



Selling the Solution

Maximize Results in Three Steps

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Once we know what a prospect wants and why they want it, we can customize our recommended solution to “hit the nail on the head”. In doing so, we also need to demonstrate how we stand apart from our competition. How present the solution can determine the level of doubt (objections) we must deal with.

Start with a Validation Statement

Articulate and evaluate the gap and use a validation statement to affirm you can fill the gap. For example:

Based on what you have told me, you want 95% on-time delivery with less than a 1.2% defect rate...is that correct? (yes) We at XYZ Company can do that for you. You are probably wondering how. Let's take a closer look...

Use Facts, Not Claims: A fact is a statement of truth about your product or service that can be proven. Examples Include:

- *Our on-time delivery for 2010 was 98.2%*
- *Our defect rate on has averaged less than 1% for the past five years – that is 50% better than industry averages*

An example of a claim would be, “We are the best in the business!”. You may believe this to be so, but the prospect may be skeptical.

Our goal in selling the solution is to reduce our prospect's doubt by increasing our credibility. Keeping these objectives in mind, we should employ facts whenever we can and avoid making claims.

Transition Phrases: Selling is a leadership process. Facts become valuable when we link them to what is important to the prospect. To merge a fact with a benefit, we must use a transition statement. For example:

Our reject rate is .08%, which is 30% better than the industry average. This means that you can have more satisfied customers and help preserve your market share.

Here are some sample transition phrases:

- So that...
- What this means to you...
- The benefit to you is...

Benefits: A benefit concisely shows how the fact relates to the buyer's expressed needs

- *You will have greater assurance of on-time delivery*
- *You will save production time and increase profit margins*
- *You will increase coordination and teamwork and morale*

Use Evidence to Strengthen Credibility

When we are presented objections, we must be prepared to defeat skepticism with convincing evidence. Two questions that commonly go through our prospects' mind are:

1. Who says so besides you?
2. Can you prove it?

Part of our preparation for a good sales presentation should be selecting different types of evidence that will increase the probability of us selling our solution. Top sales performers consistently prepare well for their appointment. In the words of former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, we must "prepare relentlessly". Here are some different types of evidence:

Social Proof: Besides ourselves, who else is pleased with our product or service? Let us never underestimate the power of a testimonial from a satisfied customer. We can reduce skepticism with precise quotes and endorsements from well-known and respected customers. For example:

We worked with Joe Jones from XYZ Corporation. Here is what he said about the quality of our product.

Caution: It is wise to find out if they know Joe Jones and respect his opinion. If we don't affirm this, and he or she does not like Joe, we can end up increasing resistance rather than reducing it. For more on this, refer to Contextual Listening: Filtering

Statistics: This refers to valid and relevant data that strengthens our point. For example:

- *According to last month's article in Harvard Business Review, nearly 90% of*

employees quitting their job do so based on the relationship of their immediate supervisor. Our Coaching Clinic will help enable your team to be problem solvers and improve relationships between management and direct reports

- *For the next ten years, an average of 10,000 baby boomers per day will retire. Taking advantage of this plan now will help you get the jump on a happy retirement.*
- *A survey of computer customers conducted last year found that less than 1% of the customers have replaced their equipment in the last three years.*

The "Tie-Down": In selling, "yes" is a good word, and we want to get as many "yeses" as we can. Responding to an objection gives is a good opportunity to add to our positive and engaging responses.

Cushioning our Response

When presenting the solution, it is common for us to receive objections. If you sell a quality product or service with added value, you have likely heard the common objection, "Your price is too high". When we receive an objection such this, it is important we remain positive and not get on the defensive. We need to cushion our response.

Definition of a Cushion: A cushion is a statement that says, "I've heard what you said. It is important." A cushion also seeks to find an area of common agreement. Here is an example:

Objection: "Your price is too high"

Cushioned Response: “I can understand your concern about your budget. That is good business sense. This may sound unusual for me to say...the concern you have for your budget could be the very reason you would want to take a closer look at what I am suggesting. Here’s the reason I say that... (Evidence, bridges, benefits, tie-downs)

Avoid using “But”, “However” and other words that could arouse a defensive posture. For example, if we added “but” to the above situation, we would have said:

I can understand your concern about your budget, but...

Evidence: Statistics show the over 75% of the time, the reason an employee quits is connected to the quality of the relationship they have with their immediate supervisor. Data also shows that

when a company hired an ICF certified coach to help with teamwork and communication, turnover is reduced by an average of 25% annually.

Tie-Down: This can help with your goal of a higher profit margin. How much would a 25% reduction in turnover mean to you and your profit margin?

Summing it Up: There are three parts

1. Cushioning
2. Present evidence
3. Ask a tie-down question

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