

BREAKTHROUGH

SALES

RESULTS



***Understanding Your
Strengths & Weaknesses
in the Sales Process***

Selling is a very important part of the process of getting customers to buy your services or products. Yet, it is greatly misunderstood.

Selling is not a process that manipulates people into buying your products or services, rather, it's a process of understanding your prospect's needs and understanding the sensitive dynamics of finding the right fit.

What exactly should you ask? How should you explain your products or services? How do you close and confirm you actually have the sale?

It sounds simple, but many sales professionals lose sight of the steps needed to sell successfully, and skip through steps and wonder why they weren't able to close the deal.

Like any profession, selling has a body of knowledge related to successful execution.

There are seven key steps that can help you be successful in any business environment.

1. PROSPECTING

This is the first step of any sales system. It is the phase of the sale where prospects are identified, detailed background information is gathered, the physical activity of traditional prospecting is coordinated and an overall strategy for face-to-face selling is developed.

Possible reasons for not doing well in this areas could include a lack of understanding of who the real prospects and decision-makers are, a lack of understanding of the type of information needed to qualify a prospect, being tied to traditional methods of prospecting (ie: cold-calling by phone or door-to-door), poor time management or ineffective telephone or email techniques.

TAKE ACTION



Work on a profile of your best customer that includes:

- Size of business
- Type of business
- Geography
- Average purchase amount
- Typical decision-maker
- How you originally got their business



Then list what were the typical problems or pain they were experiencing and how you solved those problems.

2. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

This the first face-to-face interaction between a prospect and the salesperson. This step is designed to enable the salesperson to display his or her sincere interest in the prospect, to gain positive acceptance and to develop a sense of mutual respect and rapport. It is the first phase of face-to-face trust building and sets the selling process in motion.

If you struggle in this area, it could be an indication of lack skills in identifying a prospect's buying style and how to approach them differently, concerned more about your own personal agenda than potential client's, an inability to understand your own personal selling style (ie: aggressive sales technique or not listening), failure to gather the right information in the prospecting stage, or a failure to display sincere interest in your prospect's problems.

TAKE ACTION



Be prepared ahead of time with questions to uncover a customer's needs and pain.



Learn to ask open-ended questions.



Approach conversations with the attitude of wanting to solve a problem instead of trying to “sell” a product or service.



Understand the buying style of people you encounter, and adjust your style to theirs.

3. QUALIFYING

The questioning and detailed needs analysis phase marks this part of the face-to-face sale. This step of selling enables the salesperson to discover what the prospect will buy, when they will buy and under what conditions they will buy. It is allowing the prospect to identify and verbalize their level of interest and specific detailed needs in the product or service the salesperson is offering.

Possible reasons for not performing well in this area include, a failure to appreciate the type of probing necessary to discover what the client wants and needs, failure to ask the tough questions or making an assumption that all prospects want to hear your presentation, or poor listening skills.

TAKE ACTION



Practice more patience in your questioning and listening.



Make sure you're talking with the decision-maker.



Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions around priorities, budget and politics within a customer's organization.

4. DEMONSTRATION

In this step of the sales process, the salesperson should present his or her product in such a way that it fulfills the stated or implied needs or intentions of the prospect as identified and verbalized in the Qualification step.

A failure in this area is usually a result of not asking the right questions in the previous step, and can also include a failure to listen to the “wants” described in the question stage, demonstrating to fulfill your needs and not the client’s needs, failure to appeal to the customer’s interest and desires, thinking about features rather than applications, and a failure to answer “What’s in it for me?” for your prospect.

TAKE ACTION



Understand the buying style of your customer in relation for the need for details, or the need for bottom-line benefits and adjust your style accordingly.



Prepare your presentation ahead of time and be sure to include the customer throughout the presentation.



Make sure you leave time and space for questions or objections from the customer.

5. INFLUENCE

What people believe enough, they act upon. This step is designed to enable the salesperson to build value and overcome the tendency that many prospects have of placing little belief or trust in what is told to them. It is this phase of the sale that solidifies the prospect's belief in the supplier, product or service and salesperson.

Possible reasons for poor performance in this area include, a failure to understand the strategy of proving your claims, a failure to sell value and justify price, or a failure to relieve the fear of buying.

TAKE ACTION



Learn to understand and identify buying signals.



Address fears or concerns directly to assure the customer you can solve their problem.



Back up your claims with credible demonstrations, testimonials or case studies.

6. CLOSE

The final phase of any selling system. This step encompasses asking the prospect to buy, dealing with objections, handling any necessary negotiation and completing the transaction to mutual satisfaction.

Ineffective closing could be a result of failing to negotiate the conditions of the sale, failing to answer objections and create value, or failure to take the risk to close the sale.

TAKE ACTION



Understand that sales have rules and follow them closely.



Know that you are there to solve their problems and not sell them something useless.



Be open and clear about the conditions of the sale.

7. GENERAL

This area represents an overall understanding of the sales process. Knowledge of the process can lead to a positive attitude toward sales and a commitment to the individual sales steps.

This area can be an indication of internal issues that you may need to resolve in order to improve your sales skills. This can include having more appreciation for the little things that lead to a successful presentation such as being prepared, using sales aids, managing time, and using call reports. You may also need to evaluate your commitment to sales as a profession or if you have a poor attitude towards selling.

TAKE ACTION



Know your strengths and weaknesses in the sales process and be honest in your evaluation.



Learn time-management skills and keep accurate records of each sales call.



Work on your sales plan and take an active part in perfecting your career.



Become a student of people, their needs and how they like to receive information.



Darrell Crawford started The Vantage Group as a way to help sales managers, CEOs, and business owners move their teams as a unified force to achieve their goals. His company does this by looking at behaviors, helping identify areas where there are disconnects between people and their goals, and working with them to reach their goals. Darrell has more than twenty years of experience coaching and training sales professionals throughout the United States.

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