

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

## Hitting the Nail on the Head with Demos and Presentations

Bill Gates once demonstrated Microsoft's newest version of the Windows operating environment to the press, it crashed. What you demonstrate and how you demonstrate it can make or break a sale to your key customers. Here are some things to think about:

Some sales teams conduct demonstrations of applications and information systems where the lead presenter / demonstrator turns the presentation over to a technical support person, who starts by sitting down at a notebook computer to conduct the demonstration.

**Instead:** It's best not to demonstrate a product sitting down. You give up all control of the presentation and your audience. Ensure that the presenter/demonstrator leads the demonstration—perhaps working at a white board or flip chart. Take two people to the demonstration, one to run the demo and one to act as lead presenter.

---

So often, presenters quickly launch a demonstration losing the audience about 2 slides into the mandatory corporate background (that no one cares about but us). Even if you have something they need, if you have 36 slides and the key slide is number 17—there's little chance they will remain conscious far enough into the presentation to see it and recognize it.

**Instead:** Help your audience understand the context of the demonstration and how it relates to them. Every presentation should be as customized as possible. Do not bring a laptop on the first call. If you get invited in to present, find out who is going to be there and try to speak to each of them one-on-one prior to the presentation—to make your presentation as useful for them as possible. When you do get to the point of a demo or presentation, it should be tailored to address the pain, fear and gain of the people you are presenting to. Start with a recap and confirmation of the business problems you are addressing. Revisit and 'reheat' the pain. Get them emotionally involved.

---

On the day of the demo, new players frequently show up. Many times the real decision-maker surfaces for the first time. The most frequent

## Self Help For Sales Representatives

reaction is 'let me show you what we have cooked up for you!' However, they almost always have a different perspective than the people you've met with so far, and they won't like what you're serving.

**Instead:** If there are new people in the room, make sure to get their buy-in. "George, are we off the target with what we are doing here? Would you agree with the assessment so far, or have we overstated the significance of this issue? Is there anything you would add?" Then, present your solution to address their problems, showing only the features, benefits and capabilities that relate to those issues.

---

As the demo progresses, someone asks, "Can your product do X?" The presenter wants to show that the product can do X, and quickly passes through 14 menu selections to do just what was asked. The person, who asked the question, and everyone else in the room, experiences 'product vertigo'—the sick feeling in your stomach that happens when the screens moved too quickly.

**Instead:** Reward and reverse—understand the question and its importance. Avoid screen flipping. Sometimes it's better to answer verbally, or by drawing on the white board. You might also say, "Yes, and we will be showing you that capability as part of this demo." If you decide to navigate to the answer, the lead presenter may say, "While Jim is moving to that portion of the demo..."

---

One of the things we dread most is that someone in the audience will be an advocate for the competition, and try to undercut us during the presentation. We silently hope to get on and off stage without argument or controversy.

**Instead:** Don't try to avoid the hidden enemy. Flush them out. "Does anyone here have any significant concerns about what we are discussing? How about minor concerns, then?" Your hidden enemies will do most of their selling when you aren't there. If you give them a chance to surface issues at the demo, their colleagues will ask them why they didn't bring up the issue—if they try to bring it up later.

---

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

If hidden enemies do surface during the presentation, the two most frequent responses are:

- 1) You try to brush over it as quickly as possible.
- 2) As they fire salvos at you, you try to defend and justify the solution you are presenting.

**Instead:** Follow the advice of Sun Tzu in his book, *The Art of War*: get to know your enemies as well as you know yourself. Embrace the question or concern. Reward and reverse—explore it deeper. e.g. "Good question, how are you handling that right now?" Put the pressure back on them. Ask the rest of the audience how they see the issue. Don't fight alone—let them fight. They have to get to consensus before they can decide on any course of action.

## Win Deals Not Conversations

Would you rather be right or successful?

### Story One - Victorian England:

A woman sat with two contenders for Prime Minister, on consecutive evenings. When asked to compare the experiences with the two she said, "After I sat with Mr. Gladstone, I left feeling he was one of the most brilliant men on the earth. After dinner with Mr. Disraeli, I felt I was one of the most brilliant women on the earth."

### Just Last Week:

A very senior and successful sales manager once said, "I used to hear their first objection and jump on it so hard I'd demolish it and walk away sure I had done a great job and was getting the deal. Over time I found I was losing a lot of those deals I thought I should win, and finally concluded that I was so forceful handling the first objection that I was losing deals due to other objections the buyer was afraid to raise - given my performance on the first one."

### Here's the point:

If he felt like he was winning, what did the buyer feel? In order to 'feel' like he was winning the conversation, he made his prospect feel like he lost.

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

Sales is no place to get your personal, emotional needs met. Listen; don't talk. Seek to understand before seeking to be understood. It's not you against them; it's you being able to join them in their 'operational reality.' Win deals, not conversations.

## Reason Buyers Lie

Buyers are Human; They Just Tend to Disguise their Pain.

**There are four rules of pain.**

Rule #1: Everyone has pain.

Rule #2: Everyone wants to get rid of pain.

Rule #3: No-one wants to admit to their pain.

Rule #4: No-one wants to admit to their pain, especially to a stereotypical sales person!

*We can and often do lie to ourselves.*

It's not just buyers—it's basic human nature to hide pain. First we hide it from ourselves. Then we, by default, hide it from other people. All living creatures seek pleasure and avoid pain. Humans have at their disposal tactics that other creatures don't. We can avoid pain through exercise of our intellect and imagination. Denial, avoidance and suppression keep pain from entering our consciousness, so we can avoid feeling it.

*White lies and other things buyers do.*

Prospects don't walk around broadcasting their problems and fears. On the contrary, they do everything they can to hide them from view. They wrap their pain in protective layers of denial and rationalization. If you've been in sales long, you've heard these tactics in action.

*Generalizing* - "I might be interested."

*White lies* - "I'm just looking."

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

*Questions about your product or service* - "How does your product scale?"

*Minimization* - "We've done it this way for years, I'm sure we can live without it."

*Intellectual smoke screen* - "We're conducting a thorough review of our options before we decide if we will move forward."

The end result is that buyers aren't open and honest about their pains, fears and gains with the very people who are most able to help them. In disguising their pain from sales people, they hurt themselves.

How sales professionals can help (and get to the bank along the way). As a salesperson you must be a master of carefully penetrating the buyer's defenses, so you can help them discover their hidden pain and take action to fix it. The challenge for the salesperson is to keep the buyer feeling O.K. throughout the process.

A surgeon uses a scalpel to get to the problem. A psychiatrist uses carefully selected questions to do the same for patients. The salesperson's tools are the same. Ask the right questions in the right way and you'll help your prospect reveal the problems you can fix.

## **Rules for finding pain:**

- 1) Keep them talking: Ask questions, with sincere interest and caring curiosity.
- 2) Keep them focused on the problem: They may try to divert the conversation by bringing up unrelated topics, changing the focus to price, skirting the issue, etc. Use rewards and reverses to help them maintain a focus on the real issue.
- 3) Don't stop until it's over or it's personal.

People often ask about "closing" the sale. But you will rarely find great "closers", only great openers!

A sale is like downhill skiing, it doesn't matter how fast you are going at the finish line if you missed a gate at the top of the hill. And you can't ski back up the hill and put in a good time.

People buy from people they.....like and trust!

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

## Continuous Contact Makes the Difference

**The Challenge:** A client expressed frustration about the fact that they had some customers who complained about 'product problems'—yet other clients who used the same series of products had no complaints.

**One Answer:** Once a failed CEO resigned, many of the organizations quickly rebounded under a new CEO. It would seem the CEO was the difference.

### Why CEO's Fail

One consultant's study of this phenomena led him to a fairly simple conclusion: CEO's don't fail due to lack of strategy or a grand vision. They fail in execution, those mundane day-to-day details of how to get it done.

### You are the CEO of Your Territory

The same is true of sales professionals and their account relationships. Why do some customers defected to the competition and others don't. Many of sales people make reference to prior problems with the product. Experts' investigation shows the only correlating variable to be (can you guess?)—the account manager. The difference between an account set with no history of product problems and those with enough dissatisfaction that they had gone over to the competition was—not the problems—but how the sales person had handled the problems—the mundane details of account management.

### Continuous contact, including contact after the sale:

1. Insures satisfaction—the sale is done when the customer's problem is gone.
2. Gives you the chance to address problems as they arise.
3. Provides warning of competitive attempts to penetrate.
4. Helps you find new opportunities.
5. Lets you take advantage of windows of opportunity, when the competition is vulnerable to displacement due to dissatisfaction.

Why isn't it done more often? The most common thing said is, "I don't have time. I have to make this month's number." It's the same reason people don't exercise. It's a false economy of time. It makes selling as hard as digging a hole with a tea spoon.

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

## Here's How to Make it Work

Triage your accounts into A, B, and C customers. Use an estimate of potential life time value as the basis of the triage. The top 20% are "A's"—the middle 60% are "B's"—the bottom 20% are "C's." Then develop a contact plan for each tier—and put it on your calendar to do.

## Dig Your Well Before You Are Thirsty

A's—Meet or call your main contact at least monthly. But don't let a key account relationship dangle by the thread of a single relationship. Set goals to expand your contacts both vertically and horizontally. Map the account. Get an organization chart and put it on the wall. Highlight who you know in green. Highlight who you don't know in red. Pick new people to meet—especially senior people in new departments or divisions—use gold to highlight these people. Initiate and maintain executive relationships a level or two above your current contact level.

Develop a personal plan to increase your value as a trusted advisor to these senior people. Read their trade press—know something about their business. Read their Annual Reports—know their company. Go to Google and search on their names—you'll find most senior people on the Web—know them. In the end you should have breadth and depth in your personal relationships in the account and you should engineer relationships between your technical people and theirs and between your executives and theirs.

B's—Meet or call your main contact at least quarterly. Develop one new contact in another functional area this quarter. If you call mainly on IT, then develop a contact in another department. Also set a goal to make a contact at least one level higher than your current contact.

C's—Take a good look at these customers. As tough as it might sound, it's often best to either fire them (burning bridges isn't necessary or desired) or promote them to the next level.

The best sales people learn there's no use winning new accounts if you don't retain them. They know they have to wisely spread their available time and attention across both new accounts and existing customers.

Maintain a relentless focus on the fundamentals and a maniacal focus on the customer.

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

## Getting Referred Up the Chain of Command

**Challenge:** It's easier to start at the top and work down where there are situations where companies are contacted about their product. If it's a problem working through the person who calls in, it's typically because:

- It's time consuming and ineffective when they have to run back and forth between you and the others in the process.
- They can't do as good a job as you can when it comes to asking the right questions and fielding the concerns of the others in the process.
- They can't give you all the information you need to offer a quality solution.

### To overcome these problems:

1. You need a structured questioning process for discovering, exploring and evaluating the buyer's motivation—the underlying reason for dissatisfaction with the status quo. A solid, consultative 'pain' step, prior to a request for access to others, gives you more latitude to ask for what you need to help them. Sequence is key and that's why a good sales process emphasizes the proper sequence of events that lead to the optimum outcome for you and the buyer.
2. As part of that process, ask questions that are obviously legitimate, but which a gatekeeper may not be able to answer. This often results in the caller suggesting that you need to speak to others. You might even ask, "Who might know that answer?"—and— "Is it out of the question for you and I to somehow get on the phone with (the others)." Note: Asking in this negative way tends to increase your odds.
3. Part of that process should also include questions like this:
  - a. "Who else is impacted by this (pain, fear, gain)?"
  - b. "How do you suggest they be involved in this evaluation process?"
4. If they fail to name someone who you suspect is part of the process—then you might say, "In every situation where we have a project like this, the Director of Finance has always been involved. Are you sure your Director of Finance won't need to take a look at this?"

## Self Help For Sales Representatives

5. If you feel you aren't getting access to decision makers, and you find that you are losing deals because you don't have access, then you may politely press the point. "I've got a lot of experience working on these projects and I have a sense of what Quality Assurance Managers tend to want. Are you sure it doesn't make sense for me to help you field her questions directly?" If they tell you no, see #6 and #7 below.
6. Don't spill the beans too soon. The caller may want information, quotes, etc. Gracefully hold back on giving them what they want. Don't squander your strong position. If you want more access, ask for it BEFORE you give them all of what they want. If you give it all away before you ask for something you want, you have squandered your leverage.
7. Promote "The Researcher" to "CEO." Most 'researchers' are territorial. They protect their turf and refuse entry into executive's offices. They take their job seriously and often feel they can be the hero by bringing the exec's the solution. Most will work with you to get you to the others if you've done what was suggested above. Some will not. If you can't get in front of the real decision maker, you can improve your chances by treating the researcher as if he was the final decision maker.
  - a. Hand them the psychological baton of power and then test their commitment to your solution. "I know no one there is going to even see our solution unless you think it's the right one. If you were making the decision, without any other input, would you select the solution we've discussed? And, by the way, I'm O.K. hearing 'no' if you don't think we're the best solution." The researcher has to be convinced himself before you can ask him to carry the ball for you.
  - b. If he is supportive, then prepare to lead. "I'm aware that you need to get others on board with this before it's final. Since you'll have to make the final presentation to (the others), may I ask you a few questions about what they may want out of this solution, what their concerns might be, and offer you a few tools I've found that are useful in talking to (Directors of Finance, Directors of Sales, etc.)?" This is a process of rehearsing them through the sales call they are going to make for you.
8. None of these TACTICS will work if they seem manipulative or wrong in any way. Your belief system has to support the use of any tactic. It is not wrong of you to want to have direct communication with the key stakeholders in the process—it's in both your best interest AND theirs. Your doctor won't let you self-prescribe. It would be malpractice if he did. A competent physician always does the right examination, laboratory tests, MRI scans and x-rays to

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

properly diagnose, only then will he / she prescribe a course of treatment. Your philosophy must be the same.

## Reaching Senior Management

One Idea That Works:

**Challenge:** You need to reach the Plant Manager or top-level decision-makers, and all you have is the company name and a central phone number. You call and ask for the Plant Manager and the receptionist always screens you out. How do you handle this?

**Answer:**

First, buy a list. They are cheap, easy to get and up-to-date. You can get a list, sorted to your specifications, by job title, industry, and geography.

Second, create your best list by calling your worst list. If buying the list isn't an option, try the "two-pass" call approach — which is a hundred times more effective than the approach you are using now. When you ask to be put through to "Plant Manager" it won't work in most cases. If you call and ask for John Smith (who is Plant Manager) you have a much greater chance of getting in.

On the first call don't ask to be put through. Ask the person who answers the phone for help updating customer list, or explain that you want to mail Plant Manager something. Use an executive briefing invitation as the premise, and get the names almost 100% of the time.

Ask to confirm the person's name (or ask who Plant Manager is), ask for the address (or confirm it), ask for their assistant's name and number, and finally for Plant Managers phone number. Update your database (see, you were truthful!) and then call back in a day or two and ask for John Smith, by name.

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

## Get An IOU For Everything You Do

**Challenge:** You are busting your behind to help customers get what they need to evaluate and buy your products, but it's such a one-way street! You are feeling like a hamster on a wheel—working hard and getting nowhere! How can you get what you need, at least sometimes?

**Answer:** Ever make a sales call where you do a lot of work for a prospect and nothing ever happens? Ever provide information and expertise to a prospect only to find out they shared it with you competitor and your competitor got the business? Prospects feel they have the right to steal our knowledge and expertise without paying for it, and they don't even feel guilty about it. Sales people have rights too.

One success they reported was the simple act of ensuring that every time a customer or prospect asked for something that the sales people asked for something in return. They said it was hard—out of their comfort zone—at first. But guess what? If you ask, you get! You have the right to ask questions and get commitments from our prospect before we give up information and pricing. If you are going to do something for a customer, always get an IOU for everything you do.

If you never ask, you're sure not to get what you need. If you give it all away on the first call how hard is it to get them back on the phone? You spilled all of the beans too soon. Your leverage is gone!

## Making the First Five Minutes Count

Please complete the following sentence: *People buy from people they*  
\_\_\_\_\_.

The two most common answers written are "like" or "trust."

Ask yourself, "Is this an intellectual reaction, or a gut level emotional response? "

People buy emotionally, and the emotional impact you have on people has less to do with what you say, and more to do with how you say it. Successful sales people are able to establish trust and 'likeability' quickly with a wide range of people.

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

Building rapport is the first step in a successful sale, or for that matter, in any successful relationship. The thing that makes this so difficult in sales is that we may have just a few minutes to get things heading the right direction.

For some reason, we all click with or hit it off with certain people and bomb with others. Why does it happen? How can we get better at it?

## A myth of the sales profession

One of the biggest myths in sales is that good sales people must be born with a 'talent' that others don't possess. This just isn't true. Up until now, we haven't understood the mechanisms of human dynamics that cause us to be trusted and liked by others. The ability to inspire trust is something anyone can learn.

New research has given us insight into how the human mind functions, and how these human dynamics work. This new technology has application in many fields - education, personal performance enhancement, child development, parenting, leadership - and the sales profession.

## Three components of communication

The emotional impact we have on others is the result of three components of communication - *words, tonality, and body language*. When we communicate,

- Words account for about 7%
- Tonality accounts for 38%
- Body language accounts for 55%.

The human mind is made up of many separate subsystems. In simple terms, we all have receptors that see, hear and sense the messages that are given off by others. These receptors allow us to absorb information and make quick judgments or decisions even before the information has been passed on to the thinking part of the brain. The non-verbal messages that one person sends to another often determine whether he will, or will not, be believed or trusted long before the any words have been spoken. In the end, people like and trust people who are like them. You may have called this 'intuition' when you 'had a feeling' that you couldn't quite explain about another person in the past.

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

## Learning new skills

To become better at establishing trust, one must learn and practice some simple skills:

Learn how to observe another person for clues about how to best reach them.

Learn to shift to the other person's preferred communication style and decision-making method.

Master these skills of sensing and matching so they can be done naturally and quickly, and you'll become a much better sales person.

## The 70 / 30 rule

*The first rule of sales - for reasons beyond building rapport - is the 70 / 30 rule.* The sales person should lead the conversation such that the prospect talks 70% of the time and the salesperson only 30%. This is especially important at the beginning - since it gives you a chance to hear, see and feel how the other person communicates. If you can do this (and most of us find it very hard!) you will naturally tend to move to their preferred communication style and improve your ability to bond with them.

## Be like them

*The second rule* is to be like them. Mirror their communication and decision making style. This requires you to identify and match tonality, body language, preferred or dominant communication style, decision making style and personality type.

If they are fast paced and bottom line, you should be too. If they are more interested in getting to know you, take your time. If they are very detail oriented and analytic, be prepared to provide mounds of data. If you mix this up, you'll fail. A bottom line person will shut down when you try to slowly develop a relationship or introduce mounds of data.

## Telesales is different

In telesales, the problem is compounded, since your normal rapport building skills are constrained by both time and the lack a visual component. When you are on the phone the mix is now 80% tonality

# Self Help For Sales Representatives

and 20% words. Your physiology is still a factor, however. Even though the party at the other end can't see you, your tone reflects your body language. If you are smiling, it will reflect in your voice. If you are sitting at a desk, looking down - the traditional 'cold call position' - your tone will be constrained and ineffective. Use a headset, stand, gesture freely, naturally, look up, and smile - it will show in your voice. *The key is to master your voice as an instrument.* Use our suggested openers to get the call off to a good start in the first 30 seconds.

## Changing your emphasis

If you are like most sales people, you spend almost 100% of your time working on the 7% factor: words; and almost no time working on the other 93%: tonality and body language.

To become fluent at these skills is much like learning to dance. First you learn the steps, then you practice, and practice, and practice until it becomes second nature. Reading a book, watching a video, listening to an audiocassette just isn't enough. You can't master these skills without practice, anymore than you could learn to ski, dance, drive a car, or ride a bike through books, tapes or videos.

Experience indicates that mastery of non-verbal communication is best accomplished through tonality and body language exercises, combined with audio and video feedback.

Shift your emphasis to mastering new skills for building rapport. It will yield a significant competitive advantage when you make the first five minutes count.

---

I hope that this helps you...