

Selling Your Professional Services *as a “Non-Professional Salesperson”*

Second Edition

Helping Professionals Help Their Clients™
A TRI Publication

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Forward

If you have this book in hand, we can assume one of two things. Either you are a professional looking to increase business, or you are considering learning how a professional gets business from scratch. In both situations, this guide will come in handy.



Whether you realize it or not, you are a salesperson. You have spent endless nights trying to sway your spouse to eat where you want or see the movie you want to see. Maybe you spend time trying to get your child to take out the trash, or have you found yourself in a situation where you need to convince a checkout clerk at the supermarket that the coupon you are using does in fact apply to the paper towels you placed on the belt.

In each of these scenarios you are selling (albeit, maybe not well). Based upon statistics, only a few of you work for large companies that have sales departments assigned with the task of bringing in new business. For the others, business development relies on the professionals in the firm to garner new clients.

Often it is one person or a few people (“Rainmakers”) that generate new business for the company. If you run a small company or operate as a sole practitioner, being a Rainmaker may be a scary proposition. If you are an employee of a company that needs new clients, you can add a great deal of value by bringing in new business.

If you are reading this book, you are most likely not a salesperson by profession. If you want to practice this seemingly “mystical” task, it is important that you understand the basics of selling. Once you gain an understanding of the basics, it will be easier to navigate the sales process.

As a professional trying to balance business development with providing quality services, the time you have available to sharpen sales skills will be limited. The purpose of this book is to provide several succinct tips that give you an edge over other professionals that do not understand the sales process.

To offer the most value to professionals with limited time, this guide is formatted to provide stand-alone tips which are broken down by category. You will see that each tip indicates either what “to do” or just as important, what “not to do” throughout the sales process. You may find that some tips come up more than once. This is not by accident. We understand that selling as service professionals may be secondary to your primary career functions and therefore want to ensure that useful information is easily accessible throughout the entire book.

The words “prospective client”, “prospect”, “caller”, “potential client”, “consumer” and “person” are used interchangeably throughout this book. Note that even though “caller” may be used in certain circumstances, it does not mean that the technique would not apply to a live meeting as well as a telephone call. In other cases, we will give specific examples that

apply to either a phone call or live meeting. In these situations, we will make the distinction.

The information included in this book comes from a variety of sources including other sales books, sales seminars, sales articles, sales programs and 30-plus years of selling professional services by the authors.

Most sales courses are geared toward people that choose to sell as their primary profession. This book, however, is geared toward the person that provides professional services and needs to sell in order to increase business.

Our goal in creating this book is to provide you with a comprehensive guide that is both easy to follow and full of useful information that can be accessed without having to memorize the entire book.

This guide is divided into five chapters categorized by either sales principles or by where the items exist in the sales process. A quick reference guide is included as well. A glossary of sales terms is at the end of the book. The topics covered in this book are alphabetized in each chapter. This may not match the sequential order of when an item occurs in the sales process. We felt this would be the easiest to find what you are looking for.

Do not be afraid to access the table of contents at the beginning of the book on a regular basis. The table not only includes chapter titles but also includes sub-headings to ensure you can find everything you are looking for in an easy-to-use and concise manner.

We suggest you first read this book in its entirety. After that, keep it handy to use as a reference guide. Be sure to highlight the tips that resonate most with you. Remember there is a large amount of useful information offered in this book and you should not expect to implement all of the items covered here in your sales process.

With the guidance offered in this book along with a little a little practice you will learn to...

- **Increase your business activity without making your prospective clients uncomfortable**
- **Sell in a manner in which you are comfortable from start to finish**

Chapter 1

Sales Principles

To become an accomplished salesperson, you must understand how the consumer thinks. As a consumer having purchased goods all of your life, you would think selling would come naturally to everyone. As ninety-nine percent of us have come to understand, nothing could be further from the truth.

Consumers tend to make purchases with their guard up. We believe this relates to the negative perception that salespeople have come to garner. In industries such as automobiles and furniture, salespeople have reputations of lying to their customers. Because of this, people interested in buying these types of products go into a buying situation with a negative attitude.

In order to make the buying experience a pleasant one for both the purchaser and the salesperson, you must understand how people think and what motivates them to make a purchase.

In this chapter you will learn some basic principles as they relate to a sale and to the sales process. In the following chapters of this book we will go into detail as to how the process works.

Begin Each Sale with an Understanding of How Long it Will Take¹

When you begin a sales process, make sure to briefly cover the points you want to cover at the beginning of the conversation. One of the items that should be covered involves providing a clear understanding as to the amount of time that will be necessary to complete the entire sales call. By being prepared, you are sending a clear message to your prospect that your time is just as valuable as theirs. You are also informing them that you intend to have a meaningful and pointed discussion within the time allotted.

This demonstrates that you respect the prospective client's time. If they indicate that their time is short, reschedule the call or even better, a subsequent meeting for a later time. The initial interaction is a good time to gauge if your client is seriously seeking your services or just shopping around.



Steer the Caller Through the Sales Cycleⁱⁱ

In order to be an effective salesperson, you should be listening to your prospective client 70 percent of the time. When you have the opportunity to speak, you want to use your words wisely. In the optimal situation, you will turn the conversation so the prospective client is selling themselves.

To accomplish this turn, you need to guide them along your predetermined path. Be sure to ask transition questions. This keeps the conversation moving in the direction you want. According to sales guru David Sandlerⁱⁱⁱ, you should begin the sales process by bonding with the prospect in order to build rapport (see Quick Reference Guide).

This can be accomplished using various techniques including matching and mirroring a caller's vocal tone, adjusting the pace at which you speak to emulate the caller, sharing the caller's level of energy and using words that replicate the caller's vocabulary (see Quick Reference Guide).

You may also consider displaying empathy when it is appropriate. By doing so, you keep the caller on your sales track. If you have something in common with the caller, be sure to express it to them. You want to also be sure that they do not perceive you as "being in a better place" than they are. No matter how dire they indicate their situation is, you should try and empathize and not compare yourself to them.

Build a Network^{iv}

Even though this topic does not naturally fall directly within the "sales" category, it is still worth mentioning. We ourselves have been successful in building our network and increasing our client base. We accomplished this by participating various types of business networking groups. We recommend joining a larger group of professionals, even if the group includes other professionals that practice the same work you do. Most professionals specialize in more than one area. This being the case, many professionals are nervous to interact with their competition.



If on the other hand, you interact directly with your competition, you learn what they are doing. It makes more sense to interact with hundreds of professionals who can refer you business openly, than to interact with 30 or so professionals who are restricted to referring business to you along with a select number of other home group members.

If you become a trusted resource to hundreds of professionals, you may be able to mitigate the need to market your services.

Don't become an Unpaid "Consultant"

Following this 'mantra' is one of the most valuable things you can practice in the sales process. In addition to discussing this topic here in this chapter, this principle is discussed throughout the book. YOU SHOULD NOT spend the limited time you have educating your

clients. Not only is this an ineffective way to sell, but it actually moves you backwards in the sales process.

Your job as a salesperson is to find what motivates your prospective client to buy then capitalize on it.

Your job as a service professional is to use your education and experience to help your client meet their goals. Notice that nowhere in either process is it your job to tell your prospective client and subsequently your client how you do your job.

Professionals are hired based upon their expertise. Their education and experience allow them to offer expert service without their client having to worry about the process in which the work is done.

When you educate a prospective client, you may actually be adding unnecessary stress or alternatively, making them feel better so they prolong hiring you.

Don't Present ALL of the Information Up-Front^v

It is important to understand that your purpose of having a sales call is not to educate your prospective client. It is never a good idea to present all of the information you have at your disposal in your initial call or meeting. As a matter of fact, there is no reason to explain your process at all.

Remember you are speaking with someone that has yet to hire you. If you offer too much up front, you may be shooting yourself in the foot by allowing the caller to ease their “pain” before they pay you.