

Professional Service Providers



Ax the Acronyms

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Let's face it, selling is a communications business.

How well you express your ideas and thoughts to prospects and customers is what ultimately determines success or failure in selling.

If you are, or have been fortunate enough to be a member of a public speaking group, you have learned one of the most vital elements of speaking is to use simple, crisp yet descriptive words that convey your meaning. You also know that your sentence structure, in fact the whole body of your speech should have a beginning, middle and an ending. Equally important is connecting with your audience at their level and to use common phrases and words with which they can relate.

Well making a presentation to a prospect or customer is very similar to giving a superb speech. And just in case you have not figured it out yet, everyone in the business of sales will be called on at some point to give a presentation. And just like a superb speech you must connect with your audience, have a plan (beginning, middle and ending) and transfer meaning from you to them in a coherent and cohesive manner.

What separates good presentations from great ones is the ability to use everyday words to express your ideas no matter whether they are simple or complex ones. Using unfamiliar, uncommon or rarely used words almost always results in a confused prospect. Here's why.

You may believe you are showing knowledge of your product or service by using sophisticated and elegant words, but the truth of the matter is that the prospect may get stuck on that word and fail to follow (hear) the rest of your presentation. Using words that demonstrate your cleverness and command of the language may enhance your ego while at the same time bewilder your prospect.

Here is a classic example. Recently I attended a weeklong seminar for the purpose of building my own business. Laced throughout the material were abbreviations and acronyms that were well known and understood by the seminar leaders, yet every time one was spoken, the entire attendee group had to stop, align their mind to the

acronym and compute its meaning before they were capable of actually hearing what the rest of the message following the acronym was about.

After each session each one of us left grimacing and shaking our head because of the needless confusion this caused. Whenever I got stuck on one of these acronyms not only did I go through the same mental gymnastics as the others, I came to realize a significant gem came right on the heels of the acronym. So naturally those gems were escaping me (and others I'm sure). In every case when this happened I had to ask others 'what'd he say?'

That's the point precisely. Whenever we use complicated words, phrases, language and acronyms known to us, we actually slow down or altogether halt the experience of having our audience, prospect and customer understand our meaning. And transferring our ideas and thoughts is what it's all about – certainly what determines our ultimate success or failure in selling.

So the next time you are tempted to jazz up your presentations, or as some describe it, put a little life in it, remember the following just like a good speaker:

- Connect with your audience
- Create a beginning, middle and ending
- Use simple, easy to understand words that require minimal audience interpretation
- and most importantly of all ax the acronyms.

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