

ENTERPRISE

From the September 23, 2005 print edition

Sales solutions

Get the sale

Show results from buying your product

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Question: I've been in sales a long time and sometimes struggle with "asking for the order." What suggestions do you have to ask for the sale and get the business?

Answer: This week's edition of Sales Solutions is the second part of the answer provided in the Sept. 9 edition.

To summarize where we left off, successful sales is not necessarily a question of asking for the order, but rather a process that requires careful strategic planning as well as a succinct tactical approach.

In part one of this answer I discussed "the purpose of a meeting is to get another meeting" and to always be thinking of the next step in the sales process, rather than the question of asking for the sale.

I also mentioned getting a commitment from your prospects that when you follow up, they will respond to you and tell you "no" early in the process, if they have decided on another solution.

The other important steps in the successful sales process involve sharing positive results your solution has produced for other customers, both anecdotal and statistical, as well as creating a profit center and a sense of urgency.

First, sharing positive results your solution has created for other customers is absolutely key in building confidence with your prospect that you can actually deliver on what you promise. Prospects are more savvy than ever these days and care less about features and benefits, and more about results. "Prove it" is often what your prospects are thinking when you're selling them on your solution.

Anecdotal results are those that come in the form of a testimonial from your existing customers. Often you may receive an e-mail thanking you for a job well done. With your customer's permission, this type of proof of results is very effective in convincing your prospect that you know what you're doing.

Statistical results are those that speak to the numbers, such as percentages and dollar amounts. For example, if you are able to show your prospect that you've made an existing customer's operating expenses decrease by 20 percent based on the use of your solution, that

is a statistical result. Or, if you can prove you've saved your customer \$5,000 in a year by using your solution, that is also a statistical result.

The combination of showing both anecdotal and statistical results that your solution has created for other customers is a very compelling way of moving your prospect through the sales process.

Next, proving your solution does not just show a return-on-investment, or ROI, but actually creates a profit center for your prospect, is also a persuasive reason for your prospect to continue to work with you through the sales process to the eventual close of the sale.

For example, if by implementing the solution you provide your customer will invest \$10,000 but actually save \$15,000 in other operating costs within six months, you can show not just an ROI of six months, but an actual profit (or savings) of \$5,000. (Savings can also be viewed as profit since it ultimately affects the bottom line, which is probably the thing your prospect cares about most.)

Finally, creating a sense of urgency will help move the sale along through the process as well. Creating a sense of urgency requires your solution to be so compelling that it doesn't make sense for your prospect to go another day without it. A sense of urgency is created by emphasizing the pain your prospects are experiencing by not having your solution and showing that by comparison, your solution will help solve their pain.

Now all you have to do is show that the sooner your solution is implemented, the sooner their pain will go away, and the next logical step in the sales process will be the sale.

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