



Selling is a Transfer of Trust



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Selling is a transfer of trust and a successful sales cycle is centered on building trust in customer relationships. The manner in which we develop those strong relationships evolves with the changes in the world around us. In my lifetime, the introduction of new technologies has radically changed how one approaches relationship building to succeed in sales.

Telephones and cars

Consider this. I became a salesman in 1972 at a time when the internet was still a research project. My first job title was Sales Engineer. I lived in North Texas and was tasked with calling on independent welding and gas distributors in Dallas, Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, Abilene, Sherman, Austin, and San Antonio. My means of connecting with clients involved many telephone calls (on land lines) and driving just over 20,000 miles

per year in my Ford Custom to meet prospects in person. Selling for success involved following this 5 step sales cycle that was developed by IBM: (1) Open the call with small talk, (2) Investigate the needs, (3) Give your product benefits, (4) Handle objections, and finally, (5) Close the call with an assortment of techniques.

Small talk

Being able to converse with your customers on their terms builds trust. The distributors I called on in the '70s were patient with my formulaic approach. I quickly learned that "small talk" should involve the Dallas Cowboys, Houston Oilers, Texas Rangers, or Houston Astros. Since I was from Baltimore, Maryland, I was considered a Yankee. My clients needed some convincing that Maryland was south of the Mason-Dixon Line! I enjoyed



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making connections with my clientele and was even asked what happened to my Baltimore dialect when I returned home for visits. I was able to develop a deep sense of trust with those Texas distributors. I still remember each of their names, their likes, and dislikes. Their work ethic and customer relationship experiences have been guiding principles in my career.

More avenues of communication

The Internet of Things (IOT) has changed how relationships are formed today. Smart phones and computers have opened up avenues of communication not even imaginable in 1972. You can build relationships via mobile phones, text, email, and video chat. Establishing trust in customer relationships remains the goal and is at the center of the successful sales cycle.

The importance of rapport

To establish trust you need to be seeking the welfare of the other person. To do this, it is important that you develop a rapport with your clients. You need the ability to

enter their world and understand it. Without heartfelt rapport it is difficult to develop trust and influence. People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. If you find your prospect won't engage, they probably have a personal relationship with your competitor and don't want to break that alliance.

Earning trust

Earn your customers trust by listening to their issues. If you are successful in encouraging your customer or prospect to talk about themselves for 20 minutes, they will bond with you. This requires strict adherence to the 80/20 listening rule. That is, the customer talks for no less than 80% of the time: you are actively listening for no more than 20% of the time.

Remember, selling is the transfer of trust and earning that trust is the key to a successful sales cycle.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Selling is the transfer of trust
2. A successful sales cycle is centered on building trust in customer relationships
3. Being able to converse with your customers on their terms builds trust
4. The Internet of Things (IOT) has changed how relationships are formed today
5. Earn your customers' trust by active listening to their issues