




5 Steps To The Perfect Sales Pitch



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How to prepare the perfect sales pitch – remember your 5 D's!

Don't begin your sales pitch until the customer agrees to buy! If you can accomplish the selling before the pitch, you're well on your way to success. The sale can be made before the presentation begins, if you ask the right questions to qualify and generate interest in the buyer to a point of commitment. A rainmaker will create a need, and then solve the requirement before the first pitch. Don't step on the mound unless you know who's holding the bat!

Creating the deficit or the need means asking pointed questions. It also means getting the prospect to think and respond in new ways.

It puts the prospect in a situation where he needs, depends on, and has trust in the knowledge of the salesperson based on the questions he has been asked.

The perfect sales pitch takes research and development where you eliminate objections before they occur, ask questions that lead to a commitment before you present, and have confidence that you can overcome any objection during the presentation.

There are five D's to remember in delivering the sales pitch, they are: Development, Details, Differentiation, Decision Makers, and Delivery.

Most sales presentations are 90 percent product knowledge and presentation -- the rest is objections and close. Not enough time is spent in the development phase, where the sale is actually made! Be prepared, do your homework; it makes the difference between success and failure.

Following we will examine the five essential elements of a sales pitch. In order to take your sales force to a higher level that is *focused on success* you must **prepare**.

1 Development

Make the presentation look professional. Have a clear message. Make sure the message you want to convey comes through to the audience. Spend plenty of time understanding your prospect. If this sounds easy, it's not, but if you prepare properly your level of success will increase significantly.

If you want to become a top sales professional you must know your customers requirements prior to delivering the sales pitch. You must understand their areas of pain and discomfort. You should know their needs better than they do. Good sales people spend a significant time before the pitch understanding the audience. Know the client, understand their history, understand the make up of the management team, and know their performance over the past few years. All this information will assist you in developing pointed questions during the meeting and make them feel comfortable that you understand their needs.

A quality sales pitch weaves a story. It's essential your pitch weaves the correct message and has the happy ending that you want.

Your message needs to have a consistent theme across all media. If you change your story and it doesn't fit the information you handed out or what's included in your web site, the audience may consider you untrustworthy.

Developing trust and understanding is a key essential in the delivery stage, which we will discuss shortly.

2 Details

Pay specific attention to the details. The most important details are the information specific to the prospect.

Each sales pitch needs to be specifically developed to meet your clients' requirements. If you're always using the same pitch, and not tweaking it for clients, you're missing the message. Each and every client is different; each and every client has different needs.

Adjust your pitch to fit their requirements. Personalize the presentation; include their specific requirements in the presentation. The client will appreciate and recognize the extra effort that was put into the pitch. Remember you're developing the relationship from the beginning; anything that sets you apart from the competition is a benefit for the long-term goal.

Pain. They all have different areas of pain that need to be addressed. Ask my favorite question to the CEO, "Right before you fall asleep at night and your rubbing your ulcer, what are you thinking about"; if you solve that problem you're a hero! Companies all have areas of pain, whether it's lack of growth, internal cost pressures, personnel issues, or board room issues, they all look for help. If your solutions can assist in relieving their pain your sales cycle just got significantly shorter!

Remember – in developing the details of your pitch, have the message address their pain area. Anticipate problems, prepare for negative comments, encourage open communication and don't forget to confirm that your answers satisfied their questions.

Being a good sales executive means raising tough questions. You want the client to ask tough questions, but you will be ready, because you've prepared and have catered the pitch specifically to meet their requirements. You've paid attention to detail!

3 Differentiation

Verify your message is clear, concise, and makes you stand out from the

competition. What sets your company apart from the competition is you! Whether or not you admit it, you do have competition. You've been told that the competition is not as strong as your product or service, but remember, your competition, if they're any good, has the same opinion about your company. If you have a great product make sure your prospects know it's great, why it's great, and most importantly know how it will positively impact their business.

Establishing market differentiation is one of the most important elements about the sales pitch. If you can't stand out from the competition, if your prospects don't see the value proposition in your product, your pitch is over. Go home, this game's over, get ready for next chance at hitting a home run.

One of the biggest problems technology companies have is to develop a message that is clear, easy to understand, focused on their core capabilities and is easily applied to providing business solutions for the prospects.

After hearing a thousand sales pitches and reviewing hundreds of business plans, the most significant problem companies have is narrowing down their message into a clear, easy to remember message that can be translated into the prospects requests.

You must make your sales pitch meaningful and interesting, and always target it towards your audience. Most C-level executives are not aware of nor care about the greatest method of communication or warp speeds, they care about solving business problems!

You don't need to mention the competition to eliminate them. Remember to raise pointed questions that will cause your prospects to eliminate the competition. If your differentiation is years of experience in a particular vertical industry, raise the question, "If you were to have brain

surgery, would you want to be the doctor's first patient, or would you want someone who has perform the procedure many times with tremendous success?" Never knock your competition directly; promote your organizations positive positions and differentiators.

You can't just say you're great, you need to show them. State examples, case studies of companies similar to the prospect. Detail how you've solved their pain and how successful you made them. If possible, demonstrate how you were able to make their business more successful; either by increasing revenue or gaining market share, these are issues facing CEO's.

Be prepared to discuss what the competition has said about your company. You should know your shortcomings as well as your differentiators. Address your shortcomings before the prospect brings them up; diffuse the issue before it becomes an issue.

No excuses! If you had trouble in the past, prepare the answer so you address how those problems occurred and how they will be prevented in the future. Remember you're not alone in your business; your competition is developing differentiation statements and trying to knock you out of the game.

Show your commitment to excellence. Companies will pay for superior service. If your commitment to excellent service is a differentiation then use it to your benefit.

Remember, excellence will generate a value proposition, however, there is only so much more a company is willing to pay for superior service.

Price always matters!

4 Decision Makers

Know your audience and what their respective roles are. Each prospective client will have multiple decision makers; the role of a professional sales person is to know each decision maker and what makes them tick.

You need a coach. Your coach is the person you've developed a close relationship with and is providing you with inside information about what the prospects' needs are and why the company needs your services. The coach will be your inside contact that, for various reasons, wants the contract executed. They will assist you every step of the way, giving directions, advise and guidance throughout the sales cycle.

You will need to identify several other decision makers within the organization that includes several influencers; technical, financial, customer service, these buyers will influence the final decision based specifically to how your product or service will impact their department.

Don't overlook the influencers, they can make or break a deal. If you understand the prospects pain prior to the sales pitch, you can delivery a targeted pitch that addresses each influencer's specific needs.

Every deal also has a final decision maker, who may or may not be the signatory. The final decision maker needs to be identified. If you have limited contact to the final decision maker your odds of success go down tremendously. Many successful companies have gained their wealth through knowing the right people, and having connections at the top.

If your product is great, your sales pitch was excellent, but you haven't made contact with the top decision makers, you're wasting your time. Your competition may be inferior but have a

higher-level relationship that is superior and win the business based on contacts.

5 Delivery

Have your best presenter deliver the message. You may only get one chance to make a sales pitch, make it count! Bring in the "A" team.

Practice the presentation before meeting with the prospect. You shouldn't be reading the presentation for the first time in front of the prospect; you should be delivering the message.

Incorporate several people into the sales pitch. One person talking for a long period of time can get the customer to lose interest. Make sure the content isn't too technical, if an engineer is presenting, make sure the message doesn't get lost in a technical discussion.

Have someone from your team take notes, make adjustments during the pitch based on reaction, body language, comments, and objections. If you practiced delivering the pitch you'll be prepared for adjustments. You'll anticipate objections.

Never get confrontational with a prospect. You can challenge them without becoming confrontational. Ask questions to make them think, to make them question themselves, don't be afraid to test your prospect.

The right questions create deficit in the comfort level of the prospect. Most salespeople want their customer to feel more comfort and more knowledge. Wrong, the more the customer knows, the less he or she needs you.

Price becomes the main issue when the customer thinks he knows it all. You've become a commodity and now they can buy from anyone and the only thing that matters is getting the best price!

Keep your message consistent, don't make it too complicated, not everyone is an engineer. Don't assume you've hit a homerun unless you walk away with an order. Know your objectives going into the meeting.

Everyone requires people skills to deliver a clear message. They need to work on specific personal development skills, such as:

Creating Rapport

The best sales executives are noted for their effective rapport building skills. Building rapport is the first step in developing trust.

Being Yourself

Remember that selling is nothing more than directed conversation. We all have the ability to hold conversations. Be sincere and you will gain the respect of your potential customer.

Listen! Listen! Listen!

This is the area most underused by inexperienced sales people. Some sales people believe they have to tell all they know in a sales pitch. Quite the opposite is true. By asking open-ended questions and listening closely to the answers, you can find what is important to the prospect.

Tie Needs to Benefits

Using the words of the prospect, tell him how your product or service will be a perfect solution for his problem. Deliver

to the customer an effective *benefit statement* utilizing their words. Always close the pitch with an affirmative response of wanting the prospects business.

Review and Exit

Review the items each of you agreed upon during the meeting. Make sure any action item is assigned. Carry through on your responsibilities in a timely manner.

Conclusion

Given the five essential requirements for a successful sales pitch are: Development, Details, Differentiation, Decision Makers and Delivery, how can you, as a sales executive improve your win ratio by altering your approach in your next presentation?

In today's competitive environment, building a successful sales pitch is essential to success of your organization.

It's imperative that your organization develops a clear message that is consistent within your organization.

The message must be is easy to understand by all the decision makers. The biggest problem in today's complex technical world is creating a message that can't be translated into client value.

There are many solutions in the market today. Companies have options available to them that weren't available over the last two years. **Stay Focused and you will Succeed!**