



Art of Selling...

By Art Waskey

WHEN THE RIGHT PRODUCT FOR THE THE RIGHT CUSTOMER IS NOT ENOUGH

Recently, I was making a sales presentation with an inexperienced young sales rep shortly after we had launched a new product. We had brought in our sales team and demonstrated a new gas distribution system that would replace high pressure cylinders with an on-site micro-bulk system. It was a fantastic, “easy to sell”, “everyone should have one” ... type of product and the inexperienced sales rep was enthusiastic about selling it.

The rep had done an excellent job of qualifying a competitive account; the prospect had a large quantity of cylinders distributed throughout his large shop; the application appeared to be a perfect situation for our product. The prospect was comfortable with the rep, the relationship seemed fine, but when the rep initiated the presentation, the customer’s attitude turned to ice!

How many times have you demonstrated a product that you just knew everyone would buy yet they didn’t purchase it? If features and benefits can’t stimulate people to buy, what does?

David Sandler, Sandler Sales Institute, succinctly explained decision making several years ago when he stated, “When people make decisions, they are either moving toward pleasure, or away from pain. People make decisions intellectually, but they buy emotional.”

So, HOW can we motivate the prospect to a high level of emotional involvement?

Motivation starts with an understanding of the difference between a product feature, advantage, and benefit. Garry Duncan, Leadership Connections, characterizes the relationship:

- A feature is an **INTRINSIC** characteristic.
- An advantage is **WHY** the sales person thinks the customer should buy.
- A benefit is the **SOLUTION** to an expressed need from the buyer.

Before a product/service is ever purchased, the buyer realizes a need. The buyer acknowledges a problem, understands the consequences of the situation, and envisions a picture of what a solution would bring. The role of the product or service should be confirmation, not arousing or creating initial interest! ***Features and advantages become benefits ONLY when the buyer associates these characteristics with an acknowledged pain or a problem.***

The young rep was trying to **CREATE** arousal based upon his initial excitement for the product features he so easily visualized. The customer failed to appreciate the benefit because his need had not been internally visualized.

Another rep demonstrated the benefits of the improved gas system to that same customer ... and a sale resulted! The difference...the customer visualized the improved system as a solution to his specific problem. The customer later commented that he couldn’t understand **WHY** we didn’t demonstrate the solution a long time ago!

STOP selling the old traditional way! **STOP** attempting to create arousal through features and advantages! **START** building emotional pain for your product. Match the benefit to the pain and watch your sales figures start to grow! □