

Timothy J. Cummuta

Powerful Strategies for Sales Success

SALES System™



TIMOTHY J. CUMMUTA

**POWERFUL STRATEGIES
FOR SALES SUCCESS**
SALES SYSTEM™

Powerful Strategies for Sales Success: SALES System™

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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- Leadership
- Strategy Development
- Sales & Marketing
- Innovation
- Creativity
- Financial Planning
- And more...

1 WHAT MAKES GREAT SALES PEOPLE GREAT?

1.1 GREAT SALES PEOPLE ARE MADE NOT BORN

Great sales people are not born great. They learn to be great. While some people do make it easier than others, most great sales people don't have it easy. Go ahead and read about any great sales person. In most cases they'll tell you they put together a system based upon who they were, then just repeated it time and time again until they achieved what they were after in life. Success came not from who they were, but from the learning and hard work they put in. Anyone can be a great sales person, anyone!

One of the biggest reasons most people struggle in sales is because they approach sales with the wrong perspective. They believe, or have been taught, you must force, persuade, or cajole people into buying what they inherently don't want, i.e. "The high pressure Sales Approach." More sales which could've and should've been closed are lost because of high pressure tactics than any other method. Nothing is more irritating for me to hear a sales manager, or worse yet, a sales trainer, say "close the prospect hard and close them often." While this may have worked in ancient history, before the internet of everything, it doesn't work now. People who are pushed to buy usually come back later and return the item for a full refund.

Many sales managers, as well as companies, want quantity sales at any cost. Often what they end up getting is a lot of apparent sales numbers up front which ultimately fall apart over the long run. It's not about numbers of sales, it's about numbers of real clients. It's not about how many you close, it's how many stay closed and products or services are delivered in full! The art of successful sales is about building a long term client base which you can come back to for more sales or referrals year after year.

The most important key to success in sales today is to learn how to treat people right. By treating them right, they begin to trust you. You thereby can find out what their real needs are. Once you've determined what they really need, you then provide a solution on how you can meet those needs. This requires you respect the customer and be genuinely concerned about their wellbeing. It also means you take whatever time is necessary to build the right type of relationship with the prospect/client.

People are smart enough to know when you're sincere and when you're not. People are also far more intelligent than they have been given credit for. Because of the internet and their ability to research anything and everything, people are more knowledgeable than ever before in history. With higher education levels, the advent of unlimited knowledge at their fingertips via the internet, and lightning fast communications technologies people can find out whatever they want to know in seconds. So if you're blowing smoke at them, you'll get caught and surely lose the sale. Here you'll find the basics to a successful selling career guaranteed to bring you all you desire, That's, as long as you are willing to take the time to determine and then give to your clients what they really desire.

The bottom line is being successful in sales is a focused pursuit and a numbers game. To be successful, really successful, you're going to have to talk to a great many people, how many depends on what you're selling. Some will say yes, more will say no...so what, that's the way selling gets done! Now, move on to the next prospect. A "No" is not rejection, it's how this works for everyone. "No" should always be a learning experience and not rejection.

Many new sales people think they're supposed to sell everyone they talk to. That's impossible. No one, I repeat, "No one" can sell everyone, not even the best sales people alive. It may seem like they can, but its more related to quality prospecting first and foremost. They sell a great many of the people they talk to because they find people who are qualified first to talk to. Prospecting is about finding people who are interested. This is what professionals do very successfully. They prospect and don't try to sell anyone until they have a qualified prospect. After they find someone qualified, then they actually engage in a realistic sales process.

While this may end up being one of the shorted books you've read on sales or any other business subject for that matter, don't sell it short. Great sales success is not rocket science. It's finding a pattern of successful operation and repeating it over and over again until you achieve your goals. You'll probably end up reading this book, and then reading it again. This stuff is good, it's important, and it will work! While the mode of marketing may change, such as email, the internet, or social marketing, selling always comes down to one on one, people talking to people to make the sale! I'm obviously not discussing pure internet sales like Amazon here. This is about a sales person talking a prospect into trusting them enough to buy from them. Today it takes a new approach for many but an old approach for the pros, *Consultative Selling*.

2 CONSULTATIVE SELLING

Today most individuals and businesses alike aren't looking for a sales person or company to buy from. They're looking for a partner, a consultant. Each of us now has literally an unlimited amount of data or information at our disposal. However, we don't necessarily know what's important or even relevant to us, our lives, or businesses. We require someone who is knowledgeable enough and professional enough who will take the time assisting us in sorting through all of the information so we can make informed decisions.

The 21st Century has changed the dynamics of selling greatly. Today, because of the Web 2.0, people are far more knowledgeable than ever before about your products or services. People can research what they're looking for, deeply in many cases, before they ever call on a sales person. It's been said that by the time you actually talk to a prospect they're about 65% sold already. If they already pretty much know what they want, how can you differentiate yourself from all the others out there? This new paradigm places more importance on creative marketing and prospecting than ever previously needed.

As you approach your business or sales career, keep in mind very few sales people who are pushy and arrogant will find any great success in the 21st Century. However, if they do, it's usually short lived. As a professional, I personally look for other professionals to do business with. You may have the best product in the world. If I cannot see your professionalism and desire to *partner* with me in my decisions, I will not likely do business with you. I don't believe anyone wants to be sold. However, people do want to buy and partner with professionals.

They're even willing to give up some quality and some cost to the right person. Why, because pushy people will make the sale and move on. I have to live with the sale for who knows how long. As a customer in the 21st Century, I've already completed much research on what I'm searching for. I have questions I want answers to. Those answers may generate more questions. I have a right to get all of my questions answered so I feel comfortable with my final decision. If you're not willing to give me time to explore my concerns and work through my thinking process, I won't do business with you! I'm not alone in my feelings. Today, many individuals operate in a similar fashion. The internet of everything has changed the sales playing field forever. The sales environment today requires professionals to go to greater lengths to make their quotas than ever before! However, you can still be highly successful. Selling is still the highest paid industry in the world!

What does it mean to consult with prospects and clients rather than sell them? Consultative selling requires that we ask probing questions to find out what the prospect/client needs and/or are looking for. You'll need to be the solution to the problem they're trying to solve? You can't have solutions until you're fully, I repeat fully, knowledgeable and understand the client's needs. There are two reasons to continue asking questions such as these. We first keep asking probing questions so the prospect/client can process through the issues. Secondly, you must come to a thorough understanding of their needs. Sometimes, especially in business, you won't be able to put your finger on the exact issue immediately. From a consultant's perspective, the job is to assist the prospect/client in finding the real issues or outcomes they're looking for. I've been in high powered sales situations where it required my team to help the client process their issues, needs, until we all understood them enough to produce a realistic solution. Any proposed solution before we fully understood their need would have been fruitless.

2.1 OUTCOMES

You're selling outcomes and value, not products or services. You're not selling a car. You're selling ownership, a driving experience, or feeling. Why are they buying the auto? You can't assume you know. A sales person may think the new model with all of its benefits and features is what the client wants. When in reality, this person may be just looking for a minimum of features to keep the cost down. Their real need may be reliability. If we're to make the sale, we must find out the real need. You're not selling a computer. You're selling more productivity at a far reduced cost as well as potentially no new employees. Your clients are interested in an outcome not features, or a thing. It's important as a sales professional to find out the outcome the client desires. Then focus all of your attention on providing the true desired outcome or solution to the prospect or client.

The following gives an example. Suppose your products are voluntary work site benefits such as critical illness insurance. Critical illness insurance is just what it states, insurance in case of certain critical illnesses. How do you actually position this type of product? This is a product which must be sold two times, once to the business leader, and then to the individual employee too. What's the client actually looking for as an outcome? There are two distinct but related answers, one for the leader, and one for the employee.

Here in the US, many individuals have to pay for their health insurance. A particular client may want lower health insurance cost while still protecting themselves and their families against financial risk and benefit costs. To do this, they may take a higher deductible on their health insurance cost to reduce the premiums. However, now that they have a larger deductible, their risk of higher personal out of pocket costs increases. This is where critical illness insurance comes in to help the client pay their deductible at a much reduced premium cost if one of the covered illnesses occur.

In light of the new healthcare laws here in the US, they may also want to meet the legal requirements of the law. If it's an employer who is considering this insurance for their employees, the outcome value is easy here. The critical illness insurance benefits shift some benefit costs from the employer to the employee reducing the company's exposure to increased healthcare costs provided under the new US law. Your products also reduce employment taxes for the employer because product premiums such as these can often be taken out of pretaxed wages. For the employee, it lowers the cost of health insurance while keeping the overall benefit levels high enough to avoid the potential risks of a serious health issue. These types of products can also reduce the tax burden on the employee because it lowers pretax income. So, outcomes for the employer are less cost more quality in employee benefits while reducing payroll taxes. The employee outcome is increased health coverage levels, less income taxes, and potentially more take home pay.

While this may be just an example, it clearly demonstrates outcome value thinking. The employer's outcome thinking is to lower health insurance costs and taxes while providing quality employee benefits. The employee's outcome thinking is to lower their personal health insurance costs while still keeping benefit levels high. The key here is, understanding the employer and the employee have two distinct and different outcomes they desire. To make this sale, the sales person needs to understand the differences and meet both needs. You can say it's just semantics about a single product or service. However, buying is an emotional reaction at every level and in every instance. In this particular situation, you must sell both the employer and the employee on your solutions. If you only produce one outcome here, say you attempt to provide one for the employer's desired outcome, you won't sell the employee and vice versa.

Great sales people are problem solvers. They learn to see problems as they really are, the root cause! Many people spend a great deal of time trying to medicate a symptom rather than solve a problem. The key to becoming a problem solver is asking the right questions and listening to the answers. If we want to provide value to our prospects and clients, we must know the real issues at stake. The prospect or client is looking for a solution! Otherwise, they wouldn't be talking to you in the first place. Often, however, they're not even sure what they need or if there is a solution available anywhere. You as a professional must resist the desire to sell something to them even if it's wrong just to make the sale. You'll potentially lose the customer forever once they realize what you've done to them, and of course they will discover it sooner or later. Make sure you have a solution that fits their need. If not, send them to someone who does. This way you gain respect and most likely sales or referrals down the road from treating this person right. It's difficult and a great deal of work to build a great reputation, but very easy to lose one!

Too often sales people come to the table with preconceived solutions. They're given a product or service to sell and told to make a certain amount of sales to meet a given quota. Let's consider you're told to sell the newest model of desktop computer. It's powerful and fast. Your company makes a great profit on this particular model. A prospect walks in looking for a smart pad. You and your company don't make as much profit on this particular unit. What do you do? Your boss says sell them the larger desktop computer and so maybe you do. How will this client feel when they realize it doesn't meet their mobile computing needs? What will they think of you and your company? If they don't bring it back, they will most likely not only never come back to your business, they'll also tell others not to go to your business for their computer needs!

Many times the sales person really doesn't listen to the prospect's needs at all. Instead, as what has been taught to sales people for years, they're just looking for words or concepts from the prospect they can target to prove how their product or service is the correct choice. They call this trigger words, words that you can repeat back to the prospect to reinforce their desire for your product or service.

Over the years many different techniques have been taught which were more like a form of brain washing than professional sales. Neural linguistic programming is one such form of selling. This is where you, more or less, force the prospect to repeat words or phrases which supposedly move them more towards a positive impression of your product or service. This is accomplished by getting them to say "yes" often. In essence, you're programming them to say yes. The theory here is their so used to saying yes, when you finally get to your close they are programmed to say "yes" and buy. Proponents believe because they're saying yes to most of what you're saying to them, they will be programmed to say yes when you ask them to buy. OK, so I'm practical and very realistic but of all this sounds stupid to me. Sorry if you're someone thinking this is a great system. To me it's a little like saying, "*These are not the droids you're looking for.*" This quote won't mean anything to you if you've never seen Star Wars. People are neither stupid nor gullible enough for this to work enough to get you long term success. It's also not professional unless you're a magician working in Las Vegas. This is because you don't care what the client's needs really are. You're just trying to make the sale no matter what or how.

You can build value for future sales and/or references from this prospect by helping them to find the solution, outcome, to their need or desire even if you don't have what they need. I've had sales later in time from people because I helped them solve a problem even though it was not with my products or services the first time. Have you ever told a prospect that what they already had was better than what you were offering? I have. By helping them, even though there was no economic value to me, I earned their trust. This can provide future sales, references, and a whole host of other benefits by being professional. Become a problem solver. Ask questions to find a place for your value.

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3 MARKETING/BRANDING

I'm not going to go into detail here on this subject because it should have its own book/s. This book is about selling. However, marketing is the primary driver of the overall sales process as you will see. For this reason, Marketing/Branding should be addressed here too. Marketing/Branding is about going out to the universe of people and developing interested people within this group about you, your product or service, and/or your company. While selling is actually the process of one on one or one on a few interactions, marketing is a broader company on many endeavor. Marketing/Branding is about communicating a bigger picture to many in the hopes of finding a few to sell to. How will the universe of potential customers know how and why you exist? This is the essence on which you build your marketing and branding platform.

I look at marketing and branding at the same time as one all encompassing business function. I'm sure I'll have the purists up in arms right now saying there is a significant difference between the two. I would disagree. I believe one should not be done without the other, not anymore! If you're not looking at your brand, you should be. Even an individual can and should have a brand. In the competitive marketplace we all work in now, we need something to make our enterprise, our solution, stand out. This is your brand.

3.1 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

You're competing with the local community, region, country, or world. Why should someone listen to you? Why does your business exist? What's different about you, your product or service, and/or your company? This thought process should be grounded in your competitive advantage. It may be your product or service outperforms the competition. It may be your offering is the lowest price. It could be the reliability of your service or business. There is something that sets you apart from your competition. This is something which needs to be thought about intently and clarified. If you can't find something that sets you apart from your competition, success will be tough.

Your difference, or competitive advantage, may be you! Maybe you pride yourself on being the best at what you do bar none. Someone out there is the best and they should let people know upfront that they are. If this is the case for you and your business, it becomes a part of your branding process, making sure the prospect understands your capabilities and commitment to their success.

Branding is about creating a logo, a process, a methodology, and/or all of these to give a clear and consistent portrayal of what you want prospects/clients to think and believe about your business. It's something which communicates the same meaning, one you create and manage, each and every time someone sees, hears, or reads your messages. This is so they come away with the same understanding of who you are and why you exist every time.

It's not just about cool logos or web sites. It's about creating a story or image you want people to understand about you and your business. When you see a picture of an apple with a bite out of it, what do you think of? Apple. You see a huge sign with this image on it, you know precisely what it means without there being one word of text on the sign. This is branding, but it's also part of the marketing process. Apple has spent millions in marketing to create this branding image and communicating a myriad of quality benefits to those who see it. Everything you go to market with should say the same branding message. People should come away with the same message each and every time you put something out for the public to see; business cards, voice mail, receptionists, holding music, letters, web sites, direct mail, email, whatever it is.

Hopefully you, or your company if this is the case, has already done a more than acceptable job of branding and marketing for you. If not, then I would suggest that you get a good book, training, or hire someone to build your brand and market it for you or your company! Now let's get back to selling.

4 PROSPECTING

As said previously, there is a great deal of difference between prospecting and selling. These are two distinct operations and should always be viewed this way. Most sales people I encounter tend to believe they're one and the same. Managers and sales people alike believe a sales person should attempt to sell everyone they encounter every time. They believe good sales people sell most of the people they meet. Anyone who tells you this is how you sell, really doesn't know what they're talking about. You should walk away from them very quickly. It's impossible to sell everyone you meet or talk to. If you do try to sell this way, even your friends won't want to be around you anymore. As one experienced sales person told me, "I've burned all of my friends and relatives, I can't ever go back to them now!"

Not only is prospecting different from sales, it's really more closely associated with marketing than sales. I do realize sales people have to prospect, understand though, it's not selling. It's a method to separate the universe of people from those who just might be interested in what you offer. Not everyone is looking for a new computer right at this moment. If this is true, one would waste a great deal of time attempting to sell computers to everyone they see. Remember, your time is always worth money. Make it pay!

When you think of the old gold prospector from US history, what conjures up in your mind? Do you see an old bearded guy sitting at the side of a creek with a pan sifting through the mud looking for a nugget? That's prospecting even today! You're searching through the mud of humanity looking for a gold nugget.

When the miner is finished with the pan of mud and finding no gold, what does he do? Does he go back through that same pan of mud or sand sifting through it once again, and then again, and then again? No, he throws the mud to the side on the shore so he doesn't go through it again. He then digs up a brand new pan full of mud or sand from the creek and starts sifting all over again looking for a gold nugget or two.

Prospecting is about working, sifting, your way through the universe of people you encounter or have access to, looking for nuggets of gold, potential prospects. Don't get so bogged down with one person or group of people that you get stuck and disillusioned. So many potentially good, possibly great, sales people lose heart and quit because they didn't close the big account they were after. More money is made by making smaller sales consistently than attempting to find only the big ones. There's far more stability in your income also with a large number of smaller clients, than a few large ones. If you have three large clients and lose one, you've lost one third of your income or revenue. Your business may not survive. If, however, you have 50 smaller clients, losing one client has little impact on your income or revenue and does not seriously impact your bottom line. There have been a great many companies which have gone out of business because they only had one or two large clients.

Whatever method you use for prospecting, and I would use as many as fit your business, it's merely a way to sort out all those people or businesses that won't buy from you from those who really offer potential at this time. It's important to eliminate those you realistically have no chance of selling for now from the pile so you don't waste your valuable time. The best sales people know how to allocate their time to only those prospects who show real promise. This is the essence of their success, not that they can sell anyone. It's rather they only attempt to sell those who have real promise. Because of this process, they close more than most other sales people. Some sales managers and executives will tell you to present to everyone but the real pros don't. They don't waste their time. They focus on the real prospects, not the suspects as they call those that have no real potential.

A good example would be a professional sports team. When they have training camp, they're looking for those who will add to their team. They'll interview many potential prospects to find those to focus on. This is how they build winning teams. If they operated like most sales organizations, they would never work with many promising recruits. Instead, they would get stuck on only the ones who needed a great deal of help, those who would most likely never make or help the team win. In real life, the ones who aren't likely to help the team win are cut and the team focuses on the ones who will help them win. This is how true prospecting should work. Look for those who really can help you win!

What this boils down to isn't spending more time than is absolutely necessary to find out who is and who isn't a real prospect. It should be a high value numbers game. As I stated before, this is more of a marketing process than a sales process. When looking through the universe of people while prospecting, your system should give them bits and pieces of your offering to see if it can generate any interest. Then, you wait for the light to go on with someone, and then focus on that individual. Later I will talk about your prospecting presentation. This is a tool you can utilize as a template for prospecting. If they're interested, they will signal their interest. They will draw you into a worthwhile discussion by asking more engaging questions. Then, you'll eventually end up in a discussion about your product or service.

There are many different methods to prospect. Every sales person should utilize as many of these methods as is realistic for them. Hopefully, your company has provided some excellent leads and/or prospecting methods, materials, and procedures for you to utilize or take advantage of. If not, the next few sections should help you establish a method you can start with. Marketing, and therefore prospecting, is about creating or trying some form of contact and then testing it, adjusting it, and testing it again until the system is proven successful. No one can create something in one shot which works every time. It usually takes time to develop a sound successful prospecting method. Once you have something which works, you repeat it over and over with each new prospect adjusting it as you go to make it better. Your presentations should never be static but alive. They should change and bend to the personality and needs of the individual you're talking to.

Remember, it's about numbers of people. The more people you know or contact, the better your chances of finding good prospects. The highest quality method of finding new clients is through referrals. Referrals often need little convincing because of your presumed credibility. Your credibility comes instantly when someone recommends you to someone they know. It's about trust, and they trust the friend, relative, or business acquaintance who referred them to you. In the prospect's thinking, they wouldn't have been referred to you if you weren't trustworthy. How do you get referrals? That's the subject of the next couple of sections.

4.1 NETWORKING

What is networking any way? Well first of all, you've been doing networking all of your life. When you first went to school way back when, you found a group of people you thought would be fun and started to network with them. If and when you went to a new school, you started with a new network group, maintaining some of your old network people within your new group. When you moved to a new town you started another new network and kept some of the old ones. From time to time you bring individuals from these different networks together, business lunches, meetings, conferences, weddings, birthdays, picnics and so forth. You network at church, at work, at play, all over the place. Obviously not all of these people are potential prospects. However, some may be, others may know someone who has great potential they would gladly recommend you to because of the trust you've built with them.

Now, you should take it to the next level and begin to network your business and sales. Don't get intimidated by this process. You're not going to a networking event to sell everyone, or anyone for that matter! You're just going to meet new people. They're also coming to these events to meet new people. You're going to find out there are going to be some very interesting people at these events. Get to know them. Begin to participate in the network group programming. You will most likely get a chance to tell the group about who you are and what you do. Some people will be gravitated toward you. Get to know them better. Learn about what they do and how they do it. Enjoy yourself and get to know new people. Participate actively in the group joining committees and outreach events if they exist.

Don't attempt to sell people when you're networking unless they make it clear they want you to discuss what your offerings. Networking is about building relationships and helping each other become better in many areas of our business and life, not selling. Don't expect sales overnight. Relationships are what bring long term prosperity. Over time people you know and people you meet are going to provide a great number of referral sales for you. Sooner or later you should be able to do the same thing for them. Most of the time when you give a referral to them, it creates an apparent obligation to them to return in kind and give you a referral.

Referral sales are usually the lowest cost sales and the easiest to make. This is because you usually have very little money invested in finding the qualified prospects and the person who referred you provided their own personal credibility for you. There are a large number of real professional sales people who don't prospect at all anymore. They've built such a great referral network; they get all the business they want just from their network.

Whether you network in person locally, through social networks online, with your local business organizations, or online business organizations such as LinkedIn, just become an active part of what is going on there. Get involved. One caution, you don't have to be involved in every social media outlet on the internet. Choose only those which make sense based upon your business and interests. Be careful also not to get caught up with all of the chatter, noise, taking place there on the net. There are a lot of individuals who just sit on these social networks and do nothing else. Busy people are busy doing business. They don't sit on social media all day unless their business is a blog!

While the social networking sites market themselves as the best place in the world to find new clients, they're not. Most people don't want to be sold something on these social networks. You don't have the time to be on the internet just to be on the internet either. I know twitter is really cool, but what real sales value does it provide as a whole? It's a communications tool. It can and should be used as part of your branding strategy. However, you must make sure what you send has value for the intended recipients. Many times what is sent as a sales tool, is most often just an irritating nuisance tweet instead. Don't become the scourge of the net. You won't make any sales by irritating people, ever. Remember no one goes online to a social network hoping to be sold something. They come there to learn and/or communicate with other likeminded individuals. Be respectful and others will respect you!

I recommend you use social networking if your product or service can help those people, but use it wisely. Most of the social networks and the people that use them consider selling to these communities as grounds for termination from the group. It's a social group, not a prospecting group. This means prospecting in these groups is very difficult and requires a great deal of thought before trying and should be done with great sensitivity. If you're going to attempt to prospect in social groups such as these, learn the right methods. Don't go it without learning how to do it right. The best way to prospect for business or referrals is to be a valued part of the group providing service, education, and/or educational tools free of charge or obligation.

Many sales people and in sales management believe you never give anything away free. I disagree again. The more value you provide, the more sales you 'll make. This value can come in free advice, free help, free education, or something your prospect or client perceives as real value. Helping someone in need without charging them often leaves a lasting impression of quality and trustworthiness. You can't buy credibility like this for any amount of money. One of my best clients came from giving them free advice which saved them thousands of dollars. Do you think it had a lasting impression on them? So much so, I'm now in a partnership with them.

Let's now discuss a second method of prospecting, creating a list of people you know.

4.2 WHO DO YOU KNOW

Everyone one of us knows hundreds of people. We go to work with people. We go to church with people. There are people who are centers of influence in our community we may know; mayors, police officers, judges, barbers, or ministers. The list could on and on. Sit down and write a list of all of the people you know. Do you have a personal phone address book? Do you have names, addresses, and/or email addresses in your smart phone? Look in there for others you cannot remember. Create a list and then track it. Over time you will remember more individuals you know. Add to the list the new people you meet. As you renew your relationship with individuals you already know, begin to embrace a networking type philosophy with them. Start taking notes and look for opportunities to get referrals. As you meet new people, invest more time in starting a relationship, if possible, one you can build on.

When you contact people you already know, don't try to sell anyone just yet. Just make it more of an announcement to the people you know. Just send a letter, email, or call. Let them know you're in business and what your product or service is. If you know them well enough, you might ask for any referrals they may know of at that time. If they give you someone you don't know, ask if it's OK to say they were referred by your acquaintance. This will add credibility to your contact.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard, "Oh, I didn't know you did that. I wish I would have known that before, I just...bought one, or I know a friend who just bought one," You get the message. Remember you're looking for gold nuggets; you're not trying to sell at first. Send out fifty letters and move on. If someone is interested, they will contact you. Don't get in a hurry to push people. You're more likely to push them away than make the sale. You can go back to these lists from time to time to inform everyone of something importance. Maybe a new product or service is now available? Some important news may have taken place with your company or you. A promotion would qualify as an event worth noting.

You can buy lists from many different list sources. I've used InfoUSA.com many times when I need to get a list. Make sure the list company is a viable list company. There are a number of list companies on the internet who really aren't professional sources. Professional list companies clean their list regularly for duplicates, bad addresses, or name changes.

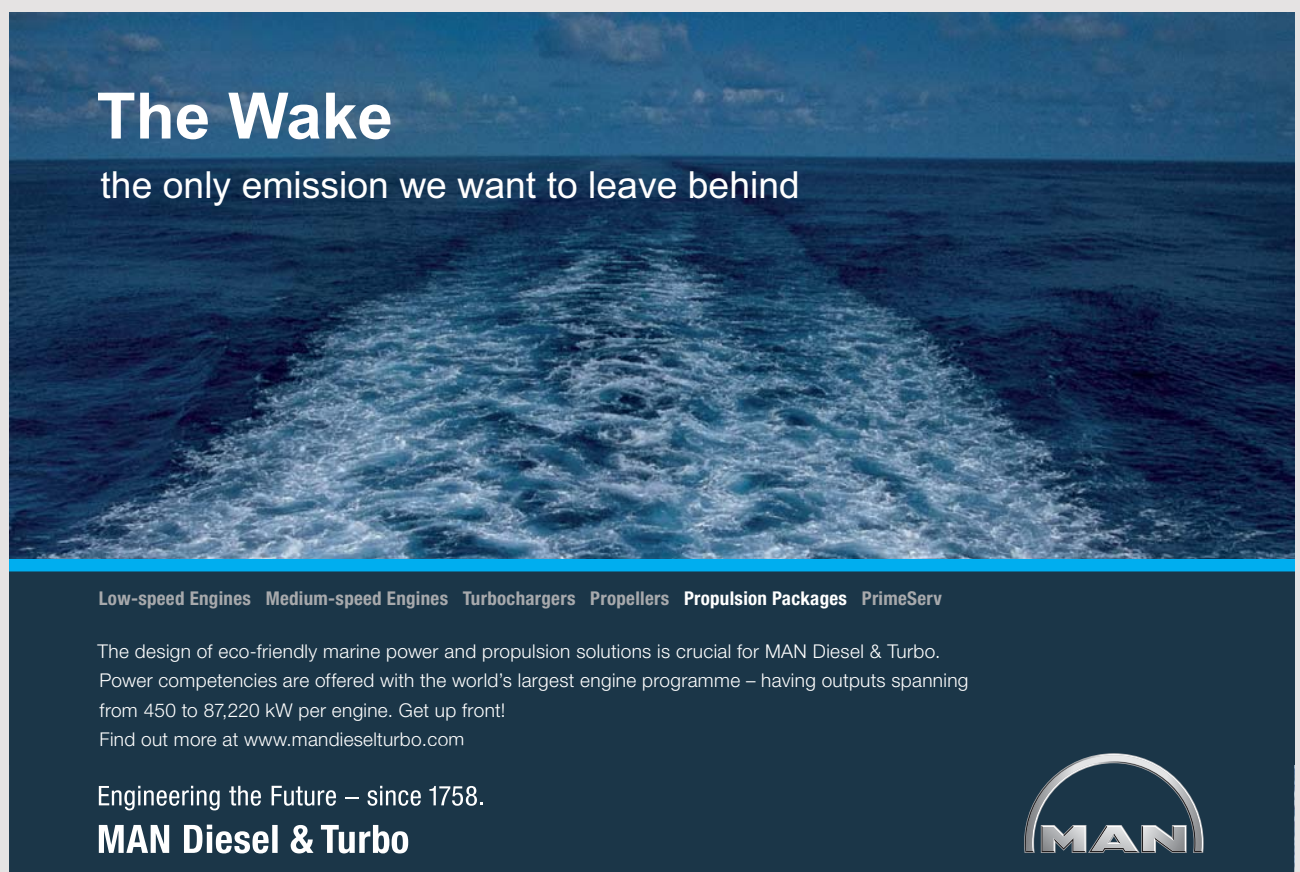
A list is just that, a list. It's a large pile of mud you must sift through. You can get cheaper lists. But remember, you usually get what you pay for. Cheaper lists are usually full of duplicates, undeliverable addresses, or names. What good is it to send out 500 letters and have 250 come back with bad addresses? Some cheap list sources send the same lists out to numerous individuals in your line of business to keep their prices down. This typically means you and any number of other sales people in your line of business are contacting these same people basically at the same time. The only time I might use these lists is if I know without a doubt what I offer is far superior. Even so, it will still take a great effort to show my supremacy or competitive advantage.

4.3 USING THE POST OFFICE

Here in the US I try send out snail mail on days so my offering gets to the prospect on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, with Wednesday being the best day. Why choose these particular days? The reason is simple. Most mail usually comes on Mondays. I don't want my offering to show up the same time 50 other pieces show up on the prospects desk. Fridays no one wants to think about business much, so on Fridays everything usually just gets a glance and most end up in the garbage. Wednesdays are typically the lowest mail days of the week with Tuesday and Thursday being second. If my offering arrives on Wednesday, preferably, I can most often get the best look from a prospect or suspect. Many times the more local the prospect the sooner it will arrive. In my state mail gets delivered in one day throughout the state. Therefore, I would do instate mail on a Monday or Tuesday for first class mail. It will usually arrive Tuesday or Wednesday. If it's not first class mail, you send it out bulk mail for instance, find out from the local post office how long it will take to get delivered and then mail as necessary.

Web site lists, or email lists, are certainly no better. Often they're worse. How many unwanted emails do you get? I get a million, well maybe not that many, but it seems like it. Most internet providers will terminate your email account if they find out your sending out spam, unwanted email. Many times, especially some social sites, will sell their email address to anyone willing to pay for it. This doesn't mean these people want an email from you. Even many legitimate sites will sell your email address. However, they'll usually give you the opportunity to opt out of the company selling your email address. Opt in list, as they're called, are the safest lists. These individuals don't mind getting unexpected contact from you.

Many people don't opt out of email lists by default and don't realize their email address is being sold to the highest bidder. Again, this does not mean they want your email. Often they're really not aware they're giving out their email addresses to any person or company willing to pay for them. Does this mean they want an email from you selling your products? No! Chances are if your email wasn't requested it will quickly be deleted or sent into the spam folder. These lists can be useful but beware of which ones you purchase and how you intend to use them. Make sure the email lists you use are for addresses where people have consented, or don't care, if they receive email from unknown individuals. As a business professional I tend to allow some email from sources which can help me in my business. This way I stay abreast of new and important information. However, I'm not interested in dating sites, male hormones, or buying the next gadget. These emails just get deleted without being read.



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One quick caveat about attempting to get rid of unwanted email. Nowadays with spammers, if you hit the remove button on an unwanted email, often you're just verifying the email address is valid, not getting it removed from their database. You may now see even more junk because you attempted this procedure. High value companies will remove your email. Spam users typically will sell your validated email address to more people. A suggestion you may try is to not respond to anyone that's not a high value well known company or person. Eventually your email address will get removed by spammers or unprofessional list sites for lack of any response from you, as an invalid email address.

Business list are usually better because businesses usually desire to know about other products and services available which may help them do their businesses better. Business owners and executives understand this is one method where you can find out about other new businesses, products, services, or important news. You can still abuse this though. If you continue to send materials out to these people, space it out so as not to appear like spam to them. If I haven't received any response from a given list, I will usually take at least a month, usually more, before sending something to them once again. I use Client Relationship Management, CRM, as I will discuss later in this book. CRM allows me to set up prospects on preplanned tracks with automated response times based on specific predetermined timing and materials.

When prospecting, establish goals. What are you trying to accomplish? Establish these goals before beginning any large scale marketing. Create a budget and then work within the budget. Do not, I repeat, do not just advertise because it seems the right thing to do. Look at the medium you're about to use. Whether it's the local paper, or a community newsletter, are there any other advertisers like you, your business or industry, using it? Not every business fits in the local newspaper. Does the advertising medium you're about to use make sense for your offering? For instance, there are many offerings which just won't work with advertising on the radio or television. Radio and Television advertising is losing its appeal and effectiveness for many products or services now that there is so much activity on the internet.

If your product is a high end product for people in upper income brackets, the local shopper will most likely not bear much fruit and likely be a waste of your precious time and money. Think about what you're trying to accomplish, who your intended prospects should be, and will they see you where you're intending to advertise? So much wasted money is poured into improper advertising and marketing mediums. Remember, these sales people are selling this advertising/marketing venue to you to earn their commissions from the sale, sometimes even if it makes no real sense for you. "Buyer Beware." You need to make sure it does make sense. Ask them to show you other clients like you who have advertised regularly and successfully with them.

5 SELLING

5.1 DRESS

I've often heard the term "Dress for Success." Many sales trainers teach this as an important characteristic of highly successful sales people. They usually mean, or it's taken for granted they mean, wear a nice suit. First of all, how do you dress for success? Success means different things to different people. Mark Zuckerberg creator of Facebook is very successful I would think. And yet, I've never seen him when he's not in a T shirt. I'm sure there are times when he dresses up, but apparently not often for business. So what is dressing for success? What do you wonder he thinks of people who show up in \$900 suits? Maybe he likes this, maybe he would prefer you be more casual like him. Most software companies are casual in their dress and won't mind you showing up in dress casual.

Consider for a moment you're going to visit a farmer to sell them an important product or service. What do you think the farmer will think of you if you show up in an Armani suit? The farmer will most likely laugh while thinking to themselves, "how can this person possibly understand my business of farming?" Maybe this is what they're thinking maybe not. What if you showed up there more casually dressed with boots in the car if needed? The farmer will most likely feel more comfortable with you and listen more attentively to what you have to ask and say.

Really dressing for success means different outfits for different people and environments. If you're going to see a CEO of a large corporation, you might dress in that Armani suit. However, if you're going to see a construction contractor onsite you may want to dress casual, or business casual, and wear boots and a hard hat if you have one. It's an important part of your first impression to look the part for the person or persons you're meeting. Think of the chameleon. It's constantly changing its color as it moves into different environments. Remember, you only make a first impression once! Make sure to consider every aspect of that first impression when meeting prospects for the first time. More often than not, business casual, possibly with a loose fitting tie, will suffice if you can't determine how to dress. If you think the tie is too much once you're there, take it off. I often make a joke about being overdressed and take the tie off if it seems appropriate.

5.2 CULTURE

Culture is another obvious area for your consideration. There are many different expectations differing cultures may have of someone attempting to sell something to them. Try to get a handle on what to expect from a culture you may not understand before you go to see them. If possible, speak to someone from a particular culture you're interested in to see how to work with their culture. Most people will appreciate the effort you undergo to understand their culture. Take your time when dealing with a culture which may be significantly different than your own. US Americans tend to be goal oriented and straight to the point. Most Europeans tend to be more social and slower to move forward on something opting to get to know you better first before purchasing from you. If I were to move to quickly with Europeans, I might not make the sale. If I move to slowly with most Americans, they might stop listening and again, I might lose the sale. This is an obvious generality and not the absolute with either culture. This is just an example. You'll never know for sure until look into it. Take the time to learn new and different cultures. The reward could be substantial. There are cultures which once you're trusted and inside their cultural fence, they send most of their friends and relatives to you. There is an untapped opportunity for those who take the time to learn to understand cultures around them!

5.3 STEP ONE – SLOW DOWN

The Warm Up

This cannot be stressed enough. Very few individuals want to buy from a stranger. However, everyone likes to buy from someone they know and trust, a friend. When you approach a prospect your job is first to get to know them and more importantly let them get to know you. Every successful sales person knows and understands the power of the warm up. Warm up simply means you're allowing them to warm up to you, and you're warming up to the prospect You're asking about them and telling them about you.

When I'm in the selling environment, such as my prospect's home or office, I look around the room or house looking for something interesting and personal to them. If I see numerous pictures of someone in military uniform, I will ask about that person. If I see sport trophies, or whatever, I will ask questions about it. This may seem strange to some sales people. However, most prospect/clients will be more than happy to discuss someone or something very important to them. People like to talk about what's important to them like loved ones, things they've won, great experiences, and much more. The more interest you show in them often translates into trust.

Forget selling for a moment. If you were introduced to someone interesting and you wanted to get to know them better, what would you do? You would ask them questions about their lives and then listen. You would pay attention and try to remember the details. You would probably joke and laugh a little. You would be at ease and you would attempt to put them at ease. This is the concept of the warm up. Whether this is an individual or a corporate president, they're still human beings and deserve the same respect and courtesy. Powerful people are just people who are powerful, but still much like you and I.

Once a prospect begins to talk they will often tell you things they would never tell you if you asked them outright without the warm up process. For instance, the person in the military uniform you noticed may be a war hero. Letting people talk demonstrates you're interested what they think about this person. Therefore, you also demonstrate you care about getting to know them more deeply.

A psychologist once did an experiment while on a long airplane flight. He purposely started a conversation with person in the next seat and then let the other person speak and speak and speak almost never interrupting for the whole flight. When the flight landed another person, also involved in the experiment, asked the individual who had been talking with the psychologist their impression of the man they had conversed with on the flight. Their response was that he was probably one of the most interesting people they had ever met. The psychologist said almost nothing the whole trip. He was interesting because he seemed interested and listened to them, not because he talked. Sales is more about listening than talking. You will be super surprised at how many sales you close without saying very much at all. Maybe this book should be titled, "How to sell in twenty five words or less." It can be done. I've made sales by just letting prospects talk. Eventually they talk themselves into buying my product or service.

I first learned this when I was over in Albania on a mission trip many years ago. We were supposed to engage the community into helping an orphanage get built and supported both financially and with manpower. I and the team were having a great deal of trouble getting people there to even talk to us and open up. The group I represented was trying to get this orphanage started up. There was a great need with orphans everywhere, many sleeping in the streets. No one would spend any time with us. I decided to change my method of engaging the local population. I started asking people about their lives, the people they loved, and about things I saw in their home. The response was immediate and significant. People began to open everywhere we went. It was an astounding eye opener for me. This was something I've never forgot to this day. It has helped me to be highly successful in sales, winning many awards over the years from a number of different organizations.

As I then began applying the same tactic in sales, I found out it worked just as well in sales as it had on that mission trip. People are basically the same, everywhere. They all love the people and things in their lives and love to talk about them. By allowing people to tell you about themselves, seeing you're really listening and caring, helps them to begin to trust you. Successful selling starts with trust. Without building trust you will get nowhere in this business.

What I'm not saying is, ask a few personal questions and go to the close. I know you can get pretty hungry at times in this business. Take the time to warm up the client and slow down. Warming up the prospect opens them up to you. Whenever I've sped through the warm up, I've lost more sales than I've made. I once took three hours to make a sale that normally would take less than an hour. The end result was I made two additional sales on that call because I took the time to converse and listen. I've made more sales by far listening to prospects than talking all or most of the time.

I have gained valuable data I needed for the current sale, not to mention future sales or referrals, simply by listening. Quite often if you'll let people talk, they'll actually inform you of the reasons why they should buy from you. For instance, you might ask what they think about some current news issue. This may give an opening which may bring you into a deeper conversation. As the conversation progresses, keep mental notes or write the details down. When it comes time to make your presentation, this may not happen on the first meeting, you can meld some of their personal data you've collected into your presentation. This makes your presentation more personal and focused on and to them. For instance, you may use your knowledge of an upcoming family birthday they've told you about to say how your product would make a great birthday gift for the person they told you about.

One caution, all of this warm discussion is based on your client's temperament. What I'm also not saying is do a data dump on them about you. You wouldn't do this with someone you just met, so don't do it to the prospect. This is about opening up a dialog, starting a conversation. You let the conversation take you where it will. Another caveat is, the conversation subject matter will also depend on the type of prospect you're talking to. A president of a large corporation may not initially, or never, want to know about your personal life. On the other hand, they may desire to get to know well before they buy, some do! You can easily tell by their responses what they want to talk about and what they don't want to talk about. Also, they may be extremely busy and have only given you a small timeslot. Not every sale is made on the first contact. The majority of sales are made after multiple contacts. I've worked on multimillion dollar sales that took three years and untold contacts before the sale closed.

Take the extra time to get to know your prospects. Talk about yourself so they get to know you. Clients whom I've worked with often know as much about me, my business, my philosophy, and my family, as I know about them. If necessary, I will tell them about my wife, my children, my grandchildren, even my dog if I think it's appropriate. I will talk about anything I think will warm them up, paying attention to their level of interest in what the conversation is about in order to let them feel at ease with me.

If you want to be fabulously successful in sales, let your prospects talk. You will be amazed at what and how much they will tell you if they feel you're really interested. Some will even talk themselves into doing business with you during the conversation.

5.4 THE FOUR SKILLS FOR BECOMING A GREAT SALES PERSON

Selling can be a simple process, not necessarily an easy one, once you master the right techniques. Without a clear understanding of what's involved in the selling process, you'll find yourself continuously coming up against roadblocks and thinking you're failing. A straightforward way of understanding your role in selling can be achieved by breaking it up into four distinct, but necessary, skill areas. The four skills are:

1. **Preparation**
2. **Learning**
3. **Education**
4. **Closing**

These four skills are utilized in my SALES System™ described later in this section. We'll now discuss each of these skills. This skill set is present in every highly successful sales person. The skills may be called by different names but, they're all present.

5.4.1 SKILL 1: PREPARATION

Pre and Post Planning

The first and most important of the four skills is preparation. You may feel you don't need this as part of the skillset. You may believe you're always prepared. If you desire success, there are a number of aspects of the sales environment which must be considered before going to any sales call. As we discussed dress previously, what kind of environment are you going to be in when you meet the prospect? Is it extremely professional? Are you meeting someone in a more casual environment? Many IT companies dress casual in every department including the executives.

What this preparation should all stem from is your research. Research your prospect as deeply as you can before you meet with them if possible. Individuals may be difficult to get any information on. Such is usually not the case with businesses. Many businesses can be found on the internet today. They might have a web site where they list many attributes of their company as well as the names of executives or other important individuals of the organization. If the company is listed on a stock exchange, you'll find a great deal of information on them. If you can't find information for the business you're going to visit, you may want to call their offices and ask to get information sent to you. If time doesn't permit, or there is no information, your first visit may simply be gathering information. Don't be intimidated by such a meeting. You're better off having good information than going in blind. However, going in blind may be the only way you get in. I often go to my first appointment and inform them I'm just here gathering information so I can be better informed about their needs.

When thinking about preparation, keep in mind any skill comes through acquiring initial information and training, then applying practice, which finally leads to eventual competence. The greatest athletes, highest achieving business people, and the most successful people in any walk of life will tell you preparation and practice are absolutely mandatory for success. You'll need to practice your presentation so well you're prepared to give it at a moment's notice. You'll be surprised how many times in the most unlikely places someone will ask you what you do for a living. Know your stuff through preparation! My brother in law once had someone say to him you're so lucky to be as good on the guitar as you are. He responded, "Yeah it's funny, the more I practice, the luckier I get."

What else does preparation include? You must study the programs, the products and the services you sell. You must become intimate with your products or services. Discussing them should become second nature to you. Don't think just about features, but what those features can do for someone. When you become comfortable with your products or services, you will easily bring your products and services into just about any discussion. The ability to discuss your offering conversationally demonstrates competence, confidence, and belief in your offering. The prospect is watching to see how much of these characteristics you clearly demonstrate. If you appear to lack any of the three, your prospect will most likely catch on. If you don't have competence, confidence, and belief in what you're offering, why should they?

Preparation also means taking your prospecting presentation or full presentation, which we will develop later in this book, and practicing them until you can recite them in your sleep. Your prospecting pitch, often called your elevator speech, should roll off your tongue conversationally like you've said it a million times. With this comfort, knowledge, and ability in your presentation, you'll be able to discuss it simply and fold it into your conversation easily in different points throughout your conversation.

The issue you're dealing with here that's most important, is again, trust! If your prospects think you're reading something off a piece of paper, their trust in you and in your system will be low and you're likely to lose them. If, on the other hand, you come across as someone who understands completely what you're talking about, what their needs are, and you demonstrate with confidence the information you're relaying, your prospect will listen more intently. The reality is, your prospects aren't only buying what you have to offer; more importantly they're buying you! If you sound like you're reciting a prewritten high school paper, they won't get very excited. Most sales scripting sounds hard and abrupt. You need to become so familiar with it so you change the tone and tenor to make it sound as natural conversation.

The greatest advantage you'll have over other programs and other businesses is your belief in and thorough understanding of your product or service, your presentations, as well as in yourself. Your products or services are needed products and services. Don't make it difficult for yourself – rely on your sales training and your faith in yourself, and prepare! Some of the prospects you see need your offering. However, unless you demonstrate clearly you're the solution, they may look elsewhere.

Prepare before and after each sales call. I often will go someplace quiet and analyze my last sales call. I can then determine what went right and what did not go so well. This may seem trite and not worth the time. However, I've fixed many broken presentations by doing just this little time out to examine what happened on the call. It doesn't matter if it was a call on the phone or in person. Take the time to evaluate the call completely especially if it went well and you made the sale. You'll want to make sure you learn to repeat your success over and over.

Think about the method you used to warm them up. How well did that go? What questions drew good full responses out of them? What was the facial expression when you were discussing the benefits of your products or services? Was there anything you said, or any way you said something which really caused an increase in interest? These are clues to success and can be used over and over again.

You've heard the saying, "why reinvent the wheel?" Well the same holds true for your presentation. You'll discover things which work. Use them over and over again. I have used some stories so much I had to start changing them just so I wasn't so bored with them. I've used the same story or joke so many times I never want to say them again. However, each new prospect or client had never heard them before. More often than not those stories worked time and time again. I still use some of those stories today many years after the first time I used them. Don't use off color jokes or bad language. It's not professional. Your prospect/client may do it, but don't respond in kind.

You should always be using stories as you speak with prospects. **Stories sell!** Develop a cadre of good true stories. Over time in your career you'll discover these stories either from your own experience, from clients, or from some of your peers. Once again, write them down if you have to in order to remember them. I write down successful practices I've developed or learned from my peers for two reasons. First, it helps me to understand the practices more thoroughly. Second, by writing them down, I can revisit them making sure I'm still using what works. Sometimes when I've found myself in a sales rut, I go and revisit my successful techniques only to find out I've stopped using some of them.

5.4.2 SKILL 2: LEARNING

Since you're prepared and practiced, why not make your first presentation? Good idea! This is the first step in your learning process. When you make your first presentation, you may find your prospect wastes no time in telling you he or she isn't interested. But you were prepared! Now what? This section is about learning from the prospects what they need or want.

Now you need to learn what it is that will convince your prospect to buy what you're offering. How do you find out what it will take to get them to respond in the way you want them to? You ask them! Start your learning process by asking probing or open ended questions designed around the concepts of your offering. Many times prospects want to jump to the price. Don't let the conversation go there until you're ready. You can say, "I can give it to you once I understand a little more about what you're looking for." Or, "That's fine, but I need some more information about your business needs before I can give you an accurate quote or price."

Most of the time, they won't fight you on this. If they do insist on a price right out of the gate, you're probably talking to a "window shopper" and not a real prospect. Remember also, you don't give a presentation unless you can give it all! Your presentation is designed to accomplish certain tasks in each step and then lead to each following step. If you get stopped in the middle or never get off the ground with it, you're most likely wasting your time. Your presentation should be designed to guide the prospect down a certain thinking pattern ultimately leading to a positive outcome based upon the goal of the presentation and/or meeting their need. **You can't meet their need unless you're absolutely sure you know what it is.**

For example:

Let's consider you're selling an educational debt elimination program. You might say, "How do you feel about all of the debt people have today?" Listen carefully to their answer. Once answered, you might follow it up with, "What do you think is a real solution?" Give them some time to think about these questions and give you an answer. The goal you desire is that they talk to you. This may be the first time the prospect actually thought in depth about the subject. In this case, your goal is to try to get them ultimately to discuss their personal finances with you. Most people don't want to talk about this, so be patient.

SMS from your computer

...Sync'd with your Android phone & number

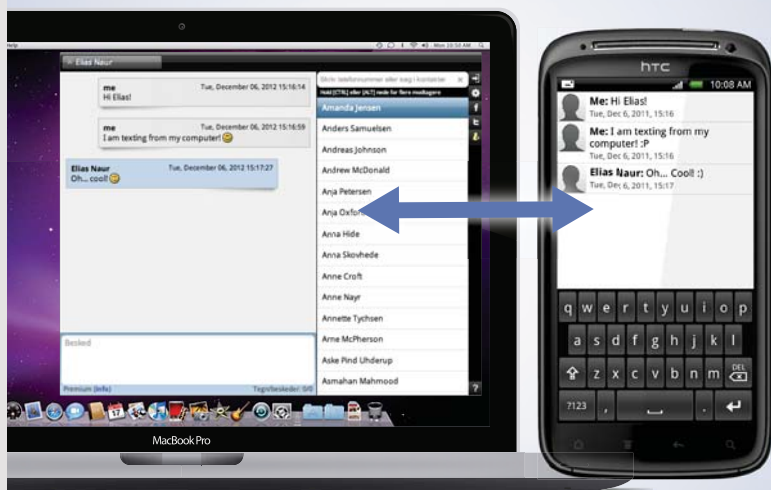
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your computer!

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Taking this example further your next question might be:

“What do you think is the amount of money being taken from you between the taxing authorities and credit corporations?” Again, wait for a moment. Allow them to answer. Ask your open ended questions and stop talking no matter how hard the silence is to endure. Don't get nervous, the next person who talks loses. When you ask questions, then allow your prospects respond, you're in control. You don't want to be too forceful, but you also don't want to lose control of the conversation. You want the discussion to go down the path you desire. Otherwise, your prospects may lead you away from your sale, not towards it.

Your question could be one of those questions which can take a moment or two to sink all the way in. Give them time. Your prospect may have never have looked at it this way before. They've always been taught the credit guys as the good guys in the past. It takes a moment for them to understand that you might be saying something totally contrary to what they understood up to this point.

Products such as insurance fall into this category. Whether in business or an individual, most people more often than not, don't understand the dangers they may be in without being fully insured. Your presentation must educate them on the dangers of the risks for them, their family, or their business.

Don't be afraid of silence as your prospect considers your questions. Give them time to answer. So many inexperienced sales people fear silence and continually jump back into a presentation whenever the silence seems too long. Not everyone has readily available answers to your questions, especially if they've never thought about the subject before. Some individuals like to consider questions for a moment before they answer. What you may think is minutes of silence is often a few seconds of waiting.

Typically, they will eventually answer unless they don't understand the question. Besides, the silence isn't as long as it feels. To gauge the silence reason, you might ask, “Does this make sense to you?” or some form of question to make sure the prospect is following your line of thinking. This also gives the prospect the ability to get things clarified for you. What if you're the one who is off track. One of the worst things you can hear from your prospect is, “You're not listening to me, or you're not understanding me? If you do hear this, apologize and ask them to clarify for you their understanding of their situation.

You need to start learning to always have open ended questions for your prospects to answer in your basket of ready tools. You're trying to educate yourself as to where your customer is positioned in relation to your product or service. Your job is to get them talking about their situation and then to listen. Don't start getting into a quote for quote discussion with them. At this point, it's not important what you think is reality, but what they think is reality. Try to listen more than you talk. From time to time restate what the prospect has just told you. Nod often to let them know you're understanding them and then continue listening.

Open ended questions are questions which cannot be answered with a yes or no answer. Typically, they're questions starting with how, why, or what. How did that happen? Why did he do it? What is the reasoning behind that decision? All three of these questions cannot be answered yes or no. Open ended questions will make people start to talk. Once talking, if you give them room, they will often keep talking. The more they talk, the more relaxed and better they feel about you and your products and the more you'll learn about them.

Because we're looking to position outcomes for them, we must know what outcome they desire. To learn this, you may ask them what outcome they hope will take place. Often, the prospect will not know the difference in what assistance they actually need as opposed to what they think they need. For instance, maybe you're a business consultant and the prospect hopes you can show them a way to increase sales. They feel they need more revenue to offset a lower revenue versus cost ratio they're seeing. Some sales people will jump in and start to sell the prospect on a product or service which will increase the prospect's sales. You need to delve deeper into this so you can be assured you've found the root cause. This might require a great deal of research and analysis of their operations.

While they may think increased sales is the answer, their real root need may actually be something entirely different. They may be losing existing clients due to poor customer service causing the overall revenue to move down closer to their cost to do business. Therefore, they think more revenue and thus more sales is the answer. In reality, customer service needs to be repaired in order to maintain their existing customer base. This will stabilize their revenue versus cost ratio. Then, sales will begin to actually grow real profit once again. You may still need to assist them with sales. However, whatever gains in sales the client makes now will actually show up on their bottom line as increased profit. You're their hero!

During this time, make mental notes or take paper notes. Most of the time, your prospect will not care if you begin writing down what they say. In fact, the opposite is often true. Writing down what prospects say to you shows you're listening and hearing them. However, if you're not sure, ask if it's OK to take notes. If you're writing down what they say, they'll know you're listening to them. Once again, if there is any doubt, ask them if it's ok. Another benefit after the fact is you then have notes on the conversation for later analysis.

Show genuine interest in their point of view. Remember, nothing is worse than hearing a prospect say, *"No, you're not listening to what I'm saying."* If you hear this, stop talking, apologize, and listen! Make sure you're not just physically there but are actually hearing what the prospect is saying. The possibility of you closing the deal rests squarely on your ability in demonstrating the value of your product or service to solve the prospects real problem or need. In order to accomplish this, you must know what their needs are. Listen intently, if given the chance, they will tell you.

Recently I was talking with a sales person. He asked what I was looking for. I started to tell him the specific service I was searching for when he suddenly interrupted me. He thought he understood my need after I spoke for about a minute, maybe. He began to rattle off all the features of one of his services. The only problem was; he was wrong about what I needed. He was also giving me features and not benefits. He couldn't give me the outcome I needed because he didn't fully understand what I needed. After he went on for a few minutes, I interrupted him. I began once again to tell him what I was looking for. After he remained silent for a few minutes, he went "Oh, now I see what you're looking for." He then told me about another service they had which actually met my need.

The only reason I didn't walk away from this person when he began to rant about the wrong service was because I really needed what I was searching for and hadn't been able to find it elsewhere. I might have just listened to his first round and said "Let me think about it" and walked away. How many times have you heard those words, "Let me think about it"? Was it because the individual was window shopping, or because you didn't listen to them and they decided to go someplace where the sales people would listen?

5.5 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Questions should be designed to elicit positive affirmations. Questions such as this are designed to bring people into the right thinking or frame of mind. **It's extremely important for you to know the competitive advantage your company or products have in relationship to your competition.** Are you cheaper, better, unlike anything before. Know why the prospect should become your client by buying from you before you even visit them. Have facts and figures ready to give them in case they ask. However, do not offer these facts and figures unless you're sure they will impact the presentation positively. The prospect is not normally interested in facts, figures, and bells and whistles. They're only interested in the benefits which will help them meet their desired outcome.

You may have to look for the competitive advantages of your products or services. Often companies just create sales materials which may look really cool but have little value when it actually comes to selling the products or services. Many companies don't understand their own competitive advantage, or even if they have one. There must be a reason or reasons why your products or services are better than the competition, find out what it is.

Every company has a competitive advantage, or should have. Competitive advantage is what corporate strategy is about. No company is without competitors. If you're in business for yourself, your business has competitors. Your competitors may not be selling the same types of products. Your competitors may have alternative products. You may be competing with an internet company. Why is your product or service a better choice? This is a question you must answer because someone will ask at some point. If you cannot find a competitive advantage, then maybe you should look for a new product or service. It's difficult to sell something which has no inherent value or reason for being.

Your competitive advantage may be lowest cost. It may be the difference which makes your product better. It could be customer service or response time, something which sets your product or service apart from the competition is what you are looking for. You need to know and stress this when you're with prospects and clients. When the competition enters the fray, your prospect or client needs to know why they should buy from you or stay with you instead of moving on to the competition. Understand your competitive advantage, you may get asked this straight out on your first contact. "Why should I buy from you?"

Many sales people will talk the competition down instead of know what their competitive advantage is and stress that. Talking bad about your competition is unprofessional. I'm not talking about comparison based on provable facts. I've been in competitive environments where the competition talked bad about either what I was selling or the company I represented. I lost some of those sales because I refused to talk them down. I won some, though, when I informed the prospect that talking negative about the competition is unprofessional and I wouldn't do it. If your product or service isn't up to the competition, then once again it may be time to look for something else to sell.

5.5.1 SKILL 3: EDUCATION

Once you've learned about the prospect's personal needs situation and how it relates to your offering, you can begin the education process. This educational process is rooted in what you've learned from the prospect and how it relates to your offering. You begin to educate them on how your offering can make the difference for them. Be careful not to ignore all you've learned from them and go into a standard "canned" presentation. If you do this, you'll likely leave the prospect wanting to get rid of you, not listen.

This is where you explain to them your understanding of what they said about the realities of the current environment they find themselves in. You begin to show them how your products and/or services provide methods to successfully meet their challenge or need. You tell them why your product or service is the best fit for their need. Explain in terms of the outcome they're searching for. Keep in mind this process may happen over an extended period of time during your meeting/s. You may go back and forth many times between each section of the process. There is no best way. Just understand, before you complete the final sale, you'll most likely have traveled through every step at least once. This is why we need to intimately understand these process steps.

The process of education and learning, as you will see, can go back and forth many times before the final solution is ready and agreed upon. You may begin to educate your prospect and then find out there is another issue related to what they've already explained to you. They may have just remembered something or they want to bring a further clarification. You should immediately fall back into the learning mode in order to make sure you fully and completely understand what these new questions or information does to your understanding of the prospect's needs. There is no time limit here. I once spent almost two years in these two steps with a client. Was it worth it? We made a multimillion dollar sale with ongoing products and support for years to follow. I think so.

Once you've sufficiently completed these steps, you can quickly move to the final step. This is an obvious oversimplification. The actual sales process, as I said, can take a long time of back and forth conversations. This is why you keep prospecting to keep your sales funnel full. You continue to search for gold nuggets. You should never stop searching for new prospects! This is what keeps your sales funnel full and your income stable.

5.5.2 SKILL 4: CLOSING

Now here we are where the money is made. For some reason and I'm not sure why, this is one of the hardest steps in the process for some sales people. Closing is not really a difficult skill to accomplish at all if you've done your job correctly. If your prospect is still with you after all of the previous work, they're very interested. At this point you can just ask them:

“Can we get started now?” or “Would you like to buy one?” Yes, it's that simple! Why waste yours and your prospect's time any longer. It's not going to get any better. Ask now! Quite often the client is waiting for you to ask. They're thinking in their minds how they will answer if you ask. Come on, what do you do when a sales person is about to ask you if you want to buy? Your prospect is no different than you are. Give them the opportunity to say yes or no. Then you know where you stand. After all, it's why you're here, isn't it?

If they say yes, get the paperwork going and don't mince any more words. You have to be careful not to undo a sale by talking at length until you do or say something that stops the client from buying. I've heard many times where sales people begin to talk about other features they haven't discussed previously at this point as if to reinforce the prospect's conviction. At this point, I almost never discuss anything the prospect has not told me or brought up in questions unless I was legally or ethically bound to tell them. Many sales have been lost or seriously delayed because the prospect hears something they hadn't thought about before and decides to wait and think now they've heard it from you. Sometimes sales people begin to talk about how others made mistakes by not buying the products. This can easily back fire and get your prospect to rethink their decision. Instead tell the new client they made the right decision and you'll be there to help them see the real value in what they've purchased today.

High pressure techniques almost never work. Sometimes it appears they did work only to find the client terminates later when the high pressure is no longer on them. Use high pressure and you'll most likely lose the sale and any future referrals. Treat every prospect with the respect they deserve. You want to make clients for life.

If they say no, ask them why. Most of the time, they'll tell you why they're unwilling to buy now. If it's something you didn't cover, then you have another shot at it. If they don't give you a good answer, you may have wasted your time with someone who was not a real prospect, it happens. Some people, it seems, just want to talk and waste your time, or prove their own expertise to you. Chalk it up to experience and move on to the next prospect. If you decide to move on, be professional tell them if they change their minds you're available to them and leave. If they're valid prospects, you need to find out why they're not ready. It could be you haven't covered something enough, or there's a hidden question/s you haven't answered.

Timing is everything. Now might not be the right time for this prospect. By being professional when you leave, you open up the possibility for future business from this prospect. You may even have the right solution, but the prospect isn't in the right mindset currently to see it for whatever reason. Personally, I have looked for as much information as I can before I'm ready to buy. By prospecting consistently, you won't feel the pressure of making a particular sale from any one presentation. Keep moving in the right direction because prospecting is simply a numbers game.

Overcoming Objections

I don't believe in overcoming objections. You should never run into objections which need to be overcome if you're doing your job correctly. The concept of overcoming objections equates to forcing someone to take what they really don't want or need. If your offering isn't right for their need, you need to stop trying to sell them on it. First of all, you're looking for people who do want or need your offering. Second, if they don't really need it, you may get it back. Or, worse yet, you may lose the client and any referrals forever.

Apparent real objections are really more often questions which haven't been answered or answered correctly. If you get an objection, drop back to the learn phase if they'll let you. If they won't, then this may not be a real prospect. Sometimes you may see this if the client is running out of time in the meeting and needs to go. Ask if there's a better time to discuss this further. If they're unwilling to do this, then professionally excuse yourself. Don't, I repeat, don't try to push them into buying now. You may get another chance somewhere down the road. You need to be professional which sets you apart from other less professional sales people.

I once had a meeting with a CEO. As soon as I arrived, he came out of a meeting and looked intently at me and said, “You said over the phone this meeting would be 15 minutes. The last guy said the same thing and I was in there for over an hour.” I looked at him and said, “This meeting will only be 15 minutes, unless, you keep me there yourself.” The presentation I gave was 15 minutes. We stayed for an hour because he never stopped asking questions about our offering. As soon as his questions stopped, I told him we were done unless he had more questions. You’re a professional and you should always act like one no matter what the circumstance are. **Be true to your word.** If you’re saying it’s going to be 30 minutes, work your tail off to get it completed in 30 minutes.

Objections are about questions. If they don’t have any questions, they’re not interested or they’re window shopping. Either way, you want real prospects and need to move on professionally and quickly

Post Analysis

Whether you’ve just completed a presentation with a prospect or make a new client with a sale, post analysis should always be done. The only way to stop making sale losing mistakes and keep doing what’s consistently successful is to do post analysis regularly. I realize, especially if you’re in telesales, you may not be able to analyze immediately after a call. Then make sure you’ve taken good notes and then analyze later or at the end of the day. If you say something which is taken wrong, or make the prospect lose interest, write it down and say what it actually did to your presentation.

If you’re in sales management working with sales staff in post analysis, be sure to make them understand this is not just criticism, it’s an important part of learning to become professional. Teach them this is a regular step of becoming a successful sales professional. It accomplishes just the opposite by being heavy handed and demanding increased sales without helping your people to learn all they need to know to become successful. The only thing heavy handedness by managers accomplishes is to frustrate sales people and force the good ones to go where they feel appreciated, not threatened. This isn’t to say competition and high expectations are wrong, they’re not. You should be a team player not an overlord. Managers, this business can be stressful enough, don’t make it worse by being threatening.

6 YOUR PROSPECTING PRESENTATION (20 MINUTES)

What's the Goal? Stick to it! Your prospecting presentation is a short introduction to what you do, the services you provide, and how the prospect will benefit. Focus clearly on benefits. It has to get to the heart of the matter quickly and effectively. While there have been times I've really been asked what I do in an elevator, this kind of presentation is generally given to warm market prospects. Warm market being anyone you've started to relate to previously. This could be someone you've just met and are having a nice conversation with. As such, this presentation requires a very personalized format. For this reason, we leave it up to you to develop your own presentation using a format which is most comfortable for you to convey to someone you may know personally. You have to be brief and precise in order to capture the prospect's interest. You must feel comfortable with this presentation. If it feels wrong, change it. It should flow easily and smoothly. Make sure the voice is yours and not some canned speech. How would you talk to people you know?

Let's go through the important points of creating your prospecting presentation.

1. Your prospecting presentation must have a goal.

You need to decide first what it is you're trying to accomplish. Most of the time, your presentation will be designed to get another shot at them. Very seldom will anyone buy or join anything in twenty minutes. What this presentation should do is get prospects to attend, or allow one of your full presentations. The full presentation is how they'll get enough information to make the right decision.

2. Introduce Yourself

Before someone is ready to listen to what you're offering them, they need to know a little about who you are. As a warm market prospect, they know your name, and probably a little more about you than would a stranger. However, do they know you've started your own business or expanded your services? This is where you grab their interest. From a prospecting perspective you could be sending out letters to your warm list informing them of your new enterprise or sales position and what you offer. Keep the letter informal but get to the point of exactly why you're contacting them. Don't beat around the bush. Many people want many things in life. Some of those things you'll sell. They'll buy from you if they, in fact, know you sell something they need or are looking for. If you don't tell them, someone else will get there first. Who do you think they would rather do business with a family member or friend, or a stranger?

3. Ask them Questions

Your twenty minute prospecting presentation should start out by clearly identifying the problem you're generally attempting to resolve with your product or service. You do this by asking them questions. This also gets the prospect to move into the frame of mind you desire for them. Here are some examples again using debt elimination or financial planning as our products and services. The first three are rhetorical and the last is an open ended one:

- Did you know that 96 percent of Americans are destined to fail financially? *Department of Health and Human Services statistics.*
- Did you know that you're a millionaire in the making? If you make \$25,000 a year for forty years, that equals \$1 million.
- Did you know that financial institutions are poised to take up to ___% of your future wealth?
- How do you think you could retire successfully?

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These types of questions will clearly show the problems people face in America, as well as many other well developed countries today. This will hopefully and quickly get their attention and position their thinking where you want it to be. Then you can let them know there are options available to them they may not know about. If they show concern and interest, now you can begin to show the prospect that you have solutions which might make sense for them. If not, you probably don't want to go any further at this time. Again, the goal is to get them to allow a full presentation now or later showing how to fully address their newly formulated concerns.

4. Show them the Benefits

Don't make the mistake of giving your prospect one fact after another about how the system works. People aren't interested in facts, they want benefits! (Remember: **WIIFM, What's in it for me?**) Your prospect is also not interested in your personal victories unless you can show them the way it will bring victory to them. In other words, you don't want to tell them how the system works, but rather what it will do for them. They're also not interested in features. Features aren't benefits.

Examples:

(FACT) The Anyone Can Be Financially Free Course will teach them everything they need to know about personal finances.

(BENEFIT) THE ANYONE CAN BE FINANCIALLY FREE COURSE WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO CREATE AND KEEP THE ABSOLUTE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF YOUR HARDEARNED MONEY AND SHOW YOU YOUR PERSONAL PATH TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL FREEDOM!

(FACT) The Anyone Can Be Financially Free Course will show you how to cut interest payments.

(BENEFIT) SO YOU'LL SAVE HUNDREDS TO THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN INTEREST AND HAVE YOUR MONEY WORKING FOR YOU INSTEAD OF FOR YOUR CREDITORS!

(FACT) You'll be able to legally deduct money you're already spending.

(BENEFIT) SAVING YOU HUNDREDS TO THOUSANDS IN HARDEARNED DOLLARS ON YOUR TAXES! YOU CAN TAKE VACATIONS; SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY.

(FACT) You'll learn how to save and/or invest more wisely.

(BENEFIT) YOU WILL CREATE A FINANCIAL FUTURE WHICH WILL CHANGE YOUR FAMILY FOREVER!

Keep in mind the benefit, outcome, is the only thing the prospect is really interested in. They want to hear how all this information you're pouring out will benefit them. They're interested in the outcome value you are proposing. **What's in It for Me?**

5. Your Testimonial

Selling of any kind, whether it's a product, a service, or a concept, is ultimately a transfer of belief. You're transferring your belief in the product, service, or concept to the prospect. This is the reason you need to be a product of the product if possible. Once you experience the satisfaction on a personal level, you'll be able to pass your personal conviction and satisfaction enthusiastically on to your prospects.

Do you sell insurance? Then buy some insurance from yourself. Do you sell cars? Then buy one of the cars you sell. Do you provide services? Have you or someone close to you ever used them. One of the strongest sales tools is a personal true story about the product or service. If a client tells you a great story write it down and ask them if you can use it. Most of the time they'll be more than happy to let you use it. Personal testimonies are a powerful sales tool. Don't make anything up. This is dishonest and it will eventually come back to haunt you one way or another. Find a real story. If your products or services have real value, there will eventually be great testimonials. What will you say if a prospect asks you if you use the product or service and you don't?

6. Commitment

Getting the prospect to commit to an interest in finding out more about your products or services at the first meeting gives you the leverage you will need to contact them again. You'll be able to build on levels of interest throughout the presentation. Watch for indications to an emotional link to what you're saying.

Sometimes you can schedule a full presentation with them at your first meeting. If not, you can schedule it for the next meeting. Your next contact should be within 48 hours whenever possible. Life is busy and if you allow this additional contact to be delayed very long, interest will most like wane or be gone.

This next contact can sometimes be used to close the sale, but not often. The bigger the price tag the bigger the decision. Closing a sale usually takes several contacts – Some to uncover concerns and questions – some to provide answers to their questions – and finally to complete the applications or paperwork. The bottom line is you want to get them to give you the opportunity and time to show them everything they need to know in order to satisfy their concerns and make a sound decision. A confused mind says “no”! If you don't give them enough information to yes, they will most likely say “no”.

7. Close

The end of your presentation goes back to your goal. The only way to close this presentation is to ask them for what you're looking for, a full presentation or a second appointment. There's no big secret to closing. It all boils down to asking them. If you don't ask, I can guarantee you won't get a commitment from them every time, so ask!

As you develop your presentation, you should test it with someone you know, or at your organizational training meetings if you have them. Your organization's meetings are a learning environment; you'll learn there, and others will learn from you.

“What do you do for a living?”

Can you answer this question concisely and simply with a moment's notice? You should be able to do just that. If not, get to work building a presentation and memorize it. You want to make this presentation efficient and to the point hitting major points, benefits not features, which lead to further interest. Sometimes people are just asking the questions to be friendly. By giving a short conversational presentation you be able to determine whether they're a potential prospect or just someone being cordial.

6.1 YOUR FULL PRESENTATION

This presentation will also include all seven steps as in the Prospecting Presentation. Again, this and any presentation requires a goal. Establish your goals before beginning to create a presentation. Make sure you stay true to the goal while creating the presentation. If you're anything like me, a bunch of great things to show and say will come to me while in the creation mode. Do they track with your goal? Go back and read your presentation during the creation process frequently. This way you can make sure you stay true to the goal you've set for this presentation. You also need to make sure the presentation is efficient. Again, the prospect/client doesn't want a data dump. You don't want to tell them everything you know. Stick to the goal and be efficient.

Most complete presentations take about an hour. Any presentations longer than an hour had better be academy award category or you will lose the prospect. For high powered busy people an hour of their time is a huge cost and a great deal to them. Any more time is far too much of their precious time. It's also hard to keep someone's attention when one is sitting longer than 50 to 60 minutes. The only way more time makes sense is when there is an understanding by the prospect that more time is needed and they agree to it. Depending on your offering, more time for a good presentation may be the norm.

You'll meet prospects every day, under all kinds of circumstances, with varying conflicts or time constraints which will prevent you from making a full complete presentation at any given moment. The difficulty arises when there are times when you'll find yourself in the position of having to give a short presentation or lose an interested prospect.

Be advised, once again, giving only part of a presentation will often give the prospect just enough information to say no. So consider if you're not going to finish giving your presentation, don't start! Try to set up an appointment to give them a full presentation. Serious prospects will give you a future time to get back to them. If they start coming up with excuses about setting up another time, consider they might not be a serious prospect. Don't spend time with people who are suspects, not really serious. Many sales people will spend too much time chasing something they'll never get. Serious professionals know the difference between time well spent and time wasted.

Sometimes people don't have the time for a whole presentation. To remedy this, everyone should have and use a prospecting presentation they can give at any time, in about twenty minutes or less.

Building Your Presentation

Whether you're comfortable with public speaking or not, having a complete well thought out Presentation makes your presentation flow smoother, remain consistent, and conveys a knowledgeable and professional image and message. Many times your company will have a presentation which will work. Don't reinvent the wheel unless the presentation just doesn't work for you. Please don't use that as an excuse to do your own thing either. Many companies or industries don't allow you to create your own presentation, so keep that in mind also. Make sure you find out whether you can use your own or not before creating one. I've seen many good sales people lose their positions just because they created and used their own presentation when the company didn't allow it.

The more professional your presentation looks, the more professional you look. It is a direct reflection of you. Remember, you only get one shot at a first impression. PowerPoint is a professional looking presentation tool if you know how to use it. PowerPoint is easy to learn if you've never used it before. Company sales materials often look great but don't necessarily convey benefits. So, if you use company materials make sure you convey the benefits one way or another if the materials do not.

Many times, especially for geeks, there's a tendency to use fancy impressive video and what I call, "wow" things in your presentation. You see this a great deal on the internet. I don't know about you, but I'm not interested in spending time seeing how great someone is at making the screen flash and hear cool sounds. I want information on how I can accomplish what I'm after. The simpler and more professionally a sales person can get to the point for me, the more likely I'm going to stay engaged throughout the full presentation. You can use cool things but make sure they don't detract from your presentation or waste time watching them. Also if you utilizing the internet, long drawn out text without giving the information the prospect is looking for will most likely just cause them to go to another web search. The internet is about speed and information.

Whichever method you prefer to use for your presentation, you'll find a professional presentation used consistently gives your prospects the information they need in order to make the right decision for reaching their goals. The more times you give the same professional presentation the easier the presentation gets. The easier it gets the more professional you will appear to the prospect. The prospect is looking for confidence emanating from you. If they perceive a lack of confidence in your presentation, they'll look warily at your product or service.

The key to making your presentation come off without any hitches is practice. You need to know your products and/or services intimately and build an emotional connection with them and then be well practiced. If you have a presentation which came from your company or provider you must use, get it out and practice reading the script and using the presentation until you know it backwards and forwards. Present to your spouse, family, friends, anyone who will listen to you. You'll develop a comfort level very early in your practice simply because you're doing the presentation over and over. Practicing your presentation also helps you increase your knowledge about the need for your products and services. After you become very intimate with the presentation, you'll begin to think about other ideas which can amplify the benefit when you give the presentation.

What if they say no?

If they say no, then most likely you haven't completed one of your tasks correctly, they're just not a valid prospect, or the timing is not right. If everything is right, either you haven't learned what their needs really are, or you haven't educated them to the fact you truly have a viable answer. If this happens, drop back to the learning step. Start asking questions:

"What is it you don't understand about what our products, services, programs can do in relation to your desired outcome?"

and/or

“I’m sorry I must have missed something. Is there something here you didn’t understand or I miscommunicated?”

Once they answer your questions completely, you can begin the education process again centered around what they’ve now told you. If they ask you a question you can’t answer, don’t guess at an answer. Today people are smart enough to know we can’t know everything about everything. Sometimes they will even ask questions they know the answer to just to see what you say.

You might want to ask them if knowing the answer to a particular question is important to their making their decision. Sometimes they’re just interested in the answer and it really has no bearing on whether they buy or not. You may be chasing an unimportant rabbit if you don’t ask about the importance. If, on the other hand, the question is important, just tell them you’ll get the answer and get back to them. Then schedule an appointment with them to resume your discussion at an alternate date when you have the answer. Or, if available, call your supervisor or someone who has more knowledge about the issue being raised.

Keep in mind, if there’s a problem with what you’re saying to them you’re unaware of, you need to learn about it. Then, and only then, can you begin to educate your prospect about the real solution. Just keep going back and forth through the steps until you either sell them or convince yourself you’re wasting your time in continuing on with them any further.

The selling and closing process seldom takes place in one meeting. Follow up is a primary key in successful sales. According to the Association of Professional Salesmen and the National Sales Executive Association:

- 2% of sales are made on the 1st contact**
- 3% of sales are made on the 2nd contact**
- 5% of sales are made on the 3rd contact**
- 10% of sales are made on the 4th contact**
- 80% of sales are made on the 5th through the 12th contact!**

So how many follow ups should I do? You should make as many as it takes to make the sale or realize you’re wasting your time. If you keep your prospecting funnel full, waiting on any given prospect to close will not kill you. I’ve waited years for some clients to close. If I hadn’t kept busy I would have starved.

The learning step may be in the first two or three meetings, and the education process is in the last one or two. Be flexible; the number of meetings is not cast in concrete and really has no meaning with a real sale. It may take two meetings; it may take twenty or more. With some large sales you may have so many meetings you will lose track of the number of meetings you have had before the sale was complete.

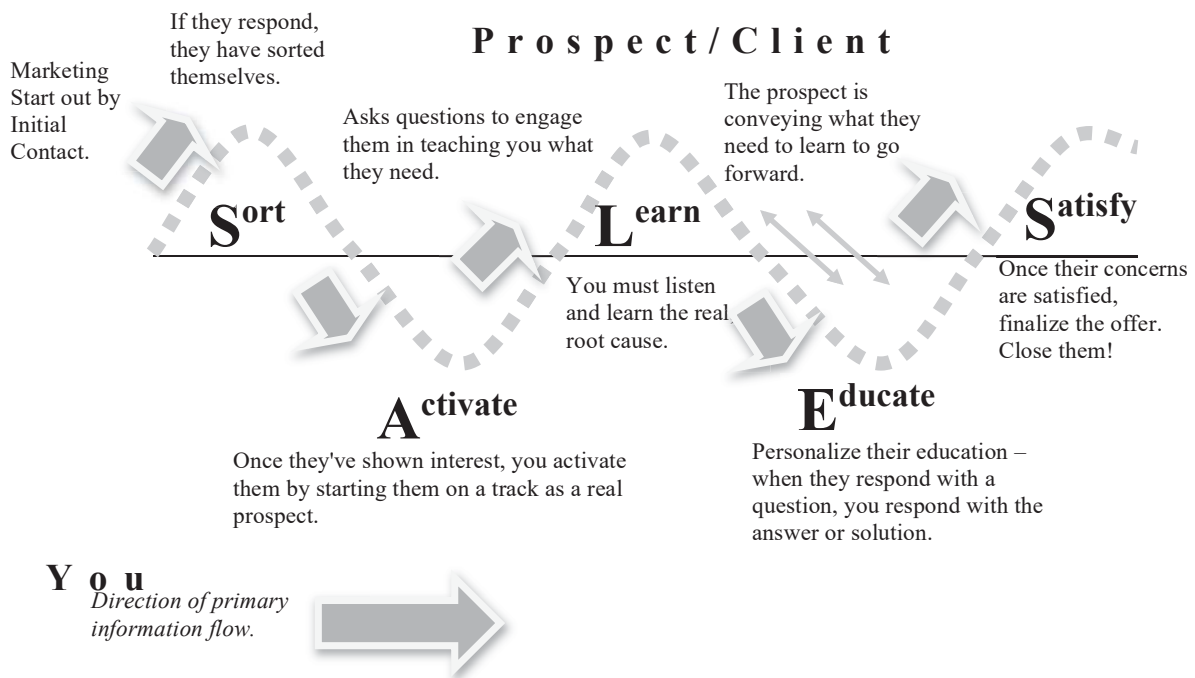
If you continue to fill your funnel with prospects, more and more sales will come out the other end. It really is a numbers game. The more prospects you see, the more sales you'll make, guaranteed! A mistake many sales people make is to place too much priority on any one prospect no matter how big they are. Everyone would like to close the dinosaur. For most sales people, the lion's share of their income will come from smaller sales made consistently. The dinosaurs will come. Just know prospecting is a part of the sales process. The more prospecting you do; the more money you'll make.

7 SALES SYSTEM™

I utilize the acronym SALES to describe the powerful sales process that will create your ongoing sales success.

7.1 SINE WAVE

The flow of information between the sales person and the prospect is clearly demonstrated in this sine wave.

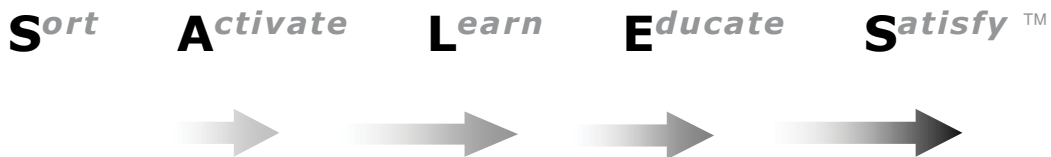


Sales System Sine Wave

The baseline indicates the separation in the direction of the information flow between you and the prospect/client. Note the direction of flow of information and what side of the baseline the direction of activity is on.

- It's given previous to this sine wave you're marketing in order to develop responses of some type. This could be person to person, mail, email, web, phone, or some other form of contact.
- In the sort phase, prospects essentially sort themselves by either replying or not replying to your prospecting efforts.
- Upon receiving their positive reply, you activate them by scheduling or making a presentation.

- In the Learn phase, you're the person learning, the prospect replies with information, issues, questions, and concerns. You must listen carefully in order to find the real questions they need answered. If you don't find the root issue/s in order for them to make the decision to buy, they won't buy. Your solution is based on what you've heard the prospect convey they needed to learn, know, or have. You're listening to them and learning.
- The Education phase is your response to the prospect's questions, concerns, and/or situation. This is the answer to what you've learned in the previous phase. Often it's a rephrasing of what they've said to you in terms of a solution which makes sense to both of you. If you haven't perceived their need properly, you go back to the learning phase or step.
- Once all of the prospect's questions and concerns are resolved, you've satisfied their needs. They are now ready to buy, close them!



7.2 S SORT

Sorting is the step where you're filling the funnel with people who are responding to your initial offerings. These individuals have sorted themselves by responding to your marketing efforts. This is your first real contact to or from these prospects about your offering specific to them. So, your response must be your best effort right out of the gate. Be sure to give the prospect/client the benefits in the form of **WIIFM (What's in it for me?)**, "me" being them. We'll begin with whom to contact.

Warm

market:

Cold

market:

Your cold market is anyone you have had very little or no previous contact with.

7.3 A ACTIVATE

This is the step where you take action with the prospect. He or she has expressed an initial interest in the product or service you represent. Now they're ready to hear more information. This is where you ask your open end questions. You can actually make the full presentation at this point in some cases depending on your offering. Be flexible here. In one on one meetings, prospects/clients often interrupt you and send you back and forth throughout the presentation with questions. Don't be too rigid but also don't let the prospects take control of the presentation either. If you allow the prospect to take control of your presentation more often than not, there will be no moving on. The only caveat I can think which would go against this rule is if you're not quite sure what they're really after. You may need to let them control the discussion until you really get the right impression of what they need. Whether your presentation is about the products or the services doesn't matter, as long as it's a well thought out tested part of the **SALES System™**.



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7.4 L LEARN

Your prospect is ready to start hearing some of your presentation at this point. Hopefully you've done your initial contact correctly and professionally, whether in person, by mail or through email. You're going to now begin learning where the client is coming from with this step. They will inform you of the areas they need to learn more about to make the proper decision. Right now a decision is most likely the furthest thing from their mind. The prospect wants you to give his or her reasons to buy or they wouldn't be talking to you. If you push for the sale now, you'll probably lose them. This is YOUR learning process and you'll devote most of your time listening to what they have to say. Don't try to give them answers here. Repeat your understanding of what they're saying back to them in order to get clarification. You need to make sure you fully understand their need. You might not get the real issues or question at first, but as they keep talking, the true question or concern will surface. Continue asking for clarification on what they're telling you if you think you're not getting to the root issue/s. Once you've fully understood what the root issue/s are, then and only then you'll be able to address their need as they see it through the education step. Remember, how you see it doesn't matter. They're thinking, "**WFIIM?**"

7.5 E EDUCATE

By this time, you should have found the link which will connect the prospect's emotional needs with one or more of your product or service benefits. Now you need to make that connection clear to them. This is where you give them the facts and realities which are in benefit form as solutions, outcomes, to the problems they themselves have identified in the Learn phase. Keep the response in terms of what they've showed you. Use their own words wherever they'll fit in this part of the presentation. For instance, "You said that... was important to you. Here's how we solve that issue." By encasing your response inside of their own words you create a connection to their need from your product or service.

7.6 S SATISFY

You've identified and satisfied all of your prospect's questions and concerns at this point. They can now see a workable solution in one of your products or services and are anxious to get started even if you don't see it. They now move from prospect and are now waiting to become your client. This is where you close them. Don't hesitate and don't get too wordy. If they say they want to buy, the first thing you do is begin to fill out the appropriate paperwork or load up the computer however you take your orders. Stop what you're doing and begin to take the order. I start the order taking process immediately while I continue to converse with them. I may drop back to some of the things we discussed during the warm up phase to again keep the level of friendship or trust going. Be very careful not to bring up any issues which may cause them to hesitate. This is a sensitive moment; you're winning; don't blow it!

The following section is what I call the prospect finder. This is a tool to jog your memory and open up ideas on who you can approach. Spend some quality time thinking about who you may know or you could contact. Ask people for referrals if you feel you know them well enough. If it's true there is only 6 degrees of separation between every one on the planet, you'll have quite a large contact list after a short while of working on your prospect list.

8 PROSPECT FINDER

List everyone you know, including as much information about them as you have available. Consider the following possibilities:

- family members
- friends
- your doctor
- your hair dresser
- your mechanic
- the checkout person at the grocery store
- your grocer
- your child's teacher
- other teachers you know
- your insurance agent
- people you work with
- people you go to church with
- the hardware store owner
- your neighbors
- waiters you know
- the owner of the local restaurant you frequent
- your local auto parts dealer
- your dentist
- the gas station owner
- your postal carrier
- a contractor you worked with recently
- your lawyer

and many, many others whom you come into contact with every day. You need to start out with a list of at least 100 names. Keep pushing and building this list so at some point you'll almost always have at least 20 people you can talk to right away.

Whenever you meet someone new, add them to your Prospect Finder list. Keep your list active and growing at all times.



8.1 ONGOING PROSPECT FINDER

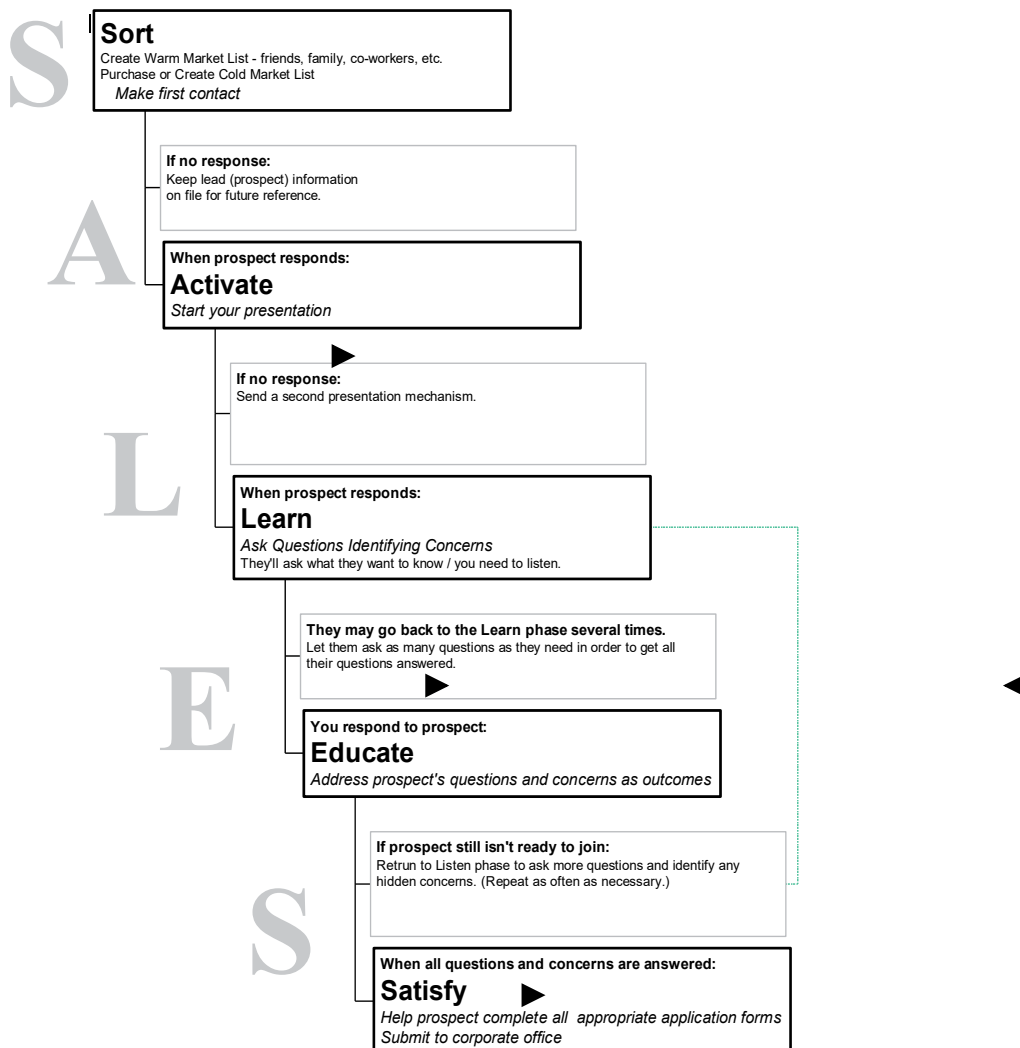
List everyone you know, including as much information about them as you have available. Add new people often and keep your Prospect Finder list active:

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>City, State, Zip</i>	<i>phone</i>	<i>email address</i>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Notes:	_____				

2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Notes:	_____				

3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Notes:	_____				

8.2 SALES SYSTEM™ FLOW CHART



9 PHONE SALES

Phone sales can be difficult not only because you're selling something seemingly not tangible, even a tangible product is something in most cases the prospect/client can't see. Many times you'll have to be good at painting a picture easily understood by the listener. Phone sales is reasonably easy if you do the right things. Nothing changes with the four skills of selling. You're just preparing for and consummating the sale over the phone. Remember if you're cold calling, that is prospecting not selling.

I recently called a company I had been trying a free offer on a supplement to help in my physical ability to do things. I intended to cancel my monthly subscription. Being a sales guru, I wasn't going to let them convince me to stay. The woman who answered was very soft spoken and conversational. This induced me to be drawn into a conversation with her. I told her I wanted to cancel my subscription. Her response was, "I can surely do that for you." This put me even more at ease.

As we were conversing I brought the conversation into to my ethnicity. She said, "I'm not allowed to tell anyone this on the phone, but I'm part Spanish and Mexican." Now we were getting serious and intimate. Every now and then she would throw in a question about the product to determine if I was using it properly. After who knows how long, she said, "If you want to try the next month, I will remove the shipping cost and if you're not happy, send it back and I will refund your money." I thought for a moment and then said, "OK". She then put all this new information in my record so anyone who I talked to later would know the policy she set up for me.

When we were finally done, I said, "Please tell your boss you did an excellent job." She told she would and we hung up. What happened here? Nothing I'm not already saying in this book. She did everything exactly as she should do based upon what I've been writing and guess what, she made the sale when I was determined to cancel. I even had my sales radar up and running. She made a friend. I'm sure this was not by accident but is how she operates every time. She was very professional and very nice, someone I would want as a friend. I felt comfortable discussing things as we went along because she built my trust by not forcing anything on me. She made me feel the product would work if I took it long enough. So, I'm going to take it longer. She saved the sale and probably got a commission or bonus because of her attitude and demeanor.

If you've been given a script to use, make it yours. I've rewritten many scripts to sound how I would talk. This made it much easier to use. I didn't change the concept or the specifics of the script but rather the words, tenor, and feel of it. I made it sound like me when I'm talking to someone just as I would in a conversation not a sale. This also made it much easier for me to memorize because it was in my lingo.

If you have a script you must use word for word because of company policy and/or legal issues, practice it until you can say it conversationally. This could mean doing it hundreds of times. Do you want to make more money? If you do, then practice it until you know it backwards and forwards no matter how long it takes! This is about being a successful professional sales person in your career whatever that is.

10 CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

How do great sales people continue to have many sales year after year? They become great at managing their customer/prospect database. Many companies will call this database your “book of business”. It’s basically all of those companies, managers, or individuals you have knowledge of and who have knowledge of you. In most cases you’ve sold something to them previously. The key to ongoing sales is to manage this database effectively. As the old saying goes, “the best places to look for new sales are with those you’ve had sales with previously”. You do this by managing the relationship with these clients by routinely staying in touch with them and providing continued value. Routine can mean weekly, monthly, or quarterly depending on how close to a sale each entity is.

Most great sales people keep track of important information about their prospects and clients for future use. Here is an example: suppose you’re talking to a prospect and are trying to set up an appointment with them. They tell you they can’t make an appointment next week because it’s their anniversary and they’re taking their spouse on a trip. You can now send the prospect an anniversary card. Do you think that will impress them? You should keep this information for future reference also. When you do make another contact with the prospect you can say you hope they had a great anniversary.

Suppose you don’t make the sale and the next year roles around and you send them an anniversary card again and wish them well. How will they think of you? Do you think this will make an impression on them? Making sales is all about timing. You may not make the sale today, but if you stay in the game, you may make the sale next time.

Suppose a prospect tells you their son is going into the military. You follow up your meeting with a thank you note for their son serving the country. Will this have a positive impact? I’m sure they’re very proud of their son. What impression will they have if you remember children’s birthdays, a child who is graduating college in a month, a spouse who loves unique gifts, or any nonessential little tidbit of information you have kept on them? You will appear to take on a more personal interest in the client. This sets you apart from all of the other sales people trying to get your prospect’s or client’s business.

Professional sales people write important information down and keep it available to ascertain any sales opportunities and/or to further their relationship with these people. They revisit client information periodically to see if there is some way they can impact their prospect or client positively.

There are many inexpensive contact management software packages that can assist in tracking and reporting upcoming events for prospects and clients. There's a difference between a contact management software package and a client relationship management, CRM, package or system. While both systems can manage contacts efficiently, CRM systems go beyond simple database tracking. A good CRM system should automate a number of the tracking and management processes for you. A good CRM should be able increase your ability to manage more prospecting, sales, and client relationships easier and more efficiently. A sales person will spend more time selling and less time doing administrative tasks someone else can do.

A CRM system is a system you utilize to set up tracks, sales paths, for individual types of products or services. Each product or service may have to be sold in a special way different from other products or services. You create the full sales funnel as a track, each and every step. It could be phone calls followed by letters followed by another phone call and so on. By creating these tracks, you can just drop prospects/clients into them and they'll be managed down the sales funnel automatically.

Setting up your CRM tracks

People often ask, "What goes into these tracks?" Now it's a lot easier for me because I've done it so much. When I started I would take the first person I successfully contacted and use the method I made the initial contact as my first step for future leads on their first contact. I would work on this method of contact, letter, email, phone call, whatever method I used until I was satisfied it was the best it could be. I would then do the same process for each follow up contact in this track. Another words, if the first contact was a letter, I could decide most likely the next contact would be a follow up phone call. I would always use any new information I gained about the client and/or our process as I put together the scripting. Remember this is going to be a specific phone call for all future prospects in step two. Because of the phone call in this step, I used scripting for phone calls. This way, I would never have to remember what to say, or how I said it last time.

I create default letters, emails, and phone calls for every step so I never have to remember what to say in each step. This does not mean I never do ad hoc contacts where I discuss something off track. I'm flexible to the current prospect/client needs and where the discussions are going. This is not a steel machine once made it can never be changed. It's a dynamic process which should be evolving over time as new success techniques and/or process methods are realized. I also can change a certain letter at any time to more closely relate to a specific prospect/client. These tracks do two things. First they're designed to elicit a response of some kind. Second, I use them to know what the next step of a given sale is anywhere and with anyone based upon their position in their specific sales funnel. In essence my tracks are a sales funnel for whatever I'm selling. If I have more than one type of product or service, I may have more than one type of sale track.

The key is to have each sales funnel, track, laid out in advance. This way it becomes a mindless task for tracking my sales. I can do this manually, use a CRM software package, a cloud based system, or an assistant to handle the processing of each prospect/client through their particular sales position in the funnel/track. All it takes is thinking more universally when building the tracks. These tracks will be used with multiple people when I create my letters, emails, and/or scripts. I make each contact sound personal. This also helps me to keep focused on what people really desire from a sales professional a personal relationship, someone they can trust.

If you're new to sales or your offering, you can find someone who is experienced and has been successful. Make sure they have had demonstrated success. Often managers are given a process which came down from their company and it's not a proven methodology. Once you've established their reliability, ask them to give you the steps of a successful sale. If they're willing to help you, make sure you take very good notes. Most successful sales people love to help others. They're often involved in many outside activities helping others in one way or another. Don't expect much, however, if you're in a competitive situation with them. Managers, hopefully, can also give you the information you'll need to create your tracks.

People don't want to be sold, but they do want relationships with professionals they believe who care about the things they care about. Long term profit comes from long term relationships with clients and prospects. Yes, determine to create relationships with prospects too. If you do this correctly, a number of those prospects will ultimately become clients over time and possibly friends too.

Depending on what your offerings are, you may have several different sales processes for the different products and services. A good CRM should allow you to create multiple sales process funnels or tracks for these different offerings. You can then just drop prospects or clients into the process which best serves them. The client or prospect then is marched through the process over time as determined by the individual settings of the process. The CRM will hide the fact from these people they're part of a larger database being marketed to. Instead your contact with them will appear to the prospects/clients to be a personal contact from an individual who is or desires to become closer and more personal.

A CRM such as this will do two important things for the sales person. First, it allows the sales professional to handle far more individuals than a professional who does not use such a system. Secondly, while the professional manages both prospects and clients with a CRM, it also allows them to start different prospects or clients at different times and manages them as a separate individual person from the others in the system.



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Another words, I may have entered a new prospect last week where step one was a prospecting letter. Now today the system indicates they need a follow phone call. I also enter a new prospect today. The system indicates they need the first contact letter. Next week the system will indicate the second prospect needs the follow up phone call while all other prospects should have moved on to a personally uniquely different step. Each time I enter a new prospect on this track, it will generate the first contact letter and maintain each of the other prospects in the track separately in individual steps of a predetermined track. When I log into my CRM each day, it should tell me where each prospects are in their relationship with me. It should remind me of appointments, phone calls, letters, or emails. Some can even automatically generate all these emails and letters at the push of a button. This is called automated work flow. I may not know who the clients are, what email or letter each is getting, but the system tracks all of that for me. This is increased efficiency and productivity without adding any new hired people or work. Often people will respond saying, "I just got your letter, so I called to talk with you about it." I will often have go into my CRM system just to see what letter or email this person received. I may not even remember their name.

I set up processes or tracks for each and every offering I have for both prospecting and clients. When I get a prospect I just drop them into the proper track and execute the processes as they come due. I set the system up to manage ongoing relationships with clients. This way I can send out cards or letters for holidays, birthdays, or such. I can also contact them with potential new products or services they might be interested in. A good CRM system will not only allow you to track more people, it will elevate the prospect or contact's perception of the level of your professionalism and concern for them and their personal priorities.

Some CRM systems will automate much of the workflow for you. Others will require you to change your prospect/clients from step to step. Automated workflow usually costs more. I prefer the automated workflow to reduce the learning curve for new sales people. Instead of training new sales people on how to drive the whole system, I teach them how to put people in and keep the database and prospect/client system up to date. When they complete a given step the system automatically moves the prospect/client to the next step as opposed to the sales person having to learn how to do the process manually. Everything else I want done, an administrator can do globally for all of the sales people. Whichever system you utilize, the more efficient, productive, and profitable your operation will become.

There are fully complete CRM systems available today reasonably priced. Many are cloud based systems. The extra benefit of these cloud based systems is they can be accessed from anywhere you can get the internet. The database is in the cloud so you can even use your smart phone to manage clients from anywhere. With the cost so low and the access so simple, there is no reason not to utilize these systems. Some systems are better than others so do your homework. Three CRM systems that I can recommend from experience are Salesforce.com, MS Dynamics, and Nutshell.com. There are a great many more standalone and those which can attach to other programs through application interfaces, APIs. CRM is a tool every professional sales person should be using.

These software packages are only as good as the person who uses them. “Garbage in, garbage out!” If you’re unwilling to utilize these packages properly, they will not help you. It’s like all of those workout videos. I used to buy them from time to time and still have numerous of these videos on my bookshelf. I haven’t lost one single pound by just owning them. My analysis, they don’t work...or maybe...I haven’t worked?

Keep your files updated with any new information you learn about your prospects or clients. You never know what will make the difference or when. By treating people as living breathing human beings who deserve your respect and attention to detail, you’ll build long term relationships and glean the maximum sales and/or referrals from these prospects or clients while also making friends.

What if the prospect isn’t really a fit for my products or services? Remember, it’s all about timing. They may not be interested today, but who knows about next month or next year? Even if they truly aren’t a good prospect, everyone knows a whole bunch of people and businesses you don’t know. By keeping up with people you keep yourself and your business in the top of their mind. If someone comes to them who needs what you offer, they will tell them about you because you have earned their trust. Another thing which makes staying in contact with prospects important, is the mobility of the workforce today. People change careers every few years in many cases. They may move into a spot which now is right for your offering. This is the essence and power of CRM and Networking. This is the reason why CRM and Networking are so important.

11 DIFFERENT PERSONALITY TYPES

People are like snowflakes – there are no two exactly alike. However, generally there are four distinct personality types with specific behavior and social styles. While each person typically has elements of all four styles, they almost always accentuate one over the others. It's an absolute fact when you're approaching someone with new information, especially if you're trying to sell them something, you must offer the information to them in their social style, not yours!

Four styles in which one can roughly divide personalities into:

ANALYTICAL: Oriented toward details and numbers, learns by reading, very orderly, slow to make decisions, likes promptness, hates to be wrong, deliberate, and wants facts, facts, and more facts.

How to approach: Provide them with tons of pertinent information. Give them facts, not fluff, verification not a vision, and do it by the numbers. Give them a pencil and paper if they don't already have one, not likely they won't have one, and let them work out their own potential savings or solutions. Often, the need for these individuals to have more data can be confused with lack of desire for your offering. It's not, these individuals need data to make what they consider to be rational decisions. They can seem standoffish, short, and to the point. You'll know what to do once you begin to ask open ended questions and giving them the opportunity to show you who they are.

DRIVER: Cool and impersonal, factual and logical, readily discloses expectations, results/ bottom line oriented, high risk taker, quick to make decisions, time conscious, very direct, a "get it done" type of person.

How to approach: Establish control; let them know you're a take charge person. Be assertive not aggressive. Challenge them with, "Let's work together and see how soon we can solve this issue." These individuals will constantly be vying for control of the situation pragmatically but not forcefully. You need to ask questions to maintain the focus on what you're trying to find out. Otherwise, they may take you down a road that leads to a symptom and not a root cause, or maybe no opportunity for sale at all.

AMIABLE: Very approachable, responsive and cooperative, patient and loyal, slow to make decisions, supports ideas of others, not time conscious, tends to generalize, relationship/people oriented, may want to include others in the decision.

How to approach: You're their friend and you'll help them every step of the way. Let them know how much you or your clients love your products or services and how it's affected people's lives. Share information with them. Be careful not to allow your meetings to become a social gathering. With the amiable type your meetings can quickly diverge into social meeting as discussions can quickly move away from the topic of importance to more people oriented discussions. You may have to go down this road in your first meeting to show you care about things they care about.

EXPRESSIVE: Very creative, needs support from others, makes quick decisions, moderate risk taker, not time conscious, visionary, tends to generalize, talks better than listens, Mr./Mrs./Ms. Entertainer.

How to approach: Focus on the dream, the vision, the freedom, the excitement, the BIG picture. Remind them of the POSITIVE IMPACT of your solution will have on their life or business. Paint a clear picture of the outcome they desire and how you'll deliver it.

But how do you know which personality type you're dealing with? You'll know some of the people in your warm market well enough to decide on their personality type right away. Others make take a few contacts by phone or in person to help you decide. Ask them questions. Are they married, do they have children, what kind of job do they have, and so on, these are items which give clues as to their personality type.

If your prospect tells you he has two point four children, he's a Certified Public Account, and his hobby is researching the origins of mathematics, you have an ANALYTIC on your hands. That knowledge will direct you in your response to him.

12 TANGIBLE AND NONTANGIBLE SALES

When considering tangible products such as things you see and feel, you have a decided advantage over sales of nontangible products such as services which can't be touched before the purchase. Tangible products typically can be demonstrated such as a car or a computer. How do you demonstrate a service such as consulting? Or, how do you demonstrate insurance coverage? In essence you're selling something in reality which is invisible to the prospect. They ultimately will take it on faith and see if you indeed deliver what you've promised.

This isn't really much more difficult than selling tangible products. However, it does require a somewhat adjusted approach. You may have to sell a vision or paint a picture. Utilizing testimonial type stories can work extremely well. It's very difficult to ignore or refute someone else's success with your offering. If you have a personal testimony of how it worked for you personally or with your client, this will stand without dispute. The only way to dispute this approach is to say it's untrue, which means they think you're lying. Most prospects are not about to accuse you of lying. They may, however, ask for proof. This proof can be provided by giving them written testimonials or allowing them to contact a previous client for their honest opinion.

I periodically ask my existing clients if they're willing to either write a testimonial for me or allow me to have prospects contact them. I also offer to write the testimonial based on what they've told me they liked about my offering. Most of the time they would agree to my writing it for them. I would write the testimonial and ask them if it was correct. If it was, I asked them to sign and get it back to me. This has worked extremely well for me over and over.

You need to get your client's permission to give their contact information out. One caveat, make sure it's a client who will give a positive response about your product or service. Also, make sure your prospect understands who exactly to contact for the proper referral. Early on in my career I gave out a client name to a prospect with the client's permission. The prospect attempted to contact the client but instead got another family member. The family member gave a poor testimonial based upon their lack of knowledge or understanding on how the product worked or worked properly. The prospect called me laughing, told me what happened. I made sure they contacted the right person next time. I also called the family member and asked why they would say what they did when they had no understanding of the product. They didn't have much of an answer but I'm sure they won't do that again. Some people are predisposed to think something is worthless or stupid without any real knowledge of it. It's much like when you ask a child to eat carrots and they say, "Yuck, I don't like carrots." "Have you ever had carrots?" "No, I don't like them." It's sad to say, but there are adults who do the same thing.

This previous client was not a family member or a previous friend before becoming a client of mine. This begs the question, how did I feel I could call back and talk to the family member as I did. I've established such a strong relationship with my clients they will allow me to correct such mistakes in a professional manner. They trust me. I didn't reprimand the individual. I just asked why they said what they said. I then asked them not to discuss it again with any future individuals who called until they actually knew how it worked. They agreed to do what I asked.

Establishing strong relationships with clients affords certain types of freedoms you wouldn't have any other way. For instance, how many sales people could call a client and ask them why they changed providers? If you feel you don't have the freedom to do this, then you've never established the correct relationship with the client in the first place. You had better start working a little harder to build relationships. I replaced a client's existing system once with one I provided. One of the reason was they only heard from the sales person yearly at best. When the other sales person heard their system was replaced, they called to ask why. They were lucky the client didn't get angry with their lack of attention to him, but rather just said we've changed and that's it. The other rep lost the sale for lack of a personal relationship with the client they already had.

When you sell something and are also there to assure it goes well from the start to finish and many times after, you're delivering the proper response to begin to establish the right type of relationship. As you continue to offer service time and time again, your client begins to trust you and your willingness to go above and beyond. It's very difficult for clients to be moved away from companies or individuals who have provided the most comprehensive and reliable service possible. They won't move for a small savings that's for sure. Many business clients won't even discuss changing with another provider no matter what the differences are if you've done your job right. If they're happy, they want to stay happy. Moving away from you adds uncertainty and in business no one likes uncertainty.

13 GOALS

Life is extremely hectic now. Things happen all of the time we haven't planned for. Many professionals spend a good amount of their day putting out fires. It's difficult to keep track of all one desires to do in business today. The plans we make, the end results we hope to attain, they're all in jeopardy throughout our lives because we can lose focus on the long term hopes and dreams due to the immediate fires we must put out now. How do you keep on track when the track is moving all over the place in front of you?

You stay on track by having and writing your goals down. Many people think there is no sense in writing goals down. They have them in their minds. I can't keep track of what I am doing the next week at times. I surely can't stay on top of what I want to do in five or ten years! Yesterday and today I had people show up unexpectedly at my office and begin several hours of discussions on things totally unrelated to my current work. Without my written daily checklist based upon my goals, it would have taken all day to figure out how to get back on track. Instead, I just went straight back to work on my daily tasks.

What people don't realize is there is magic in writing out your goals. When you write down your goals something takes place inside of you. You focus on what you're really after while also unconsciously committing to them and beginning a path toward those goals. Something changes now that you have a path to run on. You become a person who stays on track with your plans, dreams, and hopes because now you know where the track is even if you get off for a while.

I'm not talking about any spooky or goofy stuff here. I just know personally having goals has changed my life in many ways and in many areas. Talk to anyone who has written goals and see how it has impacted their lives. The research on goals also shows that people who write down their goals usually are far more successful than those who don't write down their goals. An important item for consideration is, to be successful you copy what successful people do. With goals you always have a map to verify you're still on track. No matter what happens in life or how long you don't look at your goals, you can always come back and see if you're on track. If you find out you're not on track, you can correct your path and get back on the journey toward your goals.

Incorporating goals is simple. You start by creating a long term goal. Let's say you want to save for a down payment for a new home in 5 years. Let's say the down payment is \$25,000. Now you know two important things. You know how much and when you want it to happen.

Next you break the goal down into intermediate goals. Let's consider those intermediate goals to be 1 year goals. How much do I need to save in a year for 5 straight years to attain my goal of \$25,000? I need \$5,000 a year for the next 5 years and I will achieve my long term goal.

Now, I break that 1 year goal down into two six month goals. What do I need to do in the next six and following six months in order to have \$5,000 by the end of the year? I need to save \$2,500 in the next six months and do the same in the following six months. If I can do this repeatedly each six month period over the next 5 years, I will have my down payment amount when I hoped.

Now what do I need to do in the next 30 days to be on track for my six month goal? I need to save \$425 in the next thirty days and continue to do so each month following to achieve my six month goal.

Now what is it I've accomplished? I took a long term goal which seemed high and hard to attain and broke it down until I knew exactly what to do in the next thirty days to be on track for that long term goal. If I just concentrate on each thirty day goal successfully, I can achieve my long term goal and eventually buy my new house. Instead of looking fearfully at a large down payment, \$25,000, I now only have to look at what I have to save this month \$425. If I wanted to break it down to paychecks I could break the thirty day goal down even further and make the goal that much smaller and easier to accomplish. My goal achievement becomes automatic now and is much easier to manage.

So now I want to create great sales performance goals, what do I do? We start by creating a realistic but stretch goal. Always push harder and further than you know you can easily achieve. Make this goal a yearly goal. Then, break that goal down to six month goals. Followed by making a thirty day goal. Now, we break that goal down to a weekly goal and finally a daily goal. I just have to achieve my daily goal each and every day and I'll be successful at achieving my long term sales goals.

Let's say out of every 100 prospects I talk to I get one sale. So if I want to make 48 sales this year, what do I have to do? I will have to make 24 sales in the next six months. This also means I will have to make 4 sales in the next month. Which means of course, I have to make 400 contacts in the next month to achieve my thirty day goal. Now I need to make 100 contacts in the next week if I'm to stay on track for my thirty day goal. And finally, I need to make 20 contacts a day to stay on track. Doesn't that sound a bit easier than 48 sales in the next year? I just have to talk to 20 people by phone or in person today about my business or product. Because this is a numbers game, ultimately by making these contacts I will make my sales.

What if I make 10 sales a month? Celebrate you're on your way to greatness! Don't get disappointed or overconfident if your numbers are either less or more. You may have to revise your goals, or your tactics but at least now you are aware of where you stand. You can now make your plans based upon real information. Make sure you also celebrate your successes even if they're small. Doing this will reinforce your plans and motivate you.



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About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFKI. An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.

14 UNLEASHING CREATIVITY

Today more than ever businesses have to be innovative to be successful. You may be competing locally, regionally, nationally, or globally. What is innovation and how do we go about being innovative? Trompenaars & HampdenTurner, (2010) state innovation is taking creativity and transforming it into something that has valued use, p. 11. The word innovation like transformation seems to be overused everywhere these days. It gets used so much it has almost lost value. However, innovation is the key to enabling companies to continue to be competitive and stay this way through tough and rough economies. Innovation is born out of creativity. In order for an organization to unleash innovation a business must tap into its resources of creativity. These creative resources are your people, your team. For companies to transform or innovate requires creative thinking or thinkers to change the game. The primary object then becomes how to find and unleash creativity within the organization. This is the job of and comes down from your organizational leadership team. If leaders do not buy in, nothing will change from this process.

Creativity isn't something you look for only when times are bad. Creativity should be an asset which is alive and working at all times within an organization if you truly want to stay competitive. For any organization to be able to tap creativity consistently, they must be open to diverse thinking. One of the difficulties for most management teams is that managers tend to surround themselves with likeminded thinkers. It's highly unlikely this type of management team, which is in need of creative innovation, would be able to generate the right kinds of ideas consistently when they need them most. If they could, would they have found themselves in the predicament in the first place? Most likely likeminded individuals will generate likeminded ideas not diverse ideas or thinking.

Case study: W.W. Granger, now called Granger, basically provides a wide array of products to businesses to keep those businesses running. With over \$7.2 billion in sales to businesses and government organizations Granger is a Fortune 500 company and one of Fortune magazine's most admired companies.

As a consultant a number of years ago, I was faced with a problem at Granger which had no current or realistic technological solution either off the shelf or in development. The technology needed did not exist yet. Creativity and innovation was needed to come up with an idea which hadn't existed nor even been considered previously. The company and the original consulting firm had a long established relationship. What this meant was that the consultants knew exactly how Granger did things and, more importantly, how the company wanted things done. All of the highly intelligent individuals involved, programmers, designers, and consultants had no answer. It became clear the intimacy between organizations was impeding innovation, too many likeminded thinkers.

At this point we came in and elected to put together a team unrelated to either organization and create a potential yet undeveloped solution to them. These new thinkers came up with a simple elegant solution which created sales for our organization in the millions and solved a deep rooted problem Granger had troubled over for more than two years.

Where does creativity reside? Creativity exists in the leadership, in the individual, and/or in the organization as a whole. Many times managers must lay aside their egos in order to allow creativity to come forth. Diversity of thinking brings out ideas. This is often why cross functional teams can solve inherent and deeply rooted problems. The diversity of ideas that can arise from individuals who aren't a part of the past thinking can provide ideas or directions unrealized previously.

What can be done to release creativity in individuals? Guy Claxton (2000) calls the two thinking states within us all the hare brain (left brain thinking) and the tortoise brain (right brain thinking). Left brain thinking is what most managers do. It's logical, organized, decisive, and efficient. This is the hare brain both fast and decisive. However, it's usually not very creative because of an aversion to risk. The tortoise brain is slower in its thinking processes willing to explore new ideas, methods, presuppositions, and is often illogical. Both of these are needed within the organization. The tortoise brain often comes up with innovative ideas. The hare brain then implements the new ideas and manages the processes involved efficiently.

In order to release creativity, the tortoise brain must be freed to explore new concepts and ideas. It's usually most creative during play. Have you ever wondered why the best ideas seem to come when you're in the shower, or running, or fishing? It's because the hare brain is put to a mundane task which it excels at but does not require much thinking, except maybe where did my daughter put the soap this time? Once the hare brain is mundanely occupied, the tortoise mind undertakes control of the thinking processes and begins to work on issues unconsciously. Trompenaars, & HampdenTurner, (2010) call this using the undermind. Freud called it accessing the unconscious. I just call it allowing the subconscious to analyze the problem. Have you ever worked on a serious problem never finding a solution only to wake in the middle of the night with the very solution you've been searching for? I have. How does this happen? When you're working on serious problems you're filling your mind with data and "what ifs". Although your hare brain may stop thinking about the issues, or is confounded by the lack of organized thinking, your tortoise brain is still working, or waiting to work when it can take over the processing within your mind.

So how do we get our tortoise mind working in our company? First, take an inventory of all resources available capital and human in yourself, company or organization, or your team. Make sure you can access all of the resources' capabilities. Bring a diversity of thinking together to look at the problem. Challenge the routine. Push boundaries and take the road less traveled. Utilize brainstorming, ideating, games, or whatever measure you can make use of to free up the tortoise minds of those involved. Fill your hare brain full of data and let your tortoise brain work on it.

The biggest problem with creativity is it defies the left brain logical thinking most managers rely on. Managers want to maintain the status quo. They need to keep things orderly and efficient. After all, that's why they're managers in the first place. Creativity is disorderly, inefficient, and often illogical. The logical mind says how can we solve this task quickly and efficiently? The creative mind asks why the task is being accomplished in the first place. Instead of being surrounded by like minded thinkers, wouldn't it be better to have a different opinion? The New Yorker (1925) reported Einstein's as saying, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." The opposite of innovation is sterility.

15 FINALLY

Everything up to this point means very little if you don't do the last thing I will talk about. You must take action! Thomas Edison is quoted as saying creativity is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration.

If you work hard you'll outperform more than 50 percent of your competition. Hard work in sales means doing what makes money. If you're bogged down with paperwork, then get an assistant to help, or better yet, implement CRM. The paperwork is important but almost any intelligent person can do the paperwork for you. It's not what makes you money. Prospecting and selling is what ultimately makes you money.

Do everything we've discussed up to this point and then take action. Hit the streets, email someone, phone, or talk to the person you're sitting next to. Just start contacting people. Sales are automatic after this. Send those letters to all of your acquaintances. Call those centers of influence you know. Go to those networking meetings. Get out there and make yourself visible to the community. Get your brand known.

Good Selling!

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