

Professional Service Providers

In Selling - Use Your Senses

By Don McNamara

Sales textbooks are filled with examples of trial and final closes, and if you are a student of the art and science of professional selling you have read many, if not all of them.

However today's buyers have become immune to them. Instead they are strongly focused on products, systems and services that return real value for the commitment of doing business with you. And old style stale selling ways and trite close techniques are fortunately being replaced by new, and greatly improved methods that give the buyer credit for intelligent decision-making.

One of those methods is to make a professional presentation after enough fact-finding establishing the buyers needs, wants and desires. Yet how do you determine if your delivery and message are being well received and you are getting through to your prospect?

The answer? Provide a natural checkpoint in your presentation that lets you find out if your message is being delivered by using three of your five senses, namely see, hear and feel to determine if your prospect and you are tracking in parallel. And using one of those three senses is a sure fire way to monitor how well you have been doing.

Try these the next time you want to intermittently check your presentation progress. If your prospect appears to be visually oriented ask them 'do they see it'? If on the other hand your prospect concentrates on the words, ask them 'how does that sound'? Moreover, if your prospect is outgoing, then you have a wonderful opportunity to ask them "how they feel" about what you said. In the process you have called on the prospect to make an assessment or evaluation. They certainly will be more comfortable with you since you listened for their response, what they had to say and in so doing made them part of the process.

In the new age of selling, the cornering techniques used by past generations of sales people are just not effective anymore. Savvy buyers are more than likely turned off to overused phrases and outdated methods. An improved way to demonstrate your professionalism, sales skill and knowledge of people is to let them assimilate your information and while they are doing that, stop and ask a question or two based on using their senses. You'll find the buyer is more appreciative of your down-to-earth

forthright style, as well as much more prone to give you honest feedback that you need in order to “see”, “feel” and “hear” if your presentation is on track...especially for them.

Post Script – The "Pre" Proposal Proposal

In the last edition of Personal Effectiveness Tips & Bits the topic was the "pre" proposal proposal. John Conkle, an associate and executive with a software firm in the collaboration market sent an email commenting on the topic. For the sake of brevity here are a few of his thoughts. "Having submitted several boatloads of proposals over the years and then seen them stuffed into file drawers, I learned that in most situations a proposal sells nothing...The easiest acid test to determine a real sales opportunity is ask yourself why will this person buy my product or service? If you cannot honestly answer with solid reasons voiced by the buyer, not thought of by you, forget about doing a proposal." To wit I add if the proposal step is **not** the next step in your sales cycle ask one of the following questions of the prospect. "How sophisticated does the proposal need to be"? or "At this point in our discussion how will the proposal be used?" You'll be amazed at the responses and the ton of time and energy asking one of these questions will save you.

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