

The Perfect Sales Call

The sales call is the building block of the sales relationship. Everything that moves a sale along comes through your personal contact with customers. (This includes telephone sales calls, too). Remember that a perfect sales call is a professional sales call which means it contains the following elements:

- Definite day
- Definite time
- Definite person/people
- Sales purpose
- Agreed to in advance by the customer

All battles (and sporting events) are won or lost in preparation. The same is true in sales. A great many sales calls are lost because the salesperson was unprepared (or did not allow the customer to prepare) for the sales call.

Effective call preparation has the following elements:

- Review of account profile
- Definition of value proposition
- Confirming the appointment
- Having what you need

Review of account profile. Before you make a call, you should always take a minute or two to review what you know about the customer. Too many actions in life are done on auto-pilot. You want to make each sales call a thoughtful, well-prepared experience because they are so VALUABLE. What is important to the customer? What else do you need to know to sell them more effectively?

Definition of value proposition -There are really two value props here—Why should the customer give you their time? And Why should they buy the specific product/service that you are selling? To be effective, begin with these two ideas fixed clearly in your mind—and make sure that you have some plan to help the customer understand them, as well.

Confirming the appointment - One of the simple tricks that should be used before every key sales appointment is a simple confirmation of the appointment with the customer. The day before every sales call (or maybe two days before), send the customer an e-mail (fax, letter, smoke signal, clay tablet) confirming the appointment and listing the agenda items that you have (already) agreed to cover. You will be pleasantly surprised at what this does to the customer's perception of your value and your hit rate on sales calls.

Having what you need - Before you leave or pick up the phone, take one minute to think about what might be needed on the call. What additional information might they need?

What objections might they have and what do you need to respond to them? Your humble servant once lost an order because he did not bring a pen with him on call. The customer figured that a sales guy without a pen did not expect to get an order so he obliged by not giving me one.

Perfect sales calls result when you develop a process and follow it. Try to include these habits in your preparation.

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