Customer

Tell an interesting story – People love stories. If you have a personal testimonial as to way you personally like the product, example maybe you were a customer before you went to work at the company. If not your story have a few stories of happy clients. Show them your company's social media page with happy clients, google and Yelp reviews. Third party testimonials are the most powerful sales tool you could have in your arsenal. Like we've said before, start off your pitch with a story. It'll undoubtedly grab their attention and help them to engage in a meaningful and productive conversation that leads to a sale. Keep the stories interesting, informative, and relevant with your product or service.

Because you are giving information through a story, the client will remember facts more. Ask them their story. What about your product or service enticed them to contact you? How do they see your product or service solving a problem? Let them help you sell them. By turning the story tables, they might just talk themselves into your product or service. The best sales people help their customers reach their own conclusions. This avoids hard selling or closing tactics.

Draw attention to your face – Make eye contact with individual clients. As you do this, you'll bond more with them and they'll begin to trust you. You'll begin to talk to them on a personal level. This works especially well when pitching to an audience or multiple clients at once. To gain the trust and confidence of your customers give them your undivided attention. Look them straight in the eye. Don't fidget or look away during conversations. They are the most important person in the universe to you and your company during that sales process. You only have one chance to make a great first impression. Nobody likes a "shifty" salesperson.

Give a shocking bit of information – Another way to catch attention is surprising clients with information about the product. A claim like "do you think this mop can suck up 5 gallons of water?" will surely make them wonder. Crazy fact, ridiculous tidbits, and flashy headlines will jar their attention to the product. Your clients, as your audience, will want to know more about what you said. So long as the claim is true, they will be impressed and want to learn more. Have fun with it. We sold paint and fabric protectors for cars at my dealership. Every once in a while, we would do live demonstrations of trying to set the paint on fire. We made sure it was on a Saturday and we had a showroom full of folks. Not one customer DIDN'T buy the protection package after they saw it demonstrated live. It made a very strong impression. Another benefit was once the sales team saw it live just one time they told every customer about it with enthusiasm. Guess what? Our sales of that product doubled. The salespeople felt it was their responsibility to make sure their customers know about this amazing protection package that extended the life of their paint and interior. You see at that point their job went from selling to telling. A much easier way to make a living.

Develop your Own Sales Strategy

Building their Interest and Desire

Once you've caught their attention, your next step is to build their interest. Really engage them on the product.

Highlight your product's benefits – Highlight the best parts of the product by showing the benefits. This is the part where you will use what you know about the client's needs, wants, preferences, and biases to specifically craft the product in the buyer's mind. Tell how it helps, demonstrate its use, and differentiate it from competition.

Tell them about specific cases – Tell another story about a previous client that used the product. The more real the story is, the more the buyer will realize that the product helps. Have customer testimonials ready, show pictures. If it's a high-ticket item offer to allow them to contact previous clients. When the customer can see for themselves, have third party testimonials or live product demonstrations it's much easier to move them from prospect to customer.

Also, give them unique and specific uses of the product and how it can enhance the client's life. The more personal you make a pitch, the more they buyer will want to buy.

Give options– Options give buyers choices, and that makes them feel in-control. By giving a few clear choices regarding their purchase, they will be inclined to choose one. Too many options can confuse and frustrate buyers, so keep the choices small.

Confirming the Validity of their Desire

Now you should see that your client is starting to express their desire to buy the product; confirm their desires to seal the deal. Sweep them off their feet and prove that their desire is warranted, because they need and want the product.

Give statistics – Statistics nudge consumers in the right direction by showing that other people have made the same choice. If 20,000 people's lives have been improved by this gadget, then surely theirs will be improved too. Statistics about success rates, number of units sold, or amount of satisfied people can help immensely as the buyer understands their choice is correct. If available have product reviews from experts.

Use the take away to your advantage – People hate to lose things. Give the client scenarios of using the product and how his life would be better with it. Afterwards, mention everything that they would 'lose out on' by not buying the product.

Convince Them to Act

Create a sense of urgency – By offering limited time deals or bonuses for the first few customers, more clients will rush to buy the product. They'll feel as though time is short and they might miss out on the amazing product. It's critical you create a call to action that has some sort of end date. For example, end of month deal, bonus if you purchase now, early bird specials, affinity group discounts. Whatever you can use that authentically helps them make a buying decision sooner than later. It's my experience you must strike while the iron is hot. It's typically hottest when they are sitting in front of you.

Create a sense of scarcity – A limited number of stock can really make a client purchase on-the-spot. You should create a sense of scarcity without lying, though- tell the client how popular the product is and the uncertain availability of it in the coming weeks. When it seems like they could miss out because of inactivity, the client will usually attempt to purchase the product sooner. This works with services also. Limit the number of new clients you take each month. Let them know if they don't act now they will have to wait to work with you. Convince them the sooner they get started the faster you can solve the problem that they originally sought you out for.

Develop your Own Sales Strategy

Close the Deal

After enticing the clients and selling them on the product, the final step is to actually close the deal. Nothing is worse than getting this far and then losing a client, so pay attention to how professionals do it. Remember the ABC's Always Be Closing. That's why all the way through the process you are asking closing questions that help them come to their own conclusions.

Present the Offer – This is the hardest part- asking them buy. So many times, that is where fear sets in for salespeople. The fear of rejection, the fear of negotiation, now is the time you use all the intel gathered during your time together and create a proposal that outlines your product or service but also shows the client how it solves their problem or makes their life better. This is the tricky part. If done correctly, you will increase your closing ratio by 50%. Don't rush closing the deal or you could lose the client. Instead, continue to build up the desire for your product.

Assure the client of continued relationship – The beginning of a customer relationship truly starts at the close of the sale. I believe customers really don't know how great you or your company is until you have to handle adversity or a problem. That's when you get to shine. I have created more customers for life because of how I cared for them when they were angry and their car was sitting in pieces in the shop. That's when I got to show what I was made of and most always ended with a satisfied customer for life. Never, never run from a problem. Give your clients a reassurance that they will hear from you again. They'll feel cared for, and the personal care they receive may earn you more clients through referrals.

Hype up potential awards for referrals – Successful salespeople know the value of relationship selling. Satisfied customers will talk to their friends and pique their interest. Word-of-mouth spreads fast, so explain to your customers that referrals are the lifeblood of your business. Discounts and freebies are great incentives. By creating a network of referred clients, you are building a system of potential sales. Create raving fans. You see the easiest customer to sell is a customer that has been referred by another customer. That is how you build a profitable and long term business.

Conclusively, the key to success is my general 5-step sales strategy – catch the client's attention, intrigue them, convince them that they are perfect for the product, make them want it now, and then close the deal. Combine the steps with your preferred selling method and personality to create a method that works best for your specific clients. Over time, refine your approach.

After preparing yourself, mastering your product, knowing your clients and developing your own strategy, there is only one thing left to learn – psychology. The best salespeople tend to sell more products because they can build rapport with their clients. Professional sellers seem like they can sell anything to anyone, and they do this by taking advantage of the brain. Remember that buyers are more interested in your product if they like you as a person, so making them like you will make them like the product. Try these 4 tricks to bond with your client and increase their chances of buying.

Trick #1: The Midas Touch

When conversing with your client, touch them subtly on the shoulder. Scientific studies have shown that the human touch makes the brain release oxytocin, which is the hormone released when bonding with someone. Even if the person who was touched didn't notice it, he or she will feel "attached" to the person who touched them. Be subtle and do not overdo it though, because instead of feeling attached your client may feel awkward. Learning the best way to physically interact with your clients is a skill best learned through trial and error. If you're too scared to touch and mingle with your clients then they will notice and the encounter will seem more awkward.

Trick #2: The Anchoring Effect

People's brains tend to anchor on a given number. For example, tell someone that it takes 600 gallons of water to produce a specific drink. Then ask them how much they think it would cost. Through a trick of the brain, the person will most likely reply with an amount within the \$500-\$700 range. Because the number 600 is still fresh in their head, their brain "anchored" upon it and referred back when answering the next question.

Besides the previous example, anchoring can also be used to set a price point. When striking a bargain, give a number slightly above the range that favors you. So if you want to sell a pen for 3 dollars list the price to your client as 5 dollars. Their brain will anchor on 5 and the acceptable price range for them is now in the 3-6 dollar range. You're not tricking them; you are only taking advantage of how our brains work to get a more favorable price from them.

Trick #3: Mirroring

Therapists and "pick-up artists" have used mirroring to gain rapport for years. Mirroring refers to copying the actions of another. If they have arms crossed and you do too, their brain establishes a link between you two. Similarly, nodding your head often with a potential buyer will make them nod their head too, and they will be more likely to buy. The brain thinks you are agreeing when nodding, so keeping clients agreeing will make them agree with you more.

Trick #4: The Foot-in-the-door

Salespeople use the foot-in-the-door technique on a regular basis. By pulling off a smaller sale with a client, the client will be more receptive to make larger deals. When selling a larger product, start small and work your way up with the clients.

Before trying out these tricks on clients, practice by selling ideas to your friends and family. Hone your ability to earn rapport with people, and eventually move on to.

The Numbers Game

It's been said repeatedly so far: selling is a numbers game. You need to have the greatest exposure possible to get the largest potential customer base. Advertise, promote, and spread the word about your product. Through every possible channel you need to be bringing attention to it. Knock on doors, leave fliers, create a social media buzz, and follow any sales leads that you get. People will begin to gain a general familiarity with your product, and you can then begin to make sales. Brand recognition is powerful, and the only way to build up recognition is to play the numbers game and make people aware.

The numbers game also applies to closing deals. Pro sellers aren't anal about chasing a single sale; pro sellers ditch flip-flop customers and find new ones. The more customers you get the more money you make, so what does a single client matter? Focus on the big picture and get rid of "one-itis".

The Pareto principle, also known as the 80:20 rule is a rule of thumb that states 80% of sales will come from 20% of clients. The numbers game ties in well here, as it proves that you'll need to create systems and refine relationships with "core" customers that will continue to purchase your products. If you don't have the core buyers yet, then you need to get back to pitching your product to as many people as possible.

Once you have a buyer that has purchased your products, enhance your relationship with them and try to convert them into a core customer. Scale up with Pareto in mind, because 20% more core clients could equal 80% more profits.

Overall, you need to be out there right now selling as much as possible. Dedicating yourself to selling and creating relationships with clients will lead to extra profits.

Obtain everything that we have proposed to ourselves. If we use correctly the time, the resources and everything that we have in our hands for our planning and our movements, we will get to the success of the sale of our product or service.

We should watch with interest what the customer is telling us because if we are focused we will resolve all the objections that arise with our clients.

The interest includes the interest of qualify and educate ourselves to become a professional seller, so our emotionality flows through the positive and successful side of us.

Negotiate vs Sell

The process of negotiate is often confused with selling. When you negotiate you have to use so many of the techniques of the selling, but it is a much more complex process. The one who is negotiating is looking for the solution that meets the needs of the both parts – sometimes opposed. Sales skills are needed for negotiators to focus their interactions so they can achieve commitments at each stage, until this agreement is successfully concluded.

- Building relationships
- Longer terms
- Earn customer and sell
- Sales Skill
- Direct

In my demonstration

In my demonstration is one of the most important aspects in the beautiful world of the sales. We could say that in this motivation model this demonstration would be art.

The seller must prepare the demonstration and everything that is related to the product for the day that he is going to offer it to his customers.

In this respect the movement model has an important and high charge for planning your visit of your sales and goals.

A good presentation should contain

1. Explanation of your product or service
2. Concept of our product or service
3. How it works
4. Benefits
5. Successful Closing of the Sale

Empathy

The empathy is very important because with this we can understand better the need of our customer and we can match in so many ways with them.

The empathy is essentially the ability to put yourself in the place of others, the ability to sense precisely the reactions, feelings and needs of our interlocutor.

The empathy involves the possibility of filing a fluid and constructive communication, through a sensitive and receptive attitude to the other.

An empathetic person can easily recognize the clues and cues that the listener offers so they can relate in an effective and rewarding way for both.

Listen: All the questions and objections of my client and wait at least 4 seconds to give him a good answer.

We must find a **need** and make it a profit for what we are offering. We must listen and observe and so when we meet and detect our customer needs our product or service can be used to close a sale.

It is important to use the proper and necessary time to communicate and express what we offering with our product or service.

Negotiate vs Sell

We summarize the needs that our product or service can solve for our client, and it is important that we express what we sense and understand of their needs so we can expose our summary with a question.

Movement Model

The initiation of the movement model is fundamental for a good sale in every way. If you wish to complement and reinforce the movement model you can buy the book Motivation.

We have reached one of the most important models to plan our goals correctly and complete.

The movement model has three phases: initiation, promotion and reinforcement.

We have focused on the beginning phase because we believe that with this guide you can become the most motivated and efficient seller of the world.

Start to Love

Interest

The interest that we give to the client will influence largely on the success of our sale.

Keep our customer interested is vital for a happy and complete closure between the parts.

We must keep our customer interested by using all the means that offer the social networks and the internet so that incentive will become one benefit of all our proposals.

Star to Love

Start to love is one of the most important models of our motivation model as we had always explain it. We always must start to love our movements and our goals and in the beginning the continuity is essential because our love should not be reduced at any time.

Start to love is the work that I'm doing by using all these tools that I have such talents that I have not found that I have to use them towards my goals.

Anticipation

The anticipation, as well as the word says, is that we must anticipate to the facts in this motivation model. It means anticipate the answers to the possible questions that can ask us our customer. It is important to clarify that we must listen and never lose our focus from the next question that we will do to our customer. Anticipation is preparing responses to be natural to respond to our customer so we must study them in advance to avoid falling into the trap of not knowing the answer.

Market

In the world of the sales the market where I'm working is very important for the planning and the motivation that I have to do for my sales. However effective and original is our advertising campaign, it is impossible to reach a market that we don't know well. The first step of a relationship is based on mutual understanding of the partners: tastes, interests, aspirations ... two strangers won't understand if they not previously known each other. The market has some homogeneous characteristics that we should know if we want to discover the reasons why customers are going to prefer us and not the competition. The company must define a target market and focus on that territory.

The market is the identifiable group of consumers with a purchasing power that are willing to pay for a product or service.

Negotiate vs Sell

Amplify

We must amplify everything on our expertise in sales and development of our profession so every day we expand our minds and be more open to learning and update us in many aspects such as technology. Amplify as the word says is ample, in this case we must focus on expanding our knowledge, our relationships, our emotional intelligence, our inspiration, our techniques, our gratitude, our attitude, our responsibility, our order, our imagination, our innovation our optimism and our movement model. Amplify on the good sense of increasing wealth and all that is required for optimal performance in one of the most beautiful profession on the planet earth as the sales.

Reflection

The word reflection is very important when we have not closed the sale and when we closed it. When we have not closed the sale we must think what we missed and what we must complement and express to our client to close the sale. If we close the sale the reflection is to use the tactics that we used in this sale and reflect on what we should improve.

The Biggest Mistake in Salesmanship

You may have heard the old adage, “everyone is in sales”, and whether you want to believe it or not, it’s true. You either sell your kids, girlfriend, husband, parents, etc. on seeing things your way, or they sell you theirs.

This doesn’t mean life is full of conflict, mistrust, or about battling with others. It’s just an understanding that the style of effective communication and the persuasion concepts in this book can be applied to raising a family, romantic relationships, or in business.

Having said that, the number one mistake that most sales people make when they’re presenting something the prospect doesn’t want to hear, is trying to tell the other person what needs to be done.

It almost hurts me to say those words because how much do YOU like to be told what you have to do?

Not at all?

Me neither... In fact, I absolutely HATE it, and my pride makes me want to resist anyone who’s trying to “boss me around”.

It’s a part of human nature, especially in the culture of North America where we are repeatedly taught about freedom and being able to create our own destiny.

In fact, this part of human nature is so strong that I recently heard a comedian relaying a joke about it. He was emphasizing about how strong willed New Yorkers are and shared a story about when he was buying groceries in Manhattan.

When the teller finished checking him out at the register he routinely said, “Thank you. Have a nice day.”

The teller immediately gave him a dirty look and said, “Don’t tell me what to do!”

Now THAT’S a strong instinct...

Thus, approaching a prospect and telling them what they ‘must do’ will immediately create a wall or separation between you and the other person. Once this barrier has been established, it will take 10 times the salesmanship and effort to ever get back to a level of rapport where you are able to be as powerful as you want to be while influencing others.

Negotiate vs Sell

Because of this, it's essential to start off on the right foot and avoid the natural tendency to go straight for what we want to happen. We must first establish what **they** want and use that knowledge to effectively navigate around the natural resistance that appears when we begin directing people without their consent.

The good news is that this same human nature can also be an ally if you know how to effectively harness it, so let's talk about that next...

So, in working with human nature, rather than **telling** people what to do, I'm going to help you master the **power of asking effective questions** and framing those questions with the proper context.

That might sound really simple on the surface, but let me explain what I mean a little more deeply...

First, we need to define the term **context**.

It's pretty simple, but fiercely important that you understand the difference between content and context.

Content is **what** you're saying.

Context is the **background, surroundings, or situation** in which what you're saying is being referenced.

So let's take the example of something very simple to understand - a gun.

A gun as the object is content.

How the gun is being used is the context.

You can use a gun to shoot yourself in the foot, commit crime or hurt others. However, you can also use it to provide dinner for your starving family. How it is viewed (good or bad) all depends on the situation - the context.

There are a lot of things (content) out there that can be used in many different ways (context), and your ability to present to people is one of those areas where context is critical.

Another example of content is money.

Money can be used to provide for your loved ones, or it can be used to purchase illegal drugs. The money itself (content) only has a certain meaning based purely on how it's being presented. It isn't inherently good or bad until we understand the context in which it's being used.

So how does this apply to you selling your product or service ethically and effectively?

In your job or business you will inevitably be presenting to prospective buyers, and the information you give them along with the questions you ask them will be the content. This content isn't likely to change too much because ultimately each customer needs to know certain information in order to understand your product or service to purchase it.

However, the way the prospect views you during the conversation will be the context - and it is vital that you are consciously creating the context that will serve both you and the prospect the best.

Will they see you as someone they don't trust, or will they see you as a friend giving them helpful advice?

Purposefully and Effectively Creating the Buyer's Perspective is the Unwritten Key to Salesmanship

Let me give you some practical examples of what using context effectively looks like...

Negotiate vs Sell

A lot of times as I'm coaching business owners or salespeople, I use exercises with clients that will help them to increase their awareness. I do this because increasing their awareness is the only way they can consistently make better decisions. These better choices help them in increasing their career production, lead to them having more fun in life, living healthier, cultivating their relationships, and more...

But at the end of the day, as a coach, I have to help my clients to do things that sometimes they know they **should** do, but they may not **want** to do.

In most cases they've created a resistance to taking the action that needs to be carried out, and it's keeping them from achieving their goals (often subconsciously). This is an especially difficult type of 'sale' because I'm working in an area where people already don't want to 'buy' the idea.

The goal in creating effective context is to help people understand that I am on their team. If they can understand that we both want the same thing, and that we must work together to get it, then the chances of mutual success are exponentially higher.

This approach also short circuits the natural resistance that prospects feel when they believe they're being sold something. If they feel that you are "on the **other** side of the negotiating table" rather than being on **their** side, it's going to be tough on both of you. If context is used correctly, you'll become their adviser rather than their adversary.

Everyone has excuses as to why they can't participate, or buy, or take action. I'm sure you've heard it a thousand times.

That very fact is why being an adviser while guiding the prospect through your sales process is so powerful. It helps people get past their own excuses without creating a resistance toward you.

Once they've brought up their objection, it's your chance to establish yourself as being 'on their team' rather than 'against them'.

So, rather than being confrontational or offensive to my client and directly saying, "Joe, why aren't you doing your action items? You're a waste of time and your excuses are crappy." I need to find a more effective way to influence and support him than simply beating up on him.

In fact, Joe is probably already beating up on himself a whole lot more than I ever could, so he doesn't need me to add to the bruising, right?

With sales, your customer already knows if they are being cheap, making excuses, or wimping out – so beating them up for it doesn't work toward building a good relationship.

Think about it...

We've all been through a situation where we know we're supposed to be doing something (exercising, eating better, solving a problem at home or work, going to bed earlier, etc.) and we haven't been following through, or we're wimping out on buying / doing / practicing something.

It's the same thing with any of your customers. They know that they probably need your product, service, or experience. That's why they're in front of you. The question is whether you can keep that relationship strong while helping them overcome their own doubts.

This is where context makes all of the difference...

Do the Opposite of Your Instincts

In talking with prospects, your natural instinct is to direct them (or tell them) what to do. But acting in this manner will get you exactly the opposite of what you want to have happen.

In the example above, instead of telling Joe what to do, I need to begin by asking Joe questions.

These opening questions are part of the content and help me establish what he's thinking, what's important to him, and why he needs my help. But before I dive into the tough questions that might make him uncomfortable, I need to create the proper context so that Joe knows I'm on his side.

It's a mistake to go straight in and say, "Joe, why aren't you doing / buying this?" because he'll be thinking, "Hey. Why is this guy is being a jerk?" or "This guy's confrontational. I don't like him."

This type of "bulldozer" approach will almost always create resistance and drive the person away.

Instead it's vital that he interprets that I'm asking the tough questions **for his own benefit**.

He needs to understand that I'm asking tough questions because I'm on his side and I want the same outcome that he wants. In other words, I'm being hard on him because I genuinely care about his best interests.

I emphasize this because if we're going to communicate effectively, we must realize that the intention behind what we say isn't enough. We've got to be crystal clear and make sure our prospect understands what we mean correctly.

The True Test of Effective Communication

Isn't in the Message Being Sent,

It's the Message Being Received

And Interpreted by the Listener.

If Joe knows that I'm on his side, he's going to be able to interpret the information and powerful questioning more clearly which will allow him to take action on it (IE. Buy your product or service).

So directly approaching the problem without making sure he understands **why** I'm asking the tough questions will likely turn into a "me against him" scenario.

Guess who's going to win that?

Exactly, nobody's going to win.

So the objective at this point in the sales process is to create a situation where you can help people genuinely accomplish what they want while also getting paid, getting a new customer, or continuing to serve this person with your products and services.

To continue with the example of Joe...

As I'm talking to Joe and he says, "No, I haven't been doing my action items and I'm frustrated with life, and I'm not getting the results I want." I can look at him and I can say, "Joe, you pay me to be your coach, correct?"

Next I might ask, "You're here, so that you can get results, aren't you?"

Do the Opposite of Your Instincts

And Joe would say, “Well, yeah, I am.”

Then I will ask, “Okay. Do I have permission to coach you?”

At that point Joe is going to say “Yes,” and that’s going to give me permission to be much more powerful.

I may continue to create context by saying, “Joe, the reason that you came to me is that I can help you with (insert your product), and you didn’t come here because you wanted to get bossed around or beat up on. You came here because you wanted to accomplish something, right?”

Once he agrees, he can see that I’m on his side. Now we can turn his excuse or objection around and start moving toward our goal / sale / action.

I’d then lead with, “Okay then, let’s get some results. What I’m about to say, I’m saying because you pay me to help you get those results, so I’m here to be your coach. We want the same things; we want you to be successful. There’s nothing that would make me happier than for you to accomplish your goals, so here’s what we need to do. We need to find out why you are not completing your action items. What’s getting in the way?”

When you read this part of the conversation it’s very obvious that I’m repeatedly making a point of the idea that I’m committed to **helping the prospect get what they want**.

To me genuinely being authentic and ethical in your salesmanship means doing everything in your power to help the prospect achieve their objective – even if it’s tough.

Also, it may seem a little repetitious to say the same thing in several different ways, but not surprisingly, people need to hear things more than once before they sink in. If you’ve ever had a new employee or child, you understand what I mean.

People rarely grasp what you are telling them the first time they hear it, so don’t afraid to make your point more than once.

After I’ve made my point and gotten their confirmation that they see me as someone on their side, I go directly to the same question typically asked from the beginning, “Why you aren’t you completing your action items?”

However, this time I had created the context that I’m asking questions to help Joe get what he wants. Because of the context that has been created, Joe clearly understood that the reason I was going to be hard on him. He’ll now be much more responsive and open to my help in taking action.

That’s just one simple example, and now that you’ve seen something concrete, let me break the principle of using context down a little bit further.

The Nuts and Bolts of a Powerful Conversation

The first thing you want to do when you're creating context is concretely establish that you are the expert. Not in a condescending way, but in a way that lets the prospect know that you are the one who can truly help them get what they want.

This may require you to demonstrate your competence if a relationship is new because a prospective client must believe you know what you are talking about in order for them to begin trusting you.

Fortunately, demonstrating your expertise is quite simple to do if you truly know your product, service, or industry. (And if you don't know your product / service / industry, then do whatever it takes to learn your craft because all of the salesmanship in the world is wasted if you don't understand what you are selling.)

So how do you establish expertise?

The most tried and true way I've found is to tell them something important that they don't already know about your product or service. It could be a common misconception, a simple fact that is often overlooked, or something that you'd have to be a 'nerd' in your subject to know.

For example, if I were selling dance lessons to someone (I'm a lifelong swing dancer and was a teacher at one point), I might point out the difference between Lindy Hop Swing and West Coast Swing. Most people have no idea that there are nearly a dozen types of swing, and that each of them is done to a specific type or tempo of music.

For someone who wants to enjoy swing for exercise, to meet new people, to feel sexy, or just to learn the basics of dancing – this is an essential distinction.

In this example, by teaching the prospect something they didn't know, but which might be relevant to what they want to accomplish, I've established myself as someone who can guide them. This builds trust and enhances your relationship with prospects very rapidly.

So, to put this idea into action, take a moment right now to write down some of the most important or misunderstood facts about your product(s) and how you could present them in a way that would build a genuine relationship with your prospective clients. The following example questions might help unearth some ideas:

What do they need to know that most people don't understand?

What do most prospects 'think' they know that you can help them understand correctly?

Is there a surprising and beneficial feature of your product or service?

How could you explain a seemingly complex product/feature/benefit in a way that helps the listener understand it in a simple way?

The Nuts and Bolts of a Powerful Conversation

Is there an unfounded fear about your product that you can demystify?

What is the most common reason people don't buy your product, and how can you show them the fallacy the keeps others away?

NOTE: When demonstrating your expertise, don't make the mistake of bashing the competition or other products. This doesn't build trust, it makes you look like a jerk, and is a HUGE turn off for many prospective customers. Instead, take the high road and stay laser focused on how you can meet their needs.

Occasionally, you'll find a prospect who wants to demonstrate their competence and expertise. They will blather on about how much they know about your product or service – don't let this intimidate you. This is an opportunity to use one of the most effective people skills ever invented – LISTENING.

Simply open up your ears and take in what they are saying because the prospect will give you all of the information you need to exercise your salesmanship and ethically close the deal.

While listening it is vital to pay attention to what the prospect is saying, but it's even more important to observe what they are NOT saying.

What the Prospect is NOT Saying is Often More
Important Than What They ARE Saying...

Once they've told you everything they know, you'll understand exactly how they view your product or service. At this point it's your turn to speak to them in a language that they will understand as you share your thoughts.

My favorite response to a 'know it all' prospect is to pick something that they missed or where they have a misunderstanding and say, "Wow, it sounds like you've done your research. Can I show you something important that you may not know?"

This gives them an authentic compliment, but immediately establishes you as the authority on the subject.

On the other hand, if you are talking to a longer standing client they may already understand your product quite well. In this case you may need to reestablish your expertise, but it may not be so easy to find something they don't know about your product or service.

If this is your situation you'll want to take a different approach. For example, you may reassert your competence by showing them why they began working with you in the first place and why that decision made sense.

Another way to reestablish your expertise is by demonstrating leadership. For example you could point out when you've correctly advised the client in the past by helping them avoid costly mistakes, handling their challenges, or guiding them through uncertain waters.

No matter what your approach, it's important to help remind the existing client why they work with you, and not someone else (especially if you sell something that is a commodity). You might revisit the value of the relationship, paint a picture of future prospects together, or anything else that will remind the client why you are their best choice.

Any of these will help them realize that you are an asset and have guidance to offer that is valuable and worth considering.

The Nuts and Bolts of a Powerful Conversation

Once you've established (or reestablished) this credibility, you must then get them to allow you onto their side of the table (again).

In the example that I just gave, I asked, "Joe, you come to me for coaching because you want to get a result, right? And you pay me, so that you can reach those results, correct?" and he says, "Yes."

Next I ask the magic question, "Do I have permission to coach/advise/help you?"

Once he agrees to my help, I've fully re-established my position of authority in the conversation.

Asking permission to "help", "guide" or "coach" someone is a very polite way of saying, "Listen, I know what I'm talking about. Are you willing to let me show you the way?"

Another way you can get onto the prospect's side of the table (and be on their team) is by saying something like, "Because I want you to make the best decision possible, I want to show you something that I'm pretty sure you'll want to see. Is that okay?"

This statement immediately implies that you are telling them something because you care about their well being and that what you're about to say is important. This approach then asks for permission to lead them forward while putting you in charge.

If you can cross that first threshold of establishing your authority or expertise, it will allow you to get to the second step, which is creating the context so your client truly understands that you are on the same team.

At this stage of the persuasion process, it's vital to be aware of your thoughts and how you are approaching the situation. It must not be a mindset of "me against him" or "I can outsmart them" or "I can manipulate her."

If your thoughts stay consistent (meaning you truly know and believe that you are both on the same team) establishing context will work easily and effectively.

However, if you are only giving the idea of true mutual benefit lip service while actually trying to manipulate or bully the person into buying, this approach will fail.

It's also important to point out that the only way that people are going to build a long-term relationship with you or your company, is by being allowed to make their own decisions.

Of course you want to use your leadership, influence, and stack all of the cards in your favor, but the way to establish a relationship that will stick is through letting them freely chose to work with you.

This doesn't mean that other tactics won't work in the short term because people can be bullied into a one-time purchase or talked into something momentarily or a spontaneously, but don't let these short term results lead you astray. They ultimately lead nowhere.

So let's use a new example...

If I am selling bicycles and I've already asked the client some questions to see what (s)he wants and what (s)he is looking accomplish by purchasing a bike, then I can move into establishing myself and building our relationship.

To establish my authority in a bicycle conversation I might say, "Listen, I ride bikes all of the time and I really enjoy it. I even compete on the tour and do pretty well, so I think I understand what you're looking for..." (This established common ground and authority that you are someone who the customer can trust to be knowledgeable.)

The Nuts and Bolts of a Powerful Conversation

Next it's time to establish my leadership and begin moving the conversation where it needs to go in order to help the prospect to make their decision.

I would say something like, "Can I take a moment tell you something that is important, but you may not realize about bikes?" or "Can I show you what I think you should really consider as you're figuring out which bike is best for you?" And they will likely agree.

With their agreement, I just established myself as the expert bike salesman.

Next I would say to them, "Listen, I ride and compete all of the time. And you've told me that you're in here because you want to get a bike that's going to help you start competing a little bit, right? I want to show you this other bike (or the important features of this bike), because there would be nothing that would give me more pleasure, than to help you have the best bike possible. I know if you do that, we're both going to be happy. My hope is that you're going to love this bike so much that you'll continue to come back and buy bikes from me for the rest of your life!"

There are several techniques at work here so let's start from the beginning:

In the beginning I've told him, "Listen, I understand you and your needs, and we're on the same team." We want the same things. That common ground builds rapport with him, and it also allows me to get really powerful with leading him. This is especially important if I end up needing to tell him, "Listen, this other bike you're looking at, doesn't do what you want" or "Even though it's cheaper, the other bike is a piece of junk, and this is what you really need and why you need it."

You may also feel like it doesn't make sense for me to tell him that I want him to buy a bike from me, but it actually makes perfect sense for several reasons.

First, he already knows I want him to buy a bike, so why hide it? Being up front with others builds rapport and trust. (Just don't take it so far that you end up being blunt or disrespectful. Tact and effective communication are still necessary.)

Second, I explicitly explained why it's in my benefit to genuinely help him. People often question your motives if you don't explain them clearly. So rather than leaving the prospect to guess at why I'm motivated to help him, I'm just going to let him know why I'm motivated.

The last technique I've employed during the conversation is planting the seed that I want a long term relationship. I introduce this idea by telling the prospect that I want him to buy bikes from me "for the rest of his life." This is important because he may begin to think of me as his "bike guy" which establishes me as being on his team now and in the future.

To reiterate, once trust and expertise have been established, I can be more powerful in the conversation without it appearing as though I'm trying to manipulate him or talk him into something he doesn't want. I'm truly showing him what he needs in order to accomplish his goals.

Once again, the key to this technique working is that you do have to genuinely care and have the person's best interests in mind. If that's not the case, you should probably reconsider what you're selling, or what you're doing for a living. (This isn't a judgment, it's simply necessary to believe in what you are selling to succeed at a high level in the long term.)

The Nuts and Bolts of a Powerful Conversation

However, believing in what you sell doesn't mean that your product has to be the absolute best in every category because almost no product fits that description. However, it does mean that you need to feel that the prospect will genuinely benefit from doing business with you.

Depending on your industry, the benefit may have more to do with you being their representative or sales person than it does with the actual product.

For example, early in my careers I was in the business of lending money to small businesses so they could buy business equipment.

Our company wasn't the absolute cheapest lender, and the money that we provided wasn't any different than the money other companies lent. So I had to believe that I would provide world class service and customer care in order to ethically trust that my customers were best served by working with me. That commitment to myself and my level of service is what I ended up selling and believing in even though my actual product was the money.

Fortunately, most of the people that I work with are very passionate about what they do, and so I'm going to assume that you believe in what you are selling and have some degree of enthusiasm about what you do for a living.

NOTE: If you are NOT passionate about what you do, it might feel like a step backward, but it's worth the effort to figure out what would be more in integrity with your beliefs and values. (If we ever work together through coaching or a seminar I can help with finding the right fit. Or you might want to read my book "[Find Your Passion](#)")

Know Your Product

Companies used to separate their sales representatives from their product specialists.

They did this because the product specialists are the technical ones who do not really have time for chit chat, they only go where the problem is, analyze what happened and find the people who can resolve it.

On the other hand, the sales representatives are the ones who communicate with the client, but cannot answer any product-related question apart from what the product is for.

There is an ongoing trend of combining these two areas.

A sales representative who's also a product specialist is more likely to seal a deal and maintain the client communication.

This is what you should aim to become: someone who can talk the client into buying the product and help them in case they have technical questions.

In order to do this, you must study all the aspects of the product, even the technical ones.

Here are some of the things that you would need to know about the product that you are selling:

Study the product's history – Just as previously discussed, people love and remember stories. It is very important that you let your clients know about the history of your product and tell the story behind it.

Why was it made? Who came up with the idea? Were there any issues in making it? What were the struggles met before finally reaching the productions phase?

People will not ask for the history of the product proactively, but unconsciously, they would like to know how it is made.

Tell them the story behind what you are selling, and they'd be glad that you told them about it. Again, remember to keep your story short and avoid too much details.

Know the product's benefits – This is actually your main job. More than all the talking, looking good and being confident, knowing the benefits of your product should be your primary concern.

You have to know exactly what it is for and how it will be beneficial to your client. You have to know how it works, if you have to study the basic parts, do so.

If you have to research the science behind it, do it. Your knowledge of the product will definitely score you a thousand points to your client. Studies have shown that the first thing that people complain about when talking to sales representatives is their 'lack of knowledge about the product'.

You certainly do not want to be that person who 'doesn't seem to know anything'. You have to know everything about your product, especially its benefits.

Know the product's competition – If your product has a competition, find out everything about it.

Your clients will be armed with questions about how different your product is from other brands, and you should be ready with an answer.

Do not badmouth the competition or say anything against it that you cannot prove (unless you are ready for a lawsuit).

Know Your Product

The way to do it is to highlight your product's advantages without saying anything bad about the competitor.

If your client says 'But this brand is a lot cheaper', tell them how your product is made from quality material.

Know the product's faults – Apart from knowing your product's high points and how it fares with other similar products, you also have to know your product's low points.

Of course, you do not volunteer this information to your client, but when the time comes that they ask you about it, let them know that you know about it and how it is being taken care of. Do not lie or make excuses.

Know your product's future – It will be very beneficial for you if you know the path that your company is heading to.

What are the plans to improve the product? Are you looking forward to creating a better version?

Knowing the vision and mission behind your product's development lets your clients know that what you are selling is a product of constant innovation and research, continuously being redeveloped to fit your client's needs.

Your company will be training you and give you all the tools you will need to know the product.

If the product has already been established, you would need to be creative in finding out people's feelings about it. Here are some of the things that you can do:

1. Check online support forums – You will be surprised to know how much opinion is poured over the Internet by consumers.

It is a known fact that nowadays, people complain about a product by posting it in social media or forums first before actually calling the manufacturer.

As a salesperson, it is your responsibility to know what the current "mood" is about the product so you can tell if it is because of actual issues, or just circulated rumors.

Most of your clients will search for online posts and forums about your product if they feel that there are things that you're not telling them, so make sure you address those issues before they find out about it themselves.

This is a preventive plan meant to keep your client's trust in you.

2. Check usual issues sent to the Customer Service department – Your company would have a customer service department meant to address the customer's concern.

Check for any common issues and FAQ's and make sure that you know the answer to them or how to resolve them quickly.

This will give you an edge over other sales people who do not seem to care about their clients after the product was purchased.

Show them that you are different and that you'll be there to assist them with any concern they may have.

3. Check out surveys – The industry that your product belongs to will have specialized publications for it.

Check for any article that provides survey results regarding your product (or the competitors) to see how your product is doing in the market.

Know Your Product

If you are starting your own business, it is best to test your product on a handful of test clients first in order to see what they feel about it.

Here are few of the things that you can try to see which part of your product remains unknown to you.

1. Test the product yourself – You can never sell anything that you haven't tried yourself.

Your personal experience will be the best example that you can give to your clients. It adds credibility to your claim, because you'll be a living proof.

2. Have test subjects – Companies who are into selling products know that the best way to know about their product's good and bad points is to test it out with a random group of people.

You can do this too. Hand out a few samples of your products to a group of people for free or for a very low price and keep track of their usage.

It is also wise to keep case studies of the testing phase for future reference.

3. Subscribe to publications related to your industry

Publications like magazines and journals will always have something new for you. Make sure that you are always updated with the latest news.

There may be recent studies about poisonous chemicals that you happen to use in manufacturing your product, or developments in machinery that would help you with faster production.

The information will not only be very helpful to your product, it will also make good conversation topics with your clients.

Knowing your product to the bone will make you feel confident about talking about it in front of your clients.

Confidence, as previously discussed, is perceived as one of the factors that make people trust you.

Know Your Target Market

For beginners, people who are considered prospective buyers may look like a random group of people. In reality, it isn't.

Your target market is like a pack of wolves hunting for a specific prey.

They are individuals who have the same set of needs, and whether they know it or not, they fit into a specific demographic.

Knowing your market will help you have a general idea of the people you will be dealing with.

Determine the target market - Your company may have already done this for you. However, if you are running your own business, you have to do this yourself.

You have to have a general idea of the demographics of your market, but you also have to be open to other possibilities.

Here are some ways on how to determine your target market:

1. Know which industry your product belongs to – Is it food, fitness, hobby, or electronics?

Knowing the industry that your product belongs to will definitely help you narrow down your target market. It will let you know which part of the society will “need” the product. If you are selling a set of vitamins, for example, your industry will be health and wellness.

Health and wellness is a wide industry covering medicine, exercise, and diet. Since vitamins fall into the medicine sector of that industry, your target market will be those who are buying the vitamins.

You now have narrowed down the crowd into a group who ‘want’ to take vitamins and those who are ‘allowed’ to take vitamins (those who do not have other conditions that makes them allergic to some components of your vitamins).

Your market is not limited to the people who will actually take the vitamins, as you will learn later, but at least now you know that you cannot just sell your product to anybody.

2. Identify what problems or issues are resolved by your product – A product does not come out of nowhere. No matter what product it is, it is born out of necessity (real or created).

You would need to understand the problem and how it is negatively affecting people. Does the issue waste their time? Does the problem make them unhealthy? Are things harder for them because of the problem?

Once you understand who are affected by the problem, it would be easy to know who will be asking for solutions—they will be the ones seeking your product. Let's go back to the vitamins example.

Let's say your vitamins is formulated to help people get enough sleep. You know from the industry that there are people out there who ‘want’ and are ‘allowed’ to take the vitamins, but who are they?

The problem is lack of sleep, so your target market will be those who cannot get enough sleep: insomniacs, people who work jobs with varying time schedules, people whose biorhythms are disrupted by alcohol or caffeine, and others.

Know Your Target Market

3. Identify other possible players – Your target market will not be limited to the people who directly need the product. Other players like stores and distributors will also be a part of your target market.

They will provide you with an access to a larger group of clients and they will have the names that are already associated with the product.

These other players will actually be the ones who can give you more income in lesser amount of time.

They will become your ‘muscle’ and will serve as the front-liners of your products as they sell your product to the consumer directly.

Think of these people as having the same characteristics as the actual consumers—talk to them as if they will be taking your vitamin.

While some sales people think of distributors as merely ‘middle men’ garnering profit from added procedure, most of them actually care about the quality of the products they distribute.

They will most likely be knowledgeable about the product too and they will ask you the same questions your direct consumers would ask.

Treat them in exactly the same way as you would your direct clients.

Determine the best places where you’ll find them – Aside from stores that are already selling the products that you sell, your target clients can also be seen on other venues.

Here are some of the places where you can actually find them:

1. Events and Exhibits – Trade exhibits will draw a crowd of selected people—those who are targeted by the sponsors.

Motor shows sponsored by car companies for example, draw motor enthusiasts. It is the best place for sales representatives of automotive-related products to scout.

Find any event that is related to the industry that your product belongs to, and you will find your potential clients there.

A good thing about approaching clients in these events is that it wouldn’t be awkward.

Your clients will actually be expecting some salespeople to offer them something while they are in that event. Keep a stack of your business cards handy.

2. Clubs and Organizations – Your product will be helping a specific group of people. It is very likely that these people will belong to an organized group.

By finding the organizations that aim to develop the industry, you will find your target market. If you are selling farming products, find the Farmers’ Cooperatives names.

The members of that club will be your target clients. If you are selling health products, find clubs and organizations related to health.

Know Your Target Market

The Internet has made it very easy for you to this.

3. Online Communities and Forums – the Internet has provided a virtual space where people who have the same needs and interests can meet.

Find websites, forums, blogs, and social media groups that discuss your product's industry.

Not only will you find your target clients there, you will also get a general idea of how they feel about the product.

You will see the good and bad comments that they have and it will give you a better understanding of your target market.

Legitimate online communities even schedule meetups in person. You can coordinate with the website administrator to see if you can get an invite.

Research possible correlations with other things

Your product belongs to an industry; that makes it related to other products within the industry.

Clever online marketers know this. That is why they provide online contents that are closely related to one another.

For example, they would have to market a cure for muscle pain.

They will create dozens of articles regarding muscle pain with keywords and links related to muscle pain relievers and therapy.

Therapy is not what the product is about, but it has something in common with medicine: it promises treatment.

The Internet is a web of connections, so this close correlation is very important.

You would have to determine which product is closely related to the one you are selling.

The people who are looking for those products will most likely be looking for your product as well, so your target market can be spotted from there.

Know Your Client

Now that you know the general demographic, it is time to know your actual client.

Let us say you have narrowed down your prospective buyers and you have names of people that you can actually pitch your product to.

How would you know if they are going to buy from you? Is there a way to tell just by looking at them? - Unfortunately not.

Clients will be able to discern whether or not they can trust you just by the way you dress, the way you speak and the way you handle yourself. It does not work both ways though.

No matter how much you try, you will not know from the way your client dresses or the way he speaks if he is going to buy your product. Why?

It is because the ball is on their side. They are the ones who will make a decision, not you.

They are the ones who will have to weigh everything before telling you if they will buy your product.

They have the money. They will do the best they can to hide their eagerness to buy just so they can cut a favorable deal.

Do not despair though, because there are plenty of ways that you can break the barrier and know more about your client.

No, you don't have to stalk them. All you need to do is engage them in a conversation that will let them share things about themselves.

Most sales people who end up not selling anything have this misconception: **Sales is just business, everything should be formal.**

They give out checklists asking the clients about what it is that they like, and then they go out and give it to the client.

That's exactly how a government employee would treat people applying for passport or driver's license, but that is not something a good salesperson will do. Successful sales people know that in order to be a winning sales agent, you should make a connection with your client.

There is no better way to make a connection than by engaging them in a personal conversation. You would have to know things about your client, and unless you hire a private investigator, you will not know about it unless. A simpler way is to ask them directly.

3 Things You Should Know About Your Client

Here are the 3 most important things that you should know about your clients:

1. What do they need? – However obvious it may seem, do not underestimate a client's regard for what he 'needs'. You might think, "I'm a car dealer and he called me, so it's obvious he needs a car".

Always ask them what it is that they need it for. Do they need the car because their house is too far from school? Do they need it because the one they had was wrecked because of an accident?

Ask them subtly about the story behind their need for the product. There are always some cues that you can pick up regarding the most important factors for them.

Know Your Client

2. What do they want? – Sometimes, clients resort to buying the second-best because they cannot afford the best one. Ask them about what they really want if they do not have limitations.

Of course you cannot provide them with what they want, but will have an idea of what ‘extras’ they would appreciate.

You would learn later on how clients value extras and bonuses. The very act of showing interest about what they want will make them trust you even more.

3. What do they prefer? – This is the part where you give them a choice.

This will give you a hint on which aspect of the product do they value more. For example, they told you they want a white hatchback.

Ask them hypothetically which one they prefer: A black hatchback or a white sedan. This will let you know if they value color over style.

5 Ways on Effectively Communicating With Your Client

1. Ask how they want to be addressed – Start with giving your first name, then ask them if you can call them by their first name.

Nineteen out of twenty people will usually say yes to it. Why is it important?

Names have powers. In mythology and religious scripts, you would often encounter stories about dead men brought to life when their names were called, or evil spirits whose names cannot be spoken because they will wreak havoc on Earth if somebody calls them.

It is not entirely magical or supernatural.

Names excite a part of our brains that is related to attention, focus, and memory. People are wired to remember moments when their names are called, ridiculed, or praised.

Humans are also more likely to trust and follow someone who knows their name.

Calling people by last name can be viewed as formal, authoritative or respectful. Calling people by their first name can be perceived as familiar, comfortable, and friendly.

It is very important that you ask them about it first, that way you let them know that you respect their name and how they want to be called.

So every now and then, address your client by their name in your conversation. This is a very subtle way of creating a low pressure but high value environment for your sales talk.

2. Make them tell more about themselves – People like talking about themselves.

The developers of social media platforms know that very well and have amassed millions from it.

Your clients will be looking forward to the time when you will stop talking so they can say something. It may not sound so good, but it is true for everyone.

Because of this, it will work best for you if you can encourage them to tell you things about themselves.

Know Your Client

Ask them questions about their job, their family, and their hobbies. The key is to let them know that you are interested in what they have to say.

Actually, you should be interested because this is where you'll find clues on what they want and what they need.

Be careful about questions that may be too personal for them.

If you are not sure, start by asking "I hope this is not too personal, and it's fine if you do not answer this...".

Again, it would not hurt to ask, and doing so will let them know that you respect them.

3. Point out connections – By making a good, light conversation, you are actually trying to make a connection with your client.

It is a crucial part of your sales talk because you can use the connection when you are demonstrating your product.

Those tips will not be put to good use if your clients cannot identify with you, so make sure that you point out similarities in your stories and theirs.

While your clients tell you their stories, make sure that you point out parts that you can relate to.

Simple statements like, "Really? I have a dog too" will actually trigger signals in their brains that point out familiarity.

Familiarity breeds liking. The more they can identify with you, the more they will like you.

And the more they like you, the more they will trust your anecdotes and personal accounts regarding the product you are selling.

Make sure to point out real similarities though. Do not pretend to like something you don't or make up stories just to make a connection.

Most of your clients can see through falsehoods, so you better not risk it.

People in sales are already stereotyped to be a deceitful bunch of greedy folks who lie and cheat for money, so do not prove it by being caught in a lie.

4. Give strategic compliments – Whether people admit it or not, compliments actually influence their decisions.

It has been scientifically proven that people who are complimented in a sales talk are more likely to buy from that salesman than those who are not given any compliments.

It is a very good strategy that you can employ when having a conversation with your client.

You cannot just use any compliments though, you have to acknowledge people's ability to make good actions and decisions.

Complimenting your client's appearance may come off as mere flattery meant to seduce them into buying your product. Some people would even find it inappropriate.

Know Your Client

You do not want to come off as a honey-tongued salesperson. Instead, you want to be seen as someone who gives credit to good deeds. Compliment them on actions that they have previously done.

Make empowering statements like, “You’ve made a good decision there” or “That’s the best way to do it” to acknowledge the fact that they did a good job.

Be subtle with your compliments and do not overuse it, unless you want them to feel like you are just saying those things to make them like you.

Like the other techniques we have discussed, do it in moderation and only when you genuinely feel like they deserve a compliment.

5. Make them say yes as often as you can – In order to ‘prime’ your client into saying yes to you and closing a sale, you have to condition them into saying ‘yes’ to you as often as possible.

You can ask them questions that can only be answered by ‘yes’ to drive the conversation into a positive outcome.

How will you do this? There are a couple of ways. One is to make obvious statements.

These are statements that can be confirmed easily by both of you like the weather, the environment, of traffic conditions. Sentences like “It’s refreshing to have some rain earlier today, isn’t it?” or “That coffee smells so good, right?” can be easily validated and if it is correct, your client will say yes to you.

Another way is to rephrase what they said into a question. If they said, “My daughter is fourteen years old”, ask them “Oh, so she is in high school now?”. This will make them say yes.

Do not do this too often though; otherwise, they will think that you are not listening intently.

This is not a trick to manipulate your client. It is simply a way to condition them into agreeing with you.

Once the conversation moved into a positive mood, it is easier to get your clients to buy what you are offering them.

Now that they are starting to trust you, they are entertaining the idea that you are the same as them.

If they feel that you are genuinely trying to get to know them and that you would like to provide them with the best service, they are more likely to agree with you and buy from you.

Winning Sales Techniques

Now that you have prepared yourself, have studied your product, your target market and your direct client, it is time for you to employ the winning techniques of a successful sales representative.

The following are some of the psychological concepts underlying your clients behaviors and perceptions.

After each concept, a winning tip is provided for you to practice and eventually use to score your first sale.

The Principle of Reciprocity

In Physics we know that every action has an equal or opposite reaction. In Social Psychology, every individual's action towards another person implicitly solicits an equal action by the other person to the individual.

Get it? If that confused you, let us put it this way. In everything you do, you expect something of the same nature done to you. It is like a slightly distorted version of The Golden Rule.

Researchers proved that a human being do good things because they expect that good things will be done to them.

They do not consciously expect that to happen right away, but their unconscious silently takes note of it as a "debt".

When things go south, we remember those debts and we expect those people whom we have helped in the past to help us in return.

Interestingly, the Reciprocity Principle has become so innate to human nature that the receiver of the good deed also feel indebted to the giver.

The receiver will not be conscious of it, but when the giver is in need, the receiver will feel the need to help the giver because he or she has helped in the past.

The Reciprocity Principle has helped humans survive for centuries.

As social beings, we feel tied to the idea of reciprocity that anyone who deviates to it immediately becomes an outcast.

We call them ingrates, freeloaders and other disrespectful names, just because they did not seem to understand that as human, we need to work together.

The Reciprocity Principle will help you in selling your product greatly. How?

Top Tip #1: Do Them Favors

You don't have to catch a grenade for them. You do not have to drive them home. All you need to do is give them a little token.

The Reciprocity Principle applies to any favor, big or small, it doesn't matter.

When you give something to your client, they are bound by the Reciprocity Principle to give you something in return. Some examples are:

- Give them something to drink or eat when you're talking
- When scheduling a meeting, ask them for the most convenient place and time for THEM
- Give them company souvenirs
- Open the doors for them

Winning Sales Techniques

Remember that you only need to do simple things.

The things listed above can actually be considered as normal things that any polite person would do, but believe it or not, some sales representatives do not even try those.

Those simple things can help you win your client over, so do it. Do not do or give anything grand though, because it will look like bribery.

The Power of Touch

When a person is touched by another person, the brain secretes a hormone called oxytocin.

This hormone is dubbed as the ‘bonding hormone’ because it plays a major role in social recognition. It produces the feeling of relaxation and familiarity.

What did we say about familiarity again?

Yes, you remember it right: FAMILIARITY BREEDS LIKING. This is the reason why touching, when done right, feels good and comforting.

A person is more likely to forgive you if you say “Sorry” and then give him or her a hug.

A stranger is more likely to talk to you if you introduce yourself and then offer a handshake.

Some studies show that waiters and waitresses who gently touch their customers’ shoulders when attending them get higher tips than those who don’t make any physical contact at all.

The interesting thing is, the customers did not even take note of the fact that they were touched on the shoulder.

They were unaware of it. Such is the power of touch. It can transform the way people deal with other people in amazing ways!

So, can you use The Power of Touch when dealing with clients? The second Top Tip reveals it.

Top Tip #2: Touch Them Very Gently, Very Briefly

When introducing yourself to your client, shake their hands and slightly touch them on the arm with the other.

When having a conversation with your client, slightly touch them on the shoulder or on the arm. When walking side by side with your client, touch them on the elbow or on their back.

You have to remember that your touch needs to last 1 second at most; any longer than that would feel awkward.

You also need to remember that you have to just brush your skin very lightly, do not put any pressure.

Lastly, you have to take note of the areas that you can touch: arm, shoulder, elbow and back—nothing else. The key is subtlety. You wouldn’t want your client to feel uncomfortable with you being so ‘touchy-feely’. You have to be very subtle in doing it.

The Hindsight Bias

People do not like being wrong, so whenever they are right, they need to either say it outloud or have somebody give an affirmation.

One of the biases that people have is The Hindsight Bias—also known as the “I knew It!” bias.

Winning Sales Techniques

When people make irrational decisions based on feelings, or guesses based on their gut, and it turns out to be good, they make declarations that they knew the outcome all along.

Even though they do not have facts to back up their decision. The thing is, when the outcome is negative, they just keep silent.

People feel good when they are praised for having good instincts.

The Hindsight Bias can help you make your client feel good about themselves, and because of that, they will feel good about you.

Top Tip #3: Recognize Their Clairvoyance

When a client tells you about one of his or her lucky strikes, recognize his or her gift of guessing.

When a client tells you that “I felt that something was wrong with that car, and it turns out I’m right”, agree with them and tell them they have good instincts.

If you can, back up the results with facts.

Do not make those up, just insert some facts whenever applicable. If you recognize their ‘power”, they will feel good about it, and will see you as an “ally”.

You can then make your recommendation about the product that you are trying to sell.

The Fear of Losing

People may love the idea of winning, but the idea of losing is actually what keeps them alive. Life can be summed up by a story about a wall.

Once there was a great wall that stood between two types of landscapes. On the right is a landscape with great dangers everywhere: hungry animals, earthquakes and storms.

On the left side is a landscape of peace, green fields and everlasting happiness. In the middle is the wall where there is a little bit of everything on top of it.

There were 100 people coming from the right side when the disaster started happening.

After 5 days, the 100 people were divided into 3 groups. There are 10 people on the right side of the wall.

They tried climbing the wall but they failed, so they are now being devoured by hungry animals. They are the losers.

On the left side are the winners, and there’s 7 of them alive. Ten of them climbed the wall and took the risk of jumping to the other side.

Three of them died from the fall of course, but some survived and are now enjoying a life of abundance and happiness.

Majority of the people stayed on top of the wall, there are 80 of them.

They are making ends meet, they are finding ways to grow their food, but every day, some of them are facing the dangers of wild animals and disasters too.

What’s the point of the story? Some people will try and fail.

Winning Sales Techniques

Some people will try and succeed. Some people will try, but will not try hard enough to succeed because of the fear of losing their life.

The idea of 'gaining' something is strong, but the idea of 'losing something' is much stronger.

This is the reason why people would rather be "safe than sorry".

This is the reason why most people do not take risks. They fear losing what they already have.

The concept of loss-aversion can be applied to sales, of course. The following tip demonstrates how you can use it to your advantage.

Top Tip #4: Tell Them What They'll Lose

Instead of highlighting your product's benefits by enumerating them, do it this way: Make your client imagine a scenario where they already have the product, then tell them what they will lose if they do not have the product.

When your clients already created scenes in their minds of what they are about to enjoy when they have your product, they will feel attached to it.

If they feel the threat of losing those benefits, they will most likely prevent it from happening. So what do they do to avoid losing the benefits? They'll buy the product from you.

The Bandwagon Appeal

Advertisers know this very well, and you should too. The Bandwagon Appeal is the charisma of numbers. People tend to follow the crowd, go with the 'trend', and trust the majority.

Humans and other animals survive because there is strength in numbers. It is true for the most part.

For other aspects of life like consumerism, it may not always be the best option, but nevertheless, people feel safer when they are in consensus with majority of the people.

Taking advantage of The Bandwagon Appeal is another technique that you can use when pitching your product to your client.

Top Tip #5: Give Them the Numbers

Let your client know about the number of people who already bought your product.

If this is your first sales call and you're selling a brand new product, tell them about the number of people who are MOST LIKELY going to buy the product (your target market).

It doesn't make a difference, all you need is the number. When your client hears that there are many people who bought or will likely buy your product, they will buy from you too. It's all about the numbers.

Do not lie about the numbers.

Do not make something up.

Again, you wouldn't want to be caught in a lie. All you need to do is work with the facts that you have in the most effective ways, without lying or deceiving your clients.

The job doesn't start until they object

Sometimes we have the perfect sales meeting. We seemingly hit every hurdle in stride and deftly handle objections before they are even brought up. With meetings like this, we are so on our game, there is no way we can lose. We are Superman, Rambo and Gordon Gecko rolled into one.

As great as you know you are though, I am here to let some air out of your tires. If you got absolutely no objections and they just hopped in the boat, it was probably less than half sales skill and mostly the fact that they just wanted to buy.

Don't get me wrong. After nearly twenty years selling the same market-driven product, I have been through my fair share of muffin markets. You know what I'm talking about. Suddenly, you get to work and there are free muffins in the kitchen. Your VP is bringing in lunch three times a week and your sales manager is all about buying dinner for those willing to "stick around, hustle and grind". They don't mind the extra expense because there is more revenue to go around. And if you stick around there's even more. Everybody wins!

In a muffin market, you become an order taker. Demand is high for your product and the price is right. All you really need to do is not offend the customer too badly and they'll buy from you. As a salesperson, you have to love the muffin market. Don't get it twisted though because you are not selling here. You are wearing the hat of a glorified cashier. Don't get this twisted either. It's OK to just take orders and cash some fat checks once in awhile. You earned it those weeks where you pounded the pavement or phones just to make a sale. Make that hay!

Remember this. The salesperson's job doesn't start until that first objection. This is where the sale begins. Up until that point, we are tour guides and spokesmodels. We are giving features and benefits. We are kissing hands and shaking babies. We are hopefully moving the conversation toward a sale. But we are not selling yet.

Once we hear "I'll run this by my boss", "I have to talk to my wife", "OK, let me see how this fits into the budget", or something of the sort, it's game time. This is where we earn that commission. How you react is what separates you, the sales professional, from the cashier.

I love when that first objection comes out. It tells me the prospect is engaged in the conversation. Ever try driving on fresh ice? Chances are you didn't get very far because there was no friction. Without friction, the wheels just spin on the smooth surface. To me, that first objection is like sprinkling kitty litter or salt under my tires. The conversation can now begin to move in the proper direction.

It has often been said that objections are just buying signs in disguise. This is so true. A true objection gives you that hurdle to overcome on your way to a sale. Get past the smokescreen objections; uncover their true objection and close!

The problem I have seen with those frictionless sales calls is that you often don't know if you're making a ghost sale or not. Is the client putting up no fight and "yessing" us just to get off the phone or end the meeting, or are they the one who wants our product or service no matter what?

In an instance like this, I suggest doing the unthinkable. Offer them an objection. This is a simple litmus test. If they are buying no matter what, this can have a strange effect. I have had clients in these situations start selling me on them buying from me. The effect is similar to "The Takeaway Close". Clients will literally start giving you all the reasons they need/want your product no matter what. At this point, it's time to write up a contract or ring them up. Don't talk your way out of a sale!

The job doesn't start until they object

By the same token, if the client was not a sure thing, offering them an objection like “Of course, we want to make sure your spouse is on board before we get this started right?”, gives you an opportunity to really take their temperature and test the water. If they were indeed just being polite, they will jump at the chance to end the call and go on with their day.

It is important that no matter what objection we offer up though, we are prepared to test if they are a true no-shot or a maybe. We must be locked and loaded with a relevant response and close.

This second test will allow you to cut bait on those prospects who were never going to come through anyway. I don't know about you, but I would much rather hear a definitive “no” and politely say goodbye than to waste valuable time and energy following up on dead ends. Sometimes folks are too weak to tell you “no” because they don't want to hurt your feelings.

On the other side, if there is indeed some sliver of a shot, you will find it here. Remember, that first objection is a buying sign in disguise. It doesn't matter if you fed it to them or not. It is a tool to get the ball rolling in the right direction. Feed the objection, overcome it and close. What happens next? Do they just magically say “yes”? If so, your job is done, but get them signing fast. That lack of friction is still a symptom. Do they give you another objection? GOOD! Rinse and repeat until you have a “yes”, a “no” or a firm follow-up with a relevant reason for follow up and all decision making parties scheduled to be present.

Remember, there is nothing wrong with a lie-down sale every once in a while and nothing wrong with just taking orders in a muffin market. Make hay while the sun shines. Just know that if you want to call yourself a sales professional, you have to S E L L.

The Procrastinating Prospect

We've all had that one prospect for whom procrastinating is seemingly their hobby.

It's natural. An object at rest tends to stay at rest, right? Therefore, it is sometimes darn near impossible to get some of these folks to stop procrastinating.

1. It's important to recognize the why behind the behavior here. First off, the prospective customer has lived their life so far without your product. That would lead one to believe that your product is not essential to their existence.

2. Second, although folks want to buy, they don't necessarily want to be sold.

3. Lastly, they must be shown the value we are bringing them and the benefit of our product.

Let's tackle these in order.

Why are they procrastinating to begin with?

For starters, procrastination is part of human nature. It is much easier to sit on the couch than it is to get up and paint the fence. By the same token, they have been doing fine (at least in their eyes) up until now without our product, why should they be in a hurry to sign on the dotted line with us before they've "gotten all their ducks in a row"?

If they are still stagnant after we have presented and followed up properly, there is nothing wrong with pointing out the elephant in the room. Ask them why they aren't moving forward? They took the appointment, made the inquiry, or requested the estimate because they were interested in buying right?

What haven't YOU done to ensure they are ready to move forward? Ask yourself this, but equally important, ask the customer the same question. Eight out of ten times, one of you will have the answer here. Perhaps they don't see the value yet. . . show them. Maybe you haven't explained pricing properly. . . show them. It's possible they feel the need to shop around still. If this is the case, resist the urge to besmirch your competition. Instead, build yourself and your product up by selling each benefit your product offers and your competition can't (the customer should come to their own conclusions without you blatantly hammering the point).

Now, no matter whether you feel it's time or not, toss in a simple "why don't we go ahead and get this off your to-do list" close. You'll be surprised at how often this will work. At the very least, it will bring out an objection beyond "OK... I have your number, I'm gonna chew on this."

Point number two above, brings up a strange phenomenon that has only grown more prevalent in the information age.

Our customers often feel as if they've done the research, they just want to buy without being sold. Here's where we straddle the razor's edge. We have to figure out how to show them the benefits without outright selling.

One might think an educated client is a good thing right? An educated client is indeed, great, however it is important to remember how they received that education. More than likely, they have performed Google-Fu and now feel that their grasp of product knowledge and pricing is on par with yours. They know how your competitors are priced and sadly, are probably expecting to get the bait-and-switch price advertised online for nearly every product imaginable.

The Procrastinating Prospect

Rather than play salesperson/customer, why not team up with a client like this? They've shown enough interest and initiative to learn about what we do and how we do it. Why not merely peel back the curtain and let them sell themselves? Their inclusion in the process gains ultimate buy-in and how can they object with themselves. This also throws price out the window.

A perfect example of the above statement is these "Build Your Own Burger" restaurants. Sure, for \$8.99 you can order the pre-designed Ranch Hand Burger w/ fries. You can also use this tiny golf pencil and run down our list of ingredients to build your perfect burger. The secret is, that burger YOU designed, has a way higher profit margin because you either tossed enough crap on there to run the price up to \$11.99 or you skimped so hard that your \$9.99 build-a-burger cost less to make than ordering one of the pre-designed burgers sans an ingredient or two. Either way, customer and restaurant are happy!

Finally, by painting the vision of what their life will look and feel like post-purchase, we can set them in motion.

The truth is if the customer is procrastinating now, they will continue to do so. It is our job to show them this reality.

First, weave the tale of the extra time and energy they will spend by shopping around or the money they will lose each day/week/month by not moving forward. Remind them of the guy who drives to five different stores to buy a washer and dryer, only to finally end up returning to the first store after wasting his entire Sunday and missing the game.

Next, paint the picture of how good it will feel to have this task completed. They can cross it off their list and move on with their lives. Waiting to buy only means that feeling of completion will be delayed further and they'll have to deal with more salespeople that might not be as personable as you.

Be the ice cream man

Ever yell “FIRE!” in a movie theater? Please don’t try it. There’s a reason why it is illegal. Imagine though, how frantically fast people would be climbing over each other to get out of that place.

Now think back about how fast you moved when you heard the faintest tinkling of the ice cream truck’s music as a child. You ran or pedaled home, burst through the door, begged for money from your parents, ran back out and ran or pedaled in the general direction of that jingle like a bat out of hell.

Both examples get folks moving quickly. The truth is though, as humans, we run faster from pain than we do toward pleasure. It makes sense. You’d certainly move faster to save your life than to get an Eskimo pie. Even on a hot day!

Apply this to your day to day in sales. Are you giving people reason to want to work with you?

It is all too easy to fall into the opposite track. The call or meeting doesn’t start the way we want it, and we start getting a little negative. Our customer picks up on it and they start to close off. Often times, this is right where we lose the sale.

How about this one? We toss in a close and they give us a bullshit smokescreen of an objection. Rather than calmly dealing with it, we get snarky. Chalk up another loss.

The hits keep on coming right? We follow up with a prospect. They act like they are too busy to take the call and blow us off. Our knee-jerk reaction is to be a full jerk and voila! Another prospective sale down the drain.

Do any of these sound familiar to you?

If you have read book one in this series, followed my blog, listened to my podcast or followed me on Twitter, you know what I am about to say. It’s time to get out of your own way!

Why do we do this to ourselves?

It’s crazy. We put in all the work. We prospect for a lead. We fight for the appointment. We prepare for the appointment. We take the time to primp for the appointment; I even count drive time and dry cleaning in this. Then, when it matters the most, we give in to that little devil on our shoulder and yell “FIRE!”. All that prep work, time, energy, even money are out the window. All because we gave in to our base instincts and let adrenalin get the best of us.

How many times have you heard “take a deep breath” in your lifetime? You’ve heard it because it works. That long, cleansing breath works wonders. The forced three count of a deep breath not only calms the nerves, but it also gives your brain time to take over.

I mean that. When our nerves and adrenaline kick in, we go on autopilot. We say and do things that we don’t really mean and often end up regretting. I said it a few sentences above. It’s time we got out of our own way.

Let’s look at the examples above. We start our sales presentation and can tell our prospect is distracted. Rather than get pissed off and say something snide, why not politely address the elephant in the room. We don’t know what crisis may have hit them right beforehand. Why not ask them if they need to take a minute or two? “Y’know what Jon, I can tell you are a little distracted. Do you need a minute to catch your breath before we continue? I can shave a few minutes off this presentation if I cut out the jokes.” If they truly were in distress, they will thank you for the consideration. If they DON’T need the time, you better believe you will have their undivided from there on out.

Be the ice cream man

Remember, we cannot control what goes on outside of our bubble. We never know what our customers are doing or saying five minutes before we arrive. Have they gotten bad news? Have they gotten amazing news? Are they missing an important deadline by taking this meeting? If they are too distracted, you won't make the sale right then and there anyway. Give them the opportunity to regroup. It will be in your favor bank.

The root cause here is not your fault. How you respond to it is.

In the second example, we are totally to blame. Go into every sales call expecting to get objections. We are not selling until we hit that first objection anyway. It's manna when we do get those sales without objections, but in that situation, you are just an order taker. The freebies only count in metrics.

So the client gives us a smokescreen. Don't get angry. Remember, here is where the sale starts! Acknowledge it and respond to it relevantly. Deal with their objection, no matter how big or how small and close again. Don't get emotional. Don't grip the bat too tight. Just deal with it and close.

If the objections are still there, retreat and regroup. Pushing harder at that point either turns you into the "pushy used car salesman" or worse, makes you sound desperate. Sometimes, the objection we hear is just there as a defense mechanism to hold us at bay because the customer has something else to deal with that has nothing to do with us or this transaction. Whether we push them too hard or we pull back, the end result of this conversation/meeting will be the same. One option affords you the opportunity to come back later and try again, while the other burns the bridge.

The third scenario above is another one that is up to us. We have no idea what is going on in a customer's life when we get them on the phone. Are they in line at the grocery? Are they taking a dump? Are they fighting with their spouse? Did they answer by accident thinking it was the doctor calling in with test results? All of these are very real occurrences that happen every day. We must be mindful and empathetic.

Just like the example above, consider the potential outcomes. If we shoot back at them and put some stank on it, what good can come of it. We will get that temporary rush of "I told them!" then immediately feel regret. Fuck first impressions, you don't get a second chance to make any impressions, so don't be that guy (or girl).

If we cause our clients pain on the phone or during a presentation, what are the chances they will let us back into their lives? Pretty slim. The next time you call, you will be swiped right to ignoresville.

So, the next time your inner asshole wants to come out, keep in mind that people run toward the ice cream man. People love the ice cream man.

A burned bridge won't rebuild itself. Standing there and staring won't get you to the other side. Why as salespeople, do we act as if this will work?

Does this scenario sound familiar to you? We put in a ton of time and energy with a prospect. They string us along for weeks, only to ultimately leave us for their barber's referral solely on price. To add insult to injury, they end up using the exact program you customized for them. This leech came in last minute and didn't even do any work. All they did was plug in your work and give the cut-rate price.

How fucking pissed off are you when this happens? Here's a nice nut punch for a cherry on top. You don't want to hear this, but you have no one to blame but yourself. I promised you when we started working together that I'm not going to sugar coat things.

Be the ice cream man

Here's the reality. You created this particular monster. They didn't need all that time to make their decision. You gave them that time. Had you done the work up front and closed sooner, they'd be happily working with you.

What? You say they weren't ready to move forward yet? That's on you too. Did you properly gauge their interest level and timeline? What was your follow-up game like? If they were discussing this with their barber, they clearly had interest. When was the last time you spoke with them?

If you are checking in like a telemarketer, that is how you will be perceived. Would you want your financial planner to be a lion or a lamb? It doesn't matter what you are selling, if you don't exude confidence, you won't find success. They say "Dress for the job you want", "Fake it 'til you make it", and "Act as if" for a reason. They are all sound pieces of advice!

Back to our client who dumped us. I think I've done a decent job of putting the blame back on you. What can we do about it? Assuming that ship has sailed, we have to learn to let go. Negativity breeds negativity. Learn from your mistakes and move on. Dwelling on it does no good. We won't win them back over by blowing up their phone. Getting more pissed off about it will affect how you deal with your next prospects as well. Shake it off and move on.

There is a reason that so few sports teams in history have ever gone undefeated. You truly cannot win them all, but you can learn from them all. Whether it's a victory or a loss, there is something to be learned from every at bat.

When we let the losses follow us around, it shows. We wear it on our faces. We wear it in our attitude. Our customers can hear it, smell it, even taste it. Going into your sales presentation like this is straight up bush league. You'd be better off canceling or postponing the meeting. Your net result will be the same. Take the day off and regroup.

Let's look at how this can affect you on a microscale now.

How familiar does this one sound? We are on a warm call. These folks at least expressed interest in our product in some way, yet they cut us off at the pass and legit disrespect us like we're some offshore IRS scam call. We can't get a word in edgewise and our adrenaline rush hits like an EMP.

This is just like those stats "Every minute in the US, a car accident occurs". Calls like this happen every day, every hour, and every minute on sales floors around the world. Like Tyler Durden says "You are not a unique snowflake". Get over it. What good can dwelling on this do?

Sit back and look at your options here:

1. Calling them back will only escalate the situation. End result, more anger and no sale. It could possibly end in unemployment as well.
2. We can break shit. This feels good temporarily, but a few minutes later, we will be embarrassed, regretful and have to replace what we broke, so our net is a negative cash flow.
3. We can bitch and moan to our co-workers. What is the end game here? We will bring them down too. Would we want them to do the same to us? You better be sure they will eventually return the favor and instantly cool your hot hand next time. Picture a half-dozen or so willing participants on the average sales floor and you can see this sales cancer spreading pretty quickly can't you?
4. We can let it go. We've established that shit happens. People are people. Letting it go means you have a better shot at making the next sale.

Be the ice cream man

As you can see, only one option really leads to success here. Even if you can come up with fifty more possible actions, the outcomes are the same. You have to learn to let it go.

I know this is all easier said than done. We all fall prey to these traps. It is human nature. Remember, the average human cannot sell like you do. You have an ability that mere mortals don't necessarily possess. Knowing this, you can't be surprised when success requires you to do things beyond human nature and rise above instinct.

Getting out of your own way requires thoughtfulness empathy, and mindfulness.

First, if he is geographically in an area with clearly defined seasons, he probably is best working between March and September. Other areas might afford him a better opportunity to work more months out of the year, so if he is not tied to a specific location, this can be adjusted for. Knowing right off the bat that his ideal times to do business might be limited, he may want to look into other seasonal businesses or even a seasonal location.

Next, what is his ideal customer age and gender? Ice cream knows no boundaries when it comes to gender, so in this respect he wins. Everyone likes his product equally. Age-wise, I would operate under the assumption that his ideal avatar would be kids of school age. Where do we find such clientele?

Between March and June, it seems obvious that during school hours, he can kick his feet up. Once the school bells start to ring, he should be out and about playing his music for all to hear. Once school is out for the year, all bets are off. His workday can begin at lunchtime and run through sundown.

Now... if I was the ice cream man, I would be a little more devious. Knowing that I have downtime during the day, I would seek out a shopping center or two that had a gym or yoga studio, a Weight Watchers and health food store and troll the neighborhoods surrounding it with my music turned up super loud. I would also stock some "healthy" alternatives such as frozen yogurt and other "diet" ice creams. Who better to supplement my income than someone we already know is battling the bulge and has just worked up an appetite or just gotten news (good or bad) at their weigh-in? I don't mind being an ice cream enabler. It's not like we are selling drugs now is it?

The ice cream man is a very simple business that allows for simple generalizations when it comes to defining your avatar. As you define down your ideal customer, it is ok to get more granular. The more you know about your prospects, the better prepared you can be.

By being better prepared we will dramatically improve our odds of making the sale.

Knowing our market makes this prep that much easier.

Let's define our market:

1. Our Customer Avatar

What is the age of your target client? Sex? Marital status? Education level? Are they employed? If so, what line of work are they in? What is their average household income?

Do these questions sound familiar? Chances are, you've answered them countless times in surveys over the years. This information is invaluable as you begin to target your marketing and sales pitch.

2. Know your competition

Your customers are not loyal until you give them a reason to be. By the time you have had a chance to pitch your product or service, they've definitely done some research on you and your competition. If they haven't yet, they will. This is not a negative. You do the same thing when you are looking to buy something. We live in the information age. It's all too easy to get information (and misinformation) about any topic.

Be the ice cream man

I want to know as much about my competition as they can. What do they do well? What do they do poorly? How is their product similar to my product and how are they different? How can I best exploit their weaknesses and downplay their strengths?

Take cell phone providers for instance. It has long been a given that here in the US, Verizon offers the most rock solid performance as a network. They have also been cemented as the most expensive carrier around. By contrast, in most areas of the country, Sprint is known for nearly polar opposite reasons. Their plans and pricing have been known to be much less expensive and have less strict credit requirements, while network reliability may be less reliable.

It is easy to resort to mudslinging in order to make your point and differentiate yourself here, but how can we do it without shining too much light on the competition?

If I work for Verizon, I am painting the vision of luxury and evoking imagery of Mercedes Benz, Rolex and Apple. These are products that just work. You know that when you turn the key or power them up, you can count on them to work. You want to know that should you be lost in the middle of nowhere, your phone will have a signal and you will find your way home safely. You want to know that when your child has an emergency, they'll be able to contact you instantly and effortlessly. Sure, the service might cost you an extra \$20 a month, but isn't that a small price to pay to know your family is safe and secure? This is pretty much how I have seen it played every time I have dealt with them.

On the Sprint side, I would play it almost exactly as they have in their current marketing. They are highlighting the marked improvement in their network while not increasing cost to do so. Showing the overall percentage of drop calls vs. the competition and highlighting the disproportionate price vs. quality differences is a great way to show that you lose very little in the overall benefits of the product for the large savings you enjoy.

I say I'd play it **almost** exactly the same as Sprint has because I would change one major thing. I would not have hired the ex-Verizon spokesman to be my pitchman. Sloppy seconds are just plain sloppy.

Both examples above make good use of the strengths of each company against the weaknesses of the other without resorting to trash talking the competition. Remember, we get higher by elevating ourselves than by knocking others down.

I am sure you can weigh-in on your own cell phone provider pitches as well. That's exactly why I use them as an example. That is exactly why I chose this to illustrate the point.

Knowing your market

By clearly defining our target market and knowing our competition, we will be infinitely more prepared for our sales presentations and possible objections thrown our way. We'll know what other options our prospects are seeing in the market as they shop and we'll know how to counteract the strengths of our competition while minimizing our own weaknesses.

What is your avatar?

List ten attributes that define your perfect client.

Now break down each item on that list. What problem are we solving for that particular line item?

Does our prospective client know they have this problem? If not, how do we bring it to their attention so we can solve it?

If our client is aware that they have this problem, are they aware we have the solution? If not, how can we make them aware?

If they already know we can solve the problem, how can we convince them that the problem needs to be solved today and we are just the ones to solve it for them?

Just like the Ice Cream Man hanging outside Weight Watchers, I want you to repeat this process for a secondary and tertiary avatar. You may have a perfect customer in your head, but your product certainly was created for more than just a narrow slice of the world. By repeating this process, we can find ways to tailor our sales presentations to many different demographics. Having this knowledge is invaluable.

This one always throws newer salespeople off.

From a young age, we are taught, "When you assume, you make an ASS out of U and ME". Then in sales trainings around the world, we are told that we should always be assumptive.

Wait...? What? I should be skinny and fat? I should be tall and short. I should be sorry/not sorry?

Yes... you should be assumptive and non-assumptive at the same time. Just do them for different reasons.

There is never a reason in sales to not be assumptive. You should always assume the sale. Act as if brothers and sisters!

I have written blog posts about assuming the sale. I have done podcasts about being assumptive. In my day job, I have inherited amazing training on this very topic that has evolved 30 Minute Sales Coach style into something our newer sales-folk remember forever.

We will go into the power of being assumptive at a later date.

Today, we are going to talk about the weakness of being assumptive. Yeah, I told you this one might be a little out there.

So if we are supposed to be assumptive, why are you telling us not to be assumptive?

It's simple. As humans, we tend to fill in the blanks on unknown variables in order to shape our own narrative. We jump to conclusions. We build monuments to nothing. We get angry. We get sad. We think the worst. We do a lot of dumb shit that doesn't need to get done.

See? It turns out the ass making statements we grew up with were right after all. Being assumptive at the wrong time can wreak havoc on our business and mindset.

What is your avatar?

I have seen this all too many times. We prejudge the hell out of a prospect. “It’s a single mom, she can’t afford it.”, “That guy is from (insert country here). I know exactly how this will play out.” The hits go on and on. They say don’t judge a book by its cover, yet we (we are all guilty of it at some point) still allow our subconscious to talk us out of a sale.

While we’re talking about judging books by their covers, here’s one for you. A friend of mine sells high-end automobiles. He’s great at what he does. He knows the cars inside and out and has mastered the art of suggesting how much of a stud you look like behind the wheel without going to far. He has seen tons of salespeople come and go at his dealership while he has consistently built up a book of business on past clients and referrals.

If you ask him his secret, it won’t be what you expect. The secret to his success is not judging people when they walk into the showroom. The world of luxury vehicle sales is a little topsy-turvy. Prejudge the wrong person as a tire-kicker and you kiss thousands goodbye and can ruin a long-lasting relationship before it even starts.

The folks who don’t make it in his line of work assume the wrong thing.

“That punk kid who walked onto the lot? He’ll never buy, he’s just here to waste my time.” What you don’t know is that he’s got a trust fund that dwarves your net worth. Or maybe he is shopping for his father who is too busy making millions to come in and pick out his own car. Perhaps he just signed a record deal. You just lost a sale.

“Look at what that guy is wearing. I bet one of my shoes cost more than his wardrobe.” Ever think that he likes cars more than clothes or maybe he just sold his software company for a few mil and has been locked away in front of his keyboard for months? You just lost another sale.

I could go on and on, the stereotypes and archetypes are endless and the more I type, the less PC I’ll get.

The one person my friend will never make a beeline for is the guy who comes in dressed to the nines. You know the one. Four figure suit over Ferragamos fidgeting just enough so you can see his beefy Panerai. That’s the guy who is probably NOT going to buy. This is usually the guy who dressed the part looking for a free joy ride.

Conclusion

The people who can afford to buy a six-figure automobile are confident enough to know they are able to afford it without trying to prove it to you. The ones that come in wearing jeans and flip-flops end up being the best repeat customers. The Ferragamo-fidgeters are the ones who either don't buy or freak out about their first oil-change invoice.

These examples may be a little elementary, but they serve to prove a point. When we prejudge our clients and let our subconscious make assumptions about who/what they are, we are leaving business on the table.

1. You don't know what they were doing when that phone rang, so their behavior on that particular call may not be indicative of who they are.
2. Accent doesn't equate to IQ. I know guys from the south who exploit this to the fullest. They just know (are they assuming too?) that when they get a Yankee on the line, they are being underestimated.
3. We have no idea what the prospect was expecting if they called in to us. Were they expecting to just briefly set an appointment for a later conversation when we talked their ear off for forty minutes?
4. We don't know who else is in the room with them. Are they being guarded because they are in a cubicle farm and don't want to share their personal info in public?
5. Why are they calling us? They might sound like they really have their act together, so we think they want product A and take that path. Had we dug a little deeper, we may realize they need real help and plan B or C is the better choice.

In the end, there are so many opportunities for us to mess this up every day. Every industry will have their own unique pitfalls to look out for. We must be cognizant of this at all times and assume nothing.

Treat your clients as if this is your first day on the planet and they are fascinating to you. Learn what problem they want/need to solve and show them how you can provide the solution in a way that no one else can. We are here to serve our clients and in return get compensated for it. We are not here to judge them.

Remember, the guy in flip-flops with socks doesn't walk into the Ferrari dealership without good reason.