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**Training and Development Consultancy**

**Basic Sales Training**

**Introduction to buying and selling**

People are increasingly becoming aware that sales skills are a vital tool to have for most careers. At some point in every job you may need to do a presentation or negotiate – it may be for your own pay rise! It is a proven process that will improve your chances of success. It will also help you to work more efficiently and improve your confidence.

Today’s sales techniques are about building rapport, gaining respect and trust and really understanding your client’s needs.

A *conscious ‘sales process’* is so important. If it goes well – repeat it! If it is not working – change it! Be adaptable and passionate about what you do and you will succeed.

**Why people buy**

To understand the psychology of selling, you need to understand the situation from the client’s point of view. In other words, you need to understand the psychology of buying.

At a primitive level, people buy for two main reasons: to avoid pain or to increase happiness. However, having a reason to buy doesn’t necessarily make the decision process any easier.

Think about some of the reasons you buy:

* Dissatisfaction with what you currently have or with your supplier.
* You have a problem.
* Growth.
* Technical update.
* You like the person selling to you – This is a reason they choose you over a competitor.
* You trust and value the salesperson’s solutions.
* It makes you feel good. Retail therapy!

A salesperson must consider the buyer’s thought processes and emotions. It has been said that all purchases, at some level, are emotional decisions. If the buyer can envisage the future with your product or service eliminating the need they have today, they will feel a sense of relief, accomplishment, pride, even joy. It’s up to you to create that vision.

**The buying process**

While the salesperson is moving through a process, the buyer also goes through a process. It’s important for you to understand this process so you know what’s going on in your prospect’s mind. Understanding the buying process allows salespeople to create an alignment between themselves and the buyer.



*The Buying Process*

**The sales model**

Sales success requires elements of professionalism that will include both skills and tools. At the core of the skill set is knowledge of their product or service. The next layer of skills can be divided into the following areas: communication, organisation, and motivation. Skills in these three categories must be sharpened to the point that each becomes a core strength.

The core of any sales model is your product knowledge.

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**Product and service knowledge**

In today’s professional environment, where consultative selling is the norm, customers expect their sales representatives to be experts in their field.

Make sure you have a solid understanding of the products and services your company has to offer and the audiences that they reach.

**The sales process**

Surrounding the product knowledge and the three skill sets is the entire sales process. Your understanding of this process can help you properly navigate an opportunity to close a sale, regardless of the type of product or service you are selling.

The sales process consists of: Planning, prospecting, questioning, presenting and closing, and sevice. We will be looking into more detail about each step of the sales process throughout the course.

PLANNING

PROSPECTING

QUESTIONING

PRESENTING & CLOSING

SERVICE

**Be prepared**

* Pre call planning and product knowledge
* PMA and personal motivation
* Defining your target market for effective prospecting
* Testimonials and referrals

When you are moving into new markets and broadening your portfolios, it is important to go back to basics and re-establish a strong foundation on which to build your sales strategy.

**Pre call planning**

The first and maybe one of the most important individual skills is pre call planning and being prepared. It is at the centre of any sales process and if you can master this you are one big step closer to success.

Being prepared will help you establish credibility with your client and gain their trust. It shows that you are genuinely there to offer valuable solutions for your client and you care about their business.

* Product knowledge
* Knowing your market
* Knowing your client’s market
* Competition
* Client’s business
* Call objectives
* Sales materials – price list, tech spec etc
* Questions you are going to ask
* Pen and paper
* Contact (if known)

**Prospecting methods**

As experienced sales people you will know all of these methods, but it is important to know which ones are more effective and focus on those areas of prospecting.

Prospecting methods include, but are not limited to:

* Phone prospecting (cold calling)
* Warm calling
* Networking
* Referrals
* Inbound leads
* Researched leads
* Cold knocking (door to door)
* Speaking engagements
* Clubs and organisations
* Online

**Testimonials and referrals**

Getting someone to refer you and your business is like gold dust. The only downside to referrals is that we don’t get enough.

There is one more downside and that you are delegating to others to recommend your business to potential clients and they not see it as a high priority. These people will have other things more important to them – like running their own business.

The golden rules of referrals

Rule 1: **To get referrals you have to do something.**

You need to dictate the speed of the referral – not the third party. This rule reminds you it is an *active* process.

Rule 2: **For a referral to work it must benefit all three parties**

There are three parties in a referral – you, the referrer and the target.

 Most people who agree to refer you are happy to do it without incentive.

Rule 3: **It is your responsibility to make it clear how everyone will benefit.**

The final rule is a combination of the first two rules – you must do something and all three must benefit.

The referral must be in doubt that they and the target will benefit (remember the target is a good contact of the referrer)

**How to get more referrals**

There are three steps to follow to get as many referrals as possible

1. Never underestimate their power – If you think about how many people you know well enough to pick up the phone to have a chat with it will be surprisingly high. It will be the same for your referrer.
2. The prep you must do – Don’t ask the referrer to think about anyone who might use your services this is too vague and they won’t do it. Obviously the best way is to identify your target by name, but failing that give your referrer a clear brief of who you need to speak to.
3. Write a good script that will get the referrals – It’s is no use to just say ‘Do you know anybody?’

Script One

You: ‘Have you found the advertising you have done with us effective?’

Referrer: ‘Yes, we got a great response’

You: ‘Do you know anyone else I could help? I know from experience that the biggest impact we have would be with (mention two or three big targets of yours) because we can really help with (mention how it could help them)

Referrer: ‘Yes, I think I can help you there’

You:’ Brilliant, thank you. How can I help you to get the introduction? ( You must make it easy for the referrer)

I know it sounds cheesy, but you get the idea. You have to point out the advantages to the referrer so he knows he is helping the target.

1. Ensuring you get referrals in the long term.

The previous 3 tips will give you referrals in the short term and since we know that referrals are the best way to market your business, you want referrals to be a long term source.

**Testimonials**

**What do testimonials do for your business?**

It’s a fact of life that we do business with those we trust. But these days, tooting your own horn too much can submarine your marketing effort. Conversely, when a prospect reads a testimonial about your company, from a complete stranger, it’s considered objective feedback. And so, it’s more believable.

 **The 2 Types of Testimonials—Unsolicited & Solicited**

There are 2 kinds of testimonials—solicited and unsolicited.

doorstep, without any effort on your part. The buyer took it upon himself or herself to contact you directly with their story. Here are some ways you’ll receive unsolicited testimonials:

* Emails
* Snail mail letters
* Random phone conversations

Keep a file folder of these unsolicited testimonials. Then, when the time is right, break them out and sprinkle them liberally throughout your marketing materials.

Solicited testimonials are those you consciously pursue through devices like:

* Comment cards
* Feedback forms
* Website comment pages

Research has found that 90% of your testimonials will be solicited. What this means is this: If you want testimonials, you’re going to have to work for them (like just everything else in your marketing effort).

**Who writes them—you or them?**

You should write them. Because, if you leave it up

to the satisfied customer, it won’t get done. You should write two different versions of a testimonial (or two altogether different testimonials) allowing the client to choose which one they prefer. Then, include a section called “I Can Do Better Than That” and leave some blank space underneath it for them to write their own. Put both of these on one single-sided sheet of paper and send it to them. It might look like this:

*“Every time I pull a pair of Fasthand Drum Sticks out of their sleeves, I know they’ll perform exactly like all the others I’ve used.”*

OR

*“Because these Fasthand Drum Sticks are durable and light, I give my best performance night after night.”*

 I can do better than that:

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Using a format like this, if the customer likes what you’ve written, all they do is sign and return the form to you. But, if they feel moved to write their own testimonial, then they can do that on the same page. One important note: Whenever satisfied clients have written their own testimonials, they’ve *always* been better than those I wrote.

 The important thing to remember is that they should be brief

 and to the point, three sentences at the most. This is not a

 case study.

**Questioning techniques**

* Product Knowledge
* Selling your ‘audience’
* Be a problem solver
* Questioning techniques

There are very few clients who are going to be interested in every single product/service you have avialable or have the time to listen to an extensive presentation about the range of products you can offer them.

It is essential that you find out what the *client* needs before you offer your solution.

**Product Knowledge**

Your clients are expecting you to be an expert in your field so you can offer them the very best advice and service when they are spending their very precious advertising budget.

They will want advice as to the best areas of investment that will help them achieve their objectives.

**Be a Problem Solver**

Without a need there is no sale. If a prospective client is 100% happy with their existing situation they will not feel a need to do business with you.

People do not like to be sold to, but most people like to be helped.

Start thinking in terms of the ‘problems you can, as opposed the product you have to sell and the targets you have to hit. These are of course important factors to *you* – but your clients won’t care about these things!

To offer the very best service, it is vital to understand *all* the problems you can solve your clients – not just the more obvious ones. It is also key that you are aware of the problems you cannot solve, so you do not lead the sales conversation down a road that will result in disappointment and wasted time.

**A little bit about needs**

When a buyer makes a statement that expresses a problem or concern that you can offer a solution to, this is a need. Without a need there will be no sale. There are two kinds of need:

* **Implied need** – a statement of a buyer’s problem, dissatisfaction, or difficulty with the current situation.
* **Explicit need** – a clear statement of a buyer’s want, desire, or intention to act.

Successful sales people in the larger sale can start by uncovering implied needs, and then develop them into explicit needs, helping the buyer realise all the implications of their problem or desire.

This can be done through questioning, as long as you are fully aware of the problems you can solve, and how you can uncover if a prospective client is experiencing any of these problems.

Remember – without a need there is no sale and *needs change*!

**The questioning process**

**Questioning**

This is a vital stage of the sales process. Without questioning you will not be able to fully understand you client’s needs. This is also the stage at which most sales people fall down in their eagerness to pitch their product.

Sales professionals can use the questioning process to help them understand the situation and then provide a realistic solution. You need to plan your questions carefully. As important as questioning is, clients are busy, and time is very precious.

PROBLEM

IMPLICATION

SOLUTION

**The questioning process**

**Problem Questions**

Experienced sales people are more likely to ask questions that uncover problems, difficulties or dissatisfactions. Each invites the buyer to state implied needs. Customer problems, or implied needs, are at the very heart of every sale.

If you can’t uncover any problems to solve, you don’t have a basis for a business relationship. It’s the problem questions which provide the raw material on which the rest of the sale is based.

**Using problem questions effectively**

After you’ve identified a buyer problem or dissatisfaction by using a problem question, it’s important to continue the questioning to reveal the true extent of the problem so that you and the buyer share a thorough understanding of the problem or implied need.

As with all questioning it’s is important that this is not an

interrogation, the questions must as before in situation questions, be linked and flow naturally.

Most problem questions are Where? When? Who? How often? What happens if..?

**Implication questions**

An implication question asks about the consequences or effects of the buyers situation; they help build the seriousness of the problem so that it becomes large enough to justify action.

Research shows that implication questions are strongly related to success in larger sales.

Their purpose is to develop the clarity and strength of the buyer’s problems by focusing on the consequences of the problem, extending and expanding the effects of the problem and linking the problem to other potential problems.

Implication questions help transform problems (implied needs) into explicit needs – the key buying signals in larger sales.

**What goes into good implication questions?**

* Planning – Implication questions tend not to flow automatically from your mind. You must plan your implication questions ahead of the call.
* Business knowledge – You must understand what effect your buyers problem may have on their business.
* Product/service knowledge – You have to know the kinds of problems your product/service can solve.

Ask implication questions after problem questions, but before you introduce your solution.

One of the most common mistakes sellers make is to introduce a solution before an explicit need has been fully developed.

**Solution questions**

Solution questions ask about the value, importance or usefulness of the solution. They help by increasing the attractiveness of your solution. They focus on the solution not the problem and they get the buyer to tell you what the benefits of the solution are.

Solution questions are positive and constructive. They help reduce objections because they cause the buyer to explain why your solution is the best way forward.

They also move the discussion to action and commitment. These types of questions are not easy to ask, but they are a very powerful persuader in larger sales

**How Solution questions help you sell**

* Identify explicit needs – One of the functions of solution questions is to uncover whether or not an explicit need exists; e.g. “Do you need a more targeted audience?”
* Clarify explicit needs – Solution questions get the client to explain the importance of the need in detail by asking questions such as: “Why is it important to you?” or “Do you need a more targeted medium to save Extend explicit needs – Solution questions invite the buyer to specify additional payoffs by asking, for example, “Is there any other way this will help you?” Their responses can add value to your solution.

**Planning Solution questions**

To plan solution questions, think about the potential payoffs of your solution from the buyer’s point of view, based on the relevant problems you’ve uncovered.

Be sure to identify any problem that may still need to clarified and developed by asking situation, problem and especially implication questions, so that the buyer will be receptive to the payoff.

**When to ask Solution questions**

Few sellers ask Solution questions at the optimal point in the sale. If you ask too soon the buyer’s lack of clarity about the problems they may have will prevent you from developing a string desire for a solution.

At the other end of the scale, many sellers have described their solution before they’ve built up an appetite for it, this can lead to objections you may have avoided.

The best time to ask is before describing your solution and after developing the seriousness of the buyers problem.

**Handling objections during a presentation**

Objections are areas of interest or areas of concern. Objections should be interpreted as buying signals. Each question is a request for the salesperson to talk more about the topics that the prospect is most interested in.

After an objection has been raised try to determine why the buyer has raised that concern.

* The prospect is testing the salesperson’s knowledge.
* The prospect is questioning a differentiator between you and your competition.
* The area of concern is a major issue for the prospect.
* The explanation given thus far is confusing and should be clarified.
* The presentation is focused on the product’s features and has not been addressing and offering solutions to the buyers problems and needs.

Common objections include:

* “Your price is too high.”
* “You can’t deliver fast enough.”
* “You’re not on our schedule.”
* “The solution is not compatible with our preferred technology.”
* “It’s more than we were looking for.”

**Handling objections**

“It’s too expensive.”

Always be ready for this objection! Be sure to question that comment to understand why the prospect has that opinion. If the price is being compared to quotes received from competitors, you now have the opportunity to differentiate yourself from the competition as justification for a different price. If your pricing is the highest, but justifiably so, then your quote really is not expensive; you’re offering higher quality for a higher price. Another common response to the high-price objection is “what would you like me to take out?”

Value is always in the perception of the buyer. If your solution costs more than the problem, the prospect is unlikely to go with your solution. Make sure you have gone through the full implications of the problem with the prospect, so that they *know* and have acknowledgedthe full extent of their problems.

As a process for handling objections, you should:

1. Thank prospects for their input and for raising the issue or question.
2. to ask if the prospect will be ready to proceed if you can adequately address his or her concern.
3. If appropriate, solicit the prospect’s input for a solution. If the prospect is raising the issue because it’s a differentiator for your competition, you have gained some valuable market information.
4. Address the objection with your prepared response. If the objection is a new one and you don’t have a prepared response, tell the prospect that you will look into the objection and find an answer.
5. Go back through the sales process and be sure you have discovered the problem most important to the buyer and offered a solution.

**Remember** Plan for objections and have prepared responses. You can also address objections in you presentation, before they are even brought up. Diffuse a situation before it even arises.

**Closing the sale**

 Closing the sale, when done properly, is a non-issue. The buyers will have assessed the risk and will now review what they have learned about your product, and its pricing.

If you have properly worked through the sales process to this point, the amount of risk in moving forward should be seen as minimal.

**Closing questions**

Buyers are more sophisticated in modern times, so the ABC (*always be closing)* technique of selling is long gone.

However, you do need to check that the sale is advancing and the customer is ready to move onto the next stage of the sale.

**Trial close**

Some sample trial closing questions include:

* How does that sound?
* Are we in agreement?
* Does that answer your question?
* Are you okay with that?
* Do you have any questions on that?

These questions may take you back to the presenting stage of the sales process and go back through any objections, or increase the clients perceived value of your offerings.

**Final close**

In the final close, you *ask* for the business. It’s the most important question to ask! If you don’t ask for the business you won’t get it.

All the positive feedback in the world from the prospect during a meeting will be wasted if you do not ask for the business and gain commitment.

Here are some sample final closing questions:

* If we can meet your timeline requirements at the price we’ve discussed, are we in complete agreement?
* Based on the review by your team, we can deliver on every request. Can I have my legal group draw up the contracts?
* Can we set up some time next week to review the contracts before the signature date?
* Based on the valuation you have done, will you be awarding the contract to us?
* When we finish with the assessment phase, can we extend our contract to a year?
* Do we have a deal?

Timing is very important in the closing stage of the sale. By using trial closes, you will be consistently checking the prospect’s buying status. You should have dealt with all the clients objections and both be completely clear on what the offerings are.

**Remember** – once the buyer has said yes, STOP SELLING!

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