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10 Tips For Sales Leaders to Sell Value

As seen in the *American Society of Training & Development Magazine*

1. Define value.

In a world of global competition, the customer defines value. The customer's big want is usually associated with competitive advantage and profitability. What are the features and advantages of a relationship with you and your company's products and services that deliver what the customer wants most?

2. Internalize the benefits to you in selling value.

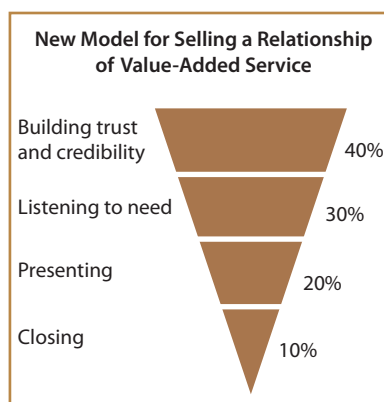
Your customer will pay more for value, their big want, than for a commodity product. This should provide you a much better return on your sale, although it may take longer and require different skills. Think about the alternative, selling a commodity product that is perceived as the same as everyone else's. Here you are often forced to sell on low price, with many competitors, and with very meager commissions. Begin each morning with your bright lights on, thankful that you are selling value!

3. Sharpen your marketing strategies.

How will you position the value you offer? How can you best generate leads and qualify opportunities? And how can you understand your customer's vision and strategies to maximize the value you bring? Finally, how will you provide on-going relationship building communications?

4. Sharpen your sales skills.

It does take different skills, planning and preparation to sell value. Commit to developing the communications skills to sell value (sec #5-9). Then commit to spending more time face-to-face with your best opportunities.



5. Understand the new model of selling.

When selling the features and benefits of a value-added relationship, 40% of your time must first be devoted to building trust and credibility often with a team of decision makers. In addition to your presentation folder with case histories, testimonials and references, you also

build trust and credibility through referrals, product demonstrations, and a top-notch capability presentation.

6. Sell the relationship before the solution.

Where do you begin to tell your story? What an overwhelming task. Beginning with the customer's needs as your focus is a good place to start. Think in terms of several key areas like your company's capabilities and demonstrated commitments that differentiate you. Then to keep it simple focus on three promises that together will differentiate you from your best competitors. Remember that there is always your personal commitment to go the extra mile. Deal



with the price issue up front so there is no sticker shock later. Explain throughout your capabilities presentation that you are not low price and why that is a smart decision on their part. Point to examples of where low price decisions turned out to be very costly. Before you begin fact finding to determine the specific needs of your customer, ask what else they need to know to feel comfortable selecting you.

7. Sharpen your listening skills.

The great sales person has always known the power of questioning. Formulate your 10 best questions to fully understand your customer's big want. Do repeat back to your customer what you think you've heard and ask them what else you need to understand. Don't be upset if they respond with more information than you expected. Remember that you now have information that helps you offer a better quality solution than your competitors'.

8. Sell a solution that includes more than the features and benefits of a product.

Remind your customer of their big hurt or their big want. Describe how your solution will address that. Offer evidence that your solution will work. Remind them of what's in it for them. Position price as an investment implying a return. Remember that you dealt with price in your capabilities presentation. Ask what more they need to know about your solution. Deal with their objections as friends who need more information. This is a relationship for the long-term. Ask what else they need to know about your solution before they would implement it until they say, "nothing else."

9. Know the best close when selling value.

If you've done the job at each stage in the new model of selling, then the best close is "Where do we go from here?" The customer understands the value you bring, sees it as strategic to their business. You have understood totally their situation; you have presented the right solution. When you ask the closing question, you give them control. You trust them and they trust

you. Their response to the question will be the appropriate next step. If it's not to do business, then something was missing ahead of time that is important to discuss before closure.

10. Deliver what you promise.

This is the source of long-term credibility. Delivering more than you promised is the source of delighted customers, repeat business and referrals to others. To do this, the sales person may need to be the customer advocate within the company they represent. Sell, don't tell, is a good motto here, too.

One final tip, know that your customer's business is chaotic. They need forward looking and inspiring partners who help them get to their preferred future first. Let that be you.

Our mission at the Leadership Development practice group of Varnum Consulting LLC, is to enhance the credibility of leaders. Our business is consulting on strategy, coaching for specific upcoming communications and developing skills for strategic face-to-face communications. For more information contact Jennifer Maxson at (616) 336-7058.