

7 Steps to Powerful Sales Presentations

The quality of your sales presentation will often determine whether a prospect buys from you or one of your competitors. However, experience has taught me that most presentations lack pizzazz and are seldom compelling enough to motivate the other person to make a buying decision. Here are seven strategies that will help you create a presentation that will differentiate you from your competition.

1. Make the presentation relevant to your prospect. One of the most common mistakes people make when discussing their product or service is to use a generic presentation. They say the same thing in every presentation and hope that something in their presentation will appeal to the prospective customer. I have been victim to this approach more times than I care to remember having been subjected to many “canned” PowerPoint presentations.

The discussion of your product or service must be adapted to each person; modify it to include specific points that are unique to that particular customer. If you use PowerPoint, place the company’s logo on your slides and describe how the key slides relate to their situation. Show exactly how your product or service solves their specific problem. This means that it is critical to ask your prospect probing questions before you start talking about your company.

2. Create a connection between your product/service and the prospect. In a presentation to a prospective client, I prepared a sample of the product they would eventually use in their program. After a preliminary discussion, I handed my prospect the item his team would be using on a daily basis – instead of telling him about the item I placed it in his hands. He could then see exactly what the finished product would look like and was able to examine it in detail. He was able to ask questions and see how his team would use it in their environment.

Also, remember to discuss the benefits of your products, not the features. Tell your customer what **they** will get by using your product versus your competitors.

3. Get to the point. Today’s business people are far too busy to listen to long-winded discussions. Know what your key points are and learn how to make them quickly. I remember talking to a sales person who rambled at great length about his product. After viewing his product and learning how much it would cost I was prepared to move ahead with my purchase. Unfortunately, he continued talking and he almost talked himself out of the sale. Make sure you know what key points you want to discuss and practice verbalizing them before you meet with your prospect.

4. Be animated. The majority of sales presentations I have heard have been boring and unimaginative. If you really want to stand out from the crowd make sure you demonstrate enthusiasm and energy. Use voice more effectively and vary your modulation. A common mistake made when people talk about a product with which they are very familiar is to speak in a monotone voice. This causes the other person to

quickly lose interest in your presentation. I recommend using a voice recorder to tape your presentation. This will allow you to hear **exactly** what you sound like as you discuss your product. I must profess to being completely humiliated when I first used this tactic. As a professional speaker, I thought all my presentations were interesting and dynamic – I soon learned that my stand-up delivery skills were much better than my telephone presentation skills.

5. Use showmanship. In the book, *The Sales Advantage*, an example is given how a vending sales person lays a heavy sheet of paper on the floor and asks his prospect, “*If I could show you how that space could make you some money, would you be interested?*” Consider the impact of this approach compared to the typical approach of saying something like, “*We can help you make more money.*” What can you do to incorporate some form of showmanship into your presentation?

6. Use a physical demonstration. A friend of mine sells sales training and he often uses the whiteboard or flipchart in the prospect’s boardroom during his presentation. Instead of telling his client what he will do, he stands up and delivers a short presentation. He writes down facts and figures, draws pictures, and records certain comments and statements from the discussion. This approach never fails to help his prospect make a decision.

7. Lastly, believe in your product/service. Without doubt, this is the most critical component of any presentation. When you discuss solutions, do you become more animated and energetic? Does your voice display excitement? Does your body language exhibit your enthusiasm? If not, you need to change your approach. After all, if you can’t get excited about your product, how can you expect your customer to become motivated enough to buy?

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