Progressions Inc.
Sales Training & Consulting

Smart Strategies for Selling Success

When representatives push the product of the month, they're simply hoping and guessing what people need. Successful salespeople know that selling isn't a "one size fits all" business. People have different needs and preferences.

To excel at sales, you have to ask yourself… How can I help that person? What products or services will benefit him or her? How can I improve this person's life?

Effective interviewing skills help representatives tailor fit products and build relationships. An effective interview is where you find out exactly what the client needs and wants. You get to know the person and how you can help them. What is most important to the client? What is that person's personal buying motive?

The Magic Moment

Avoid "spray-and-pray." This is where you just start talking and hope something is a fit. Too often when representatives see a sales opportunity, they get excited and start blurting out product info.

EXAMPLE: A client says "I'd like some information on your product." The employee does a spiel on all the different plans and features. The representative fails to find our just how the client plans to use the product or why they are interested.

If you jump the gun and start talking about your product or service too soon, you've essentially spilled your candy. You miss the opportunity to connect with the client. Effective salespeople consult with clients. They use interviewing skills to probe and then tailor fit needs.

An interview is the magic moment. It shows you care about the person. Finding out exactly what is important to the client demonstrates professionalism. You give the person exactly what he or she needs – not just all the info you have at your disposal.

Anytime you pitch a product, clients want to know What's in it for me? An effective interview provides this information. It helps you identify what the client is seeking. Meeting those needs ultimately drives sales and satisfaction.

Smart Strategies

Focus on the client. Give the person your undivided attention.

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Have a client-friendly attitude. Put the client at ease. Be friendly, polite, and patient. Take a sincere interest in the client. Use positive body language. Make eye contact. People open up more when you're friendly.

Personalize your approach. Create an environment that fits the client.

EXAMPLES:_…How much time does the person have available?_…Does the person appear to enjoy chitchat or is he or she "all business"?

Encourage a two-way conversation. Don't do a spiel. An effective interview is an even dialogue exchange between the client and the representative.

Don't put words in clients' mouths. Ask – don't tell people what they need or want. Questions become one of your most powerful tools in developing a relationship and properly servicing the client...

Ask open-ended questions. Closed probes stifle rapport and make the client feel like he or she is being interrogated. Guide people to providing expansive responses instead of one-word answers. You'll discover more about their needs and wants. Asking open-ended questions also gives you clues for cross selling.

Discover what's important to the client. If you haven't asked three questions of personal interest about the client, you're not ready to present your product. Try these examples:

• "Tell me a little bit about yourself? "_• "What bought you in today?"_• "What is most important to you?"_• "Do you have upcoming plans where we might be able to assist you?"_• "If you had a wish list for__________, what would be on it?"

Listen carefully. The best questions in the world are lost if you don't listen. Pay attention to the client's words and body language.

Take notes. Ask the client "Do you mind if I take a few notes? I would like to serve you better. And the notes will help me follow up with you."

Avoid jargon. Use simple, easy to understand language

Keep your desk neat. It emphasizes your professionalism. You can take better notes and find information you need. Plus clients are more confident you won't lose any data they provide.

Follow-Up Is Essential

When you finish an interview, ask your client "How would you like to be contacted?"Clients are impressed. They think "Wow, this is a different kind of company. These people really care about me."

Keep a page of information about each of your clients in a binder or on the computer. Examples are personal interests, background, accounts they have with you and other institutions, etc. "Follow-up separates the amateurs from the professionals. And a

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profiling form helps you with follow-up.

Send a hand-written personal "thank you" card when a client opens an account.

Phone the client somewhere between 5 and 10 days after an account is opened. Find out if the person has any questions, problems, or additional needs.

Contact the client 3 to 4 times a calendar year. Thank the person for his or her relationship. Ask if he or she has any questions or problems. Offer to send any new product information.

Never make a sale just for today…build a lifetime relationship. Competition is tougher than ever. Just a few simple steps can set you and your company apart from the rest. Strive to create interactions, not transactions.

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