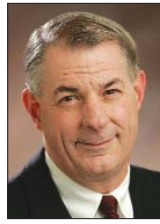


Art of Selling...



By **Art Waskey**

AFTER ALL THAT TIME AND ENERGY ... THIS IS WHAT I GET!

After several days of demonstrating a product that would net the prospective customer substantial savings, a rep complained that he was told he would get the business ... “only if our price was the lowest.” He summarized his frustration, “After all that time and energy ... this is what I get!”

Have you ever quoted prices, effectively demonstrated a product, presented a dynamic proposal, etc. only to find out the competitor got the business? The problem for this rep, and many others, is that “he lost sight of his sales cycle.” Here is a “Sales Sequence” that works.

1. **Build a relationship of trust** — People buy from people they trust. It is critical to build rapport. Experience the world from the customer’s viewpoint and he will let you into his world.
2. **Find the emotional pain(s)** — Help the buyer to understand his/her situation, problems, challenges, and goals. Then, empower them to acknowledge, assess, and alleviate their specific issues.
3. **Ask for a verbal contract** — Reach agreement with a prospect on the sales process, specific events, and steps required to solve the customer’s problems and concerns. Without a (verbal) contract, any effort on your part to move the sales process along can lead to misunderstanding and the eventual loss of the sale.
4. **Confirm that you are working with the decision-maker** — Find out who, what, when, where, why, and how a decision to buy is to be made. You must be certain that the person across the table from you can make final decisions.
5. **Establish that the customer can afford to make the investment** — Confirm the proposal has been funded (budgeted) and communicate to the prospect that the project cost is proportionate to the value of your solution.
6. **Finally, deliver the presentation** — present the solution(s) to the pain(s).

While this cycle may look simplistic, it requires application and ownership. The boundaries of these steps may often be “overlapping”, but they are “active” throughout the sales cycle. One critical point — the presentation, quote, demonstration, or proposal, should **NEVER** happen until after the customer has expressed impacting pain: pain levels exceeding the value of your product. The result of your presentation is the decision-maker has agreed to a contract to buy from you when you resolve his problem. Bottom line ... prospects don’t buy solutions, they buy you!

The rep in this example was up against a competitor with a long-term relationship with the customer. To change suppliers, the decision-maker would have to tell the competitor, his friend, that he had a better deal from us. For a decision-maker to make a major change, the proper strategy is to build a **relationship of trust** ... based on a thorough understanding of the customer’s behavioral style and his environment.

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