Sales Mastery™ ‘Lead the Pack’

Sales Newsletter

January 2007 ▪ Volume 7,

On the Native American medicine wheel, the wolf represents intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom. Humans can easily master the intelligence and knowledge components, but wisdom comes from the balance of experience and self-knowledge. Shorten your learning cycle and strengthen your wisdom by gaining knowledge about yourself and others.

Closing Skills or Selling Skills?

Many people say the most important part of the sales process is the close. After years of observing salespeople, sales management, and by training thousands of salespeople, experience indicates it is probably true that strong closers generally do better overall, than those who are weak closers.

Closing a sale is really about helping others make a decision, and closing is a process, and not an event that occurs at the end of a sales presentation. Getting a prospect to verbalize (talk more) will result in more decisions. When people verbalize, they clarify their own thoughts. Closing is as much about asking good questions and listening as it is about asking for the order. Closing is also about implementing the sales process, rather than just making a specific request for action.

If, as a salesperson, we are expecting a decision at the end of a sales call, it is our obligation to inform the customer of our expectations – at the beginning of the call. Asking at the beginning gets better audiences. Successful closing in Sales Mastery™ includes three principles.

First, is the sales process itself. By learning the steps of the sales process, and taking prospects through it, closing percentages will increase. These steps include the development of need qualifying for decision process, criteria, and qualifying for investment of time, resources, budgets, and money. Then make a presentation that focuses on the customer's pain. Reaching agreement at the beginning of the sales cycle best accomplishes this.

Secondly, closing in Sales Mastery™ relies on how people do business together. Mutual Agreement ™ is defined as reaching accord with a prospect on the sales process and the events, required to move through a sales call. In other words, how are we going to work together? Each step should conclude with a decision to move forward. Content, boundaries, interaction, communication, problems, and decisions are all topics that both parties should be clear on at the beginning of every complex sales cycle. The biggest mistake salespeople make in attempting to use the Mutual Agreement™ concept is telling a customer or prospect what their expectations are, what they want them to agree to, and what they are going to do, and then assuming the customer agrees, when they nod their head conveying they heard the words. Both parties have to agree to the steps of the process. There can be Mutual Agreement™ to have an exploratory meeting, a criteria meeting, or to reach a decision.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Please contact us for registration information.

303.462.1277

SALES MASTERY™ CLASSES
Tuesdays, 7:30 AM—9:30 AM

and

SALES MASTERY™ ADVANCED
Mondays, 12:00 PM—2:00 PM

View our calendar at:
www.LeadershipConnections.com

SALES MANAGERS’ WORKSHOP
1:30 PM—5:00 PM

February 14, Territory and Account Management

Plan your work and work your plan is the focus of this workshop. Identify your best customers and prospects and build a plan which creates ’raving fans’ and captures the right new business.

EXECUTIVE BRIEFINGS
8:30 AM—10:30 AM

February 8, Hiring and Retaining Sales Winners

Markets are changing. Necessary skill sets are changing. How can you tell who is the right match for your situation? In sales, surveys say the wrong hire occurs over 68% of the time. The cost in expense alone, before even considering lost business opportunities? A lot, most would agree, by any measure. Nothing is more effective than getting the right person with the right competencies into the right position.
Join us to learn hear the keys to identifying and retaining top talent.

All classes held at Leadership Connections, 2420 W. 26th Ave., Suite 445D Denver, CO

LEADERSHIP CONNECTIONS

Closing Skills or Selling Skills? (Continued)

The third principle is the Power of Choice™. The Power of Choice™ means honoring and giving the prospect the power they already have. That is the power to choose. They are the judge and jury to tell us "yes" or to tell us "no." Prospects have the power to choose what they want, like, and dislike, about our solutions. Prospects know salespeople are looking for a "yes" as evidenced by the common use of leading questions and other common tactics. When denied their natural right to say "no", prospects will instead, stall, object, hide and avoid. Rather than ask leading closing questions let the customer buy using neutral questions. An example of using the Power of Choice™ concept is expressed by the question, **"What happens next?" or "What do you want to do?"** or **"Are you thinking yes or no?"** Notice there are no leading connotations. A neutral, non-leading question allows the prospect to feel empowered by making a decision of their choice. Better a no now, than two months of "think it over."

There are thousands of ways to ask for the sale. We have only given a brief insight to one methodology. It is much easier to reach Mutual Agreement™ with the customer at the beginning of the process or at the beginning of each call or step. By empowering people to make a decision they feel better about you, the product or service and are less defensive and sellers must recognize the think it over as a "no" for the present time.

Along with integrity, sharing what we perceive is happening directly and openly is important. Every sales call, ideally, should end with one of the following things: a decision to end the sales process or a decision to move the sales process forward. Alternatively, a clear understanding of what will happen next in the sales process, along with each party's responsibility. Examples could be a decision, defined next step, or a referral.

Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance.

- Samuel Johnson

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Read Garry's Article:
BREAK OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE TO ACHIEVE BETTER RESULTS
in the January 15th issue of the Denver Business Journal

Don't Do That!

Don't beg the prospect for the appointment. You must be invited in; that's part of the qualification process that identifies real prospects.

Don't confuse sales calls with social calls. Sales calls uncover prospects' pain so that you can relieve it. Socializing masks that pain.

Don't use the competition's game plan. Do they take a certain approach? Then do something else. Differentiate yourself and you differentiate your product and service.

Don't answer questions – clarify. Relax and your customer relaxes, and becomes more comfortable in answering the questions you ask. Then you can discover what they really want.

Don't talk too much – listen more. Product knowledge can inform…or intimidate and confuse. Listen and discover your customers' needs before responding.

Don't assume. Avoid mind reading. Remember that the first problem the prospect mentions is never the real problem. Dig deeper; uncover the real pain and you'll make a real sale.