

Stephan/Cohen

Selling your Professional Services

as a “Non-Professional”
Salesperson



FIRST EDITION

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

First Edition

Helping Professionals Help Their Clients™
A TRI Publication

**Peter Stephan
Matthew Cohen**

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It is actually a combination of his business education along with the experience he gained owning businesses that allowed Peter to refine his sales and marketing skills. These skills combined with his expertise in his field have allowed Peter to build one of the most successful tax resolution firms in the United States.

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Prior to going out on his own, Matthew worked with his father Michael Cohen for several years running a successful services business. Matthew attributes his achievements in sales to his father who successfully practiced sales for the better part of his work life.

About TRI:

TRI is a full service tax and accounting firm that specializes in resolving client's tax concerns if they have issues with the Federal (IRS) or State taxing agencies. In addition to practicing, TRI teaches other professionals not only how to perform this type of work but also how to market and sell their professional services. Based upon 30+ years of experience, TRI has developed marketing and sales strategies to enlist new clients nationwide. TRI provides instruction and instruction materials to professionals throughout the United States.

If you have any questions, comments or require assistance with any issue, please contact TRI by calling us at **(877) 829-8370** or emailing us at:

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Be sure to include your telephone number as well as your email address so that we may respond to our questions in a timely manner.

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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 becoming a professional that wants to learn how to get business from scratch. In either case this guide will come in handy.

Whether you realize it or not, you are a salesperson. To illustrate, maybe you have spent endless nights trying to sway your spouse to eat where you want to eat or see the movie you want to see.



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Maybe you spend each week trying to get your child to take out the trash, or maybe you find yourself in a situation where you need to convince the young checker at the supermarket that the coupon you are using applies to the paper towels you placed on

the belt. In each of these cases you are selling (albeit, maybe not well).

Based upon statistics, no more than a few of you work for large companies that have sales departments assigned the task of bringing in new business. For everyone else, 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 on the other hand, you are an employee of the company you work for, you can add a great deal of value by bringing in new business.

Although you are most likely not a salesperson by profession, if you want to practice this sometimes “mystical” task in any manner whatsoever, it is important to understand the basics that apply to selling. Once you gain an understanding of the basics, you will find it much easier to navigate the sales process.

We understand that 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 in a manner that provides 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 and therefore want to ensure that useful information is easily accessible throughout the entire book.

You will notice the words “prospective client”, “prospect”, “caller”, “potential client”, “consumer” and “person” used interchangeably throughout this book. Note that even though “caller” may be used in certain circumstances, it does not mean that the same principal would not apply to a live meeting. 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 guide comes from a variety of sources including sales books, sales seminars, sales articles, sales programs and 30+ 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 that needs to sell or at least wants to sell in order to increase business.

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

This guide is divided into 5 chapters categorized by either sales principles or by where items exist in the sales process. In addition, we included a quick reference guide and glossary of sales terms at the end of the book to be used whenever you need additional support. Within each chapter you will see that the topics appear in alphabetical order. This may not match the sequential order of when each item occurs in the sales process, but we felt this would make it easier to find what you are looking for. Feel free to use 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 read this book in its entirety once and use it as a reference guide on an on-going basis. Be sure to mark the tips that resonate with you most. Remember there is a lot of useful information offered inside and we do not expect anyone to implement all of these items in their sales process. With the knowledge provided in this book along with some practice, you will find you can (1) increase business without making your prospective clients uncomfortable and more importantly, (2) sell in a manner in which you are comfortable from start to finish.

Chapter 1:
Sales Principles

In order to become an accomplished salesperson, you must understand how the consumer thinks. Since each of you purchases items throughout your life, it seems like a “no brainer”. If so, why does it seem so difficult for some to sell to their prospective clients?

We believe this relates to the negative perception many have with regard to salespeople. In industries such as automobiles and furniture, sales representatives have reputations of lying to their customers. Because of this, people interested in buying these types of products go into a buying situation with their guard up.

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

In this section you will learn some basic principles as they relate to sales and the sales process. In the following chapters of this book you will learn in more detail how the process works.

Begin Each Call with an Understanding of How Long it Will Takeⁱ

When you begin a sales call make sure to discuss up front the points you want to cover. One of these points involves having a clear



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and pointed discussion within the time allotted.

understanding of the amount of time the call is going to take. By doing so, 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

In addition to accomplishing these things, you are demonstrating that you respect the prospective client's time. If they indicate that their time is short, schedule the call or even better, a subsequent meeting for a later time. This is a good way to gauge if they are seriously seeking your services or just shopping around.

Steer the Caller Down the Sales Cycleⁱⁱ

As a salesperson you should be listening to your prospective client 70% of the time. When you have the opportunity to speak, you want to use your words wisely. In theory, you should have the prospective client selling themselves.

To accomplish this, you need to guide them along the path you set. Be sure to ask transition questions to keep the conversation moving in the direction you want. According to sales guru David Sandlerⁱⁱⁱ, you should begin the sales process by bonding and having rapport with the caller (see Quick Reference Guide).

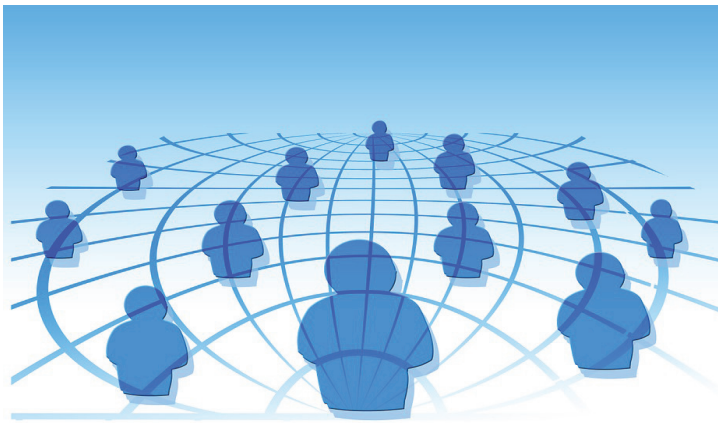
This can be accomplished using various techniques including matching & mirroring a caller's tonality, speaking at the same pace as the caller, sharing the caller's energy level and using the caller's same vocabulary (see Quick Reference Guide).

One may consider displaying empathy when it is appropriate in order to keep the caller on track. If you have points in common with the caller, be sure to express them. You want to also be sure that you do not take comfort in "being in a better place" than the caller. No matter how dire they indicate their situation is, you should try and empathize and not compare yourself to them if you are in a better place.

Build a Network^{iv}

Although this topic does not fall directly under the "sales" category, it is worth mentioning. We have been successful in building our network and increasing our client base by involving ourselves in various 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.

Typically, professionals specialize in different areas which means you may not be stepping on each other's toes; regardless of



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whether you are in the same industry or not. Even if you interact directly with your competition in this scenario, it still makes better sense to interact with hundreds of professionals that can refer you business openly, rather than say 30 professionals who are restricted to refer

business to a select number of home group members. If you become a trusted resource to hundreds of professionals, you may be able to eliminate the need to otherwise market your services.

Don't be an Unpaid "Consultant"

In addition to discussing this topic in this specific section, this principle is discussed again throughout the book. We cannot stress enough that you should not spend the limited time you have to educate your clients. Not only is this an ineffective way to sell, it actually moves you backwards in the sales process.

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

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

People hire professionals because their education and experience allow them to offer services to meet the client's goals without having to worry about how 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 You Have Up Front

Again, it is important to understand that the purpose of 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. 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 meeting the caller's need to ease their "pain" before they pay you.

In order for a professional to reach success in their practice, they must know their product/service in intimate detail. In order for a salesperson to reach



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success, they should have a grasp of some detail about the product/service they are selling but more importantly, they must know what and what not to share with the prospect. In your case you may be filling both roles so you need to be

careful to "play" the role of the salesperson and not the expert when you are selling.

It may seem counter-intuitive but "knowing" too much will work against you in a sales call.

Don't Sell Your "Product/Service"

In the past, sales pitches were conducted by discussing the features and benefits of what product or service the salesperson was selling. Once the "pitch" was complete, the salesperson would field objections which often delayed the closing the sale by the purchaser. After fielding objections, the salesperson would do their best to overcome the prospect's concerns.

By selling the old fashioned way, a salesperson provides no level of comfort to their intended audience. It is important to understand that the prospective client contacted you to fulfill a need that you are able to fulfill, but most likely do not know you from "Adam".

Providing them with a "dog and pony" show about what you have to offer will not gain their trust and will make them feel uncomfortable. Attempting to overcome their objections may backfire in that you may come across as pushy or self-serving not to mention that when they make objections, they will be putting you on the spot. In lieu of selling what you "do", sell your expertise (see "Sell Your Brand").

Don't Teach the Prospect Your Step-by-Step Process

The most common mistake professionals acting as salespeople make is to share with the prospective client exactly how they will solve their client's problem. We are not referring to solving a problem in the "general sense" here. Instead we mean providing a literal step-by-step, blow-by-blow explanation of everything you will do to make the caller's pain go away.

This format may be helpful in the long run if you are in the business of training others how to do the work you do. But even if this is the case, a sales call is not the time to do it. The reason most professionals acting as salespeople fall into this trap is that that they feel most comfortable demonstrating their knowledge of their profession, and think it will help them close the sale. This type of selling does not work.

Again, this is what is referred to as selling features and benefits. This process involves "educating" a prospective client on what positive differences the product or service being sold has over one's competitors. This type of selling not only takes way more time, but it tends to work on only a small portion of consumers. Instead, an informed salesperson will focus on learning as much as they can about

their caller's needs ("pain") by asking the right questions so that they may understand what they should offer to ease their soon-to-be client's pain.

You will be amazed by how many salespeople end an initial sales call feeling great about their presentation because they did a phenomenal job demonstrating to the prospective client, the benefits of what they have to offer; only to find out that they ended up losing the sale. If you ask them why the client did not "bite", they have no idea. You will never be able to determine how your product or service will fit your client's needs if you do not first figure out what those needs are. REMEMBER TO LISTEN 70% OF THE TIME YOU ARE SELLING.

Goals...We All Have Them^{vi}



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Acting as a salesperson, the need to set sales goals is par for the course. If you sell professionally and you have a sales manager, he or she will assign you goals based upon company standards, or goals that were previously

assigned to them when they were selling at your level. It is a simple fact of life that most everyone sets goals in order to attain results they hope to reach.

If you have tried selling before, you may have already experienced what we are about to discuss. If not, you should be prepared to see this happen if you plan to sell. Say that you set a goal

at the beginning of the month, quarter or year depending on how much time you spend selling. You work very hard and come to the halfway point in your sales cycle only to discover that you are not on track to reach your goal.

You begin to panic and push twice as hard to make up for your perceived under-performance.

You come to the last part of the cycle only to realize that you end up barely missing your goal. How disappointed does this make you feel? More so if your livelihood depends on sowing what you reap. You will also feel disappointed if you earn commissions based upon on sales numbers. In either case you will not feel good.

Two lessons can be learned from this example. First, you need to set realistic expectations relating to your sales activity. For example, if historically speaking it takes 10 calls to land 1 meeting; and 3 meetings to land 1 sale, how many calls to you need to field to reach your goal...say 10 sales? In this case you would need to field 300 calls and depending on the time span of your sales cycle as well as your marketing efforts, 300 calls may not come in.

Next you need to set goals that are activity based and not result based. Results can change easily due to reasons outside your control. Setting goals that are unreachable or that can be reached too easily can be counter-productive. If you set goals that are realistic and productivity based, you can properly manage yourself and possibly a sales team when applicable.

Humble Equals "Honest"

The novice salesperson assumes that their prospective client wants them to be "perfect" and know everything. This is far from the



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truth. Remember, someone seeking your help is looking to hire someone they can trust. If you indicate you are able to do everything perfectly and display complete confidence, you will actually scare off your caller and

most likely lose the sale.

You are much better off mirroring your prospect^{vii}. If they are humble, you should be too. If they ask you a question relating to what you do, hesitate before you provide an answer. When asked a specific work related question, do not be afraid to say something like "I'm not sure...I have done similar work but your situation is a little different" or "...let me get back to you on that...I would have to do some research before I answer that question".

Responding with these types of answers helps you in two ways. First, these types of responses keep you from having to offer no-cost consultations which take time and lower your chance of closing a deal. Second, they show the caller that you are human and humans like buying from humans, not "perfect" robots.

Feel Satisfied "Disqualifying" a Prospect^{viii}

Much of a salesperson's time is spent interacting with a prospect discussing topics that either make no positive difference in closing the sale or even worse, have a negative effect. If you are not careful, you will waste hours of time selling to prospects that never had any intention of buying from you (and probably no one else for that matter).

Learning how to quickly prequalify and if necessary disqualify prospects will make your job of selling much easier and more fruitful. By using these skills, you will save precious time that you can spend practicing your profession. This will also give you more time to spend selling to qualified individuals actually seeking your services.

An inexperienced salesperson typically has no idea how to prequalify a prospect. With a little practice you can "disqualify" the riff-raff. Nothing feels better than getting an unqualified lead off the phone in a short period of time. Be on the lookout for indications that your lead is either not qualified or not serious. Some examples of unqualified prospects include someone that is not the decision-maker and someone that does not have the time necessary to finish the sales process. Be sure the caller will tell you "yes" or "no" at the end of your conversation and not "maybe". Be sure the caller can afford to pay for your services. Following these steps will save you hours of lost time and unnecessary frustration.

Learn how to Overcome the Most Common Objections^{ix}

If you are going to practice selling, you should expect to receive rejection and more importantly, be okay with it. This comes with the territory and therefore should be anticipated. As you become more experienced, you will learn how to better cope with the rejection and make every "no" you receive a learning experience.

After each failed attempt you should ask yourself "did my process lead to the rejection or did I not properly prequalify the prospect?" The correct answer should always fall into one of these two categories. As you get better at answering these questions, you will learn to appreciate the ability you have to determine whether or not someone is a realistic prospect or not. Once you get to this level you will not mind losing a sale. Remember...a "no" is always preferred to a "maybe" or a "let me think about it" which are both unacceptable responses at the end of a sales call.

You should not be left guessing where you stand with a prospective client at the end of a call or meeting. This just leads to more wasted time and shows that you did not complete the qualification or sales process correctly.

Listen Before Talking^x

Salespeople often make the mistake of trying to dominate the sales process by talking more than they listen. They are excited to share their "knowledge" that they do not take the time necessary to determine what the prospective client is actually looking for.

Some salespeople tend to talk as a defensive action. Especially when they feel there is a lull in the conversation. This is a natural thing to do but not wise. To compensate for this knee-jerk reaction, use the transition questions (see Quick Reference Guide) in this book to keep the prospect and the sales process moving in the direction you want.

Make Sure the Client Knows the Objective of the Call^{xi}

During the initial portion of your sales call or meeting, you want to make sure you state YOUR objective and not let the caller state theirs. This is important because by laying out your expectations you take the pressure off of both you and the prospect.

For instance, if during the sales meeting you correctly implement the sales process by (1) learning as much as you can about your prospect and (2) understanding that you will not be selling your product or service, you should be able to set up the conversation and guide it down the line in a smooth fashion. You will find that the client will be speaking 70% of the time and offering valuable information in a concise manner so that you minimize the time necessary to complete the process and ultimately allow you to close the sale.

You should also indicate up front that you expect to come away with a decision by the end of the call or meeting. It may seem uncomfortable at first to let the caller know this, but it is always beneficial to both you and the prospect to be direct and let them know (politely) when they are straying from the path you have set.

You will find it beneficial to reference prior meetings and conversations with the caller if you get the opportunity. This shows the prospective client that you remember them from before and that you will in turn pay attention to their needs moving forward. By doing so you create additional trust and a prospective client will buy from someone they trust.

Measure Success Based upon Client Action...Regardless of the Outcome^{xii}

Aside from a sales call ending with a close, how do you know whether a sales call was successful? To gauge this accurately, you need to know how the prospective client proceeded after your call ends. This in most cases is impossible to determine.

The top salespeople end their sales calls knowing whether they did their job well or not. Even if they did not close the sale. If your prospect did not have the intention of buying your service, you cannot gauge the success of your call based upon a close. Rather you should measure how quickly you were able to disengage yourself from the conversation. To be good at sales you need to constantly self-reflect in order to determine if you followed the process correctly.



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If you did, you should be satisfied knowing it was not you that lost a sale that was never to be. Knowing that achieving success need not be based upon money coming in the door is reassuring. This confidence will carry you far.

Low Price, Quality and Service...Pick Two

Looking at things from the viewpoint of the consumer, when seeking a product or service you would like to obtain all of the above mentioned items...at least on the surface. That is

1. You want to purchase a product or service at a low cost,
2. you want the product or service you are purchasing to be built or provided at an acceptable standard of workmanship, and
3. you want the product or service you are purchasing to be delivered by someone professional and done so in a timely manner.

If you run a business, you are fully aware that #2 and #3 cost money. To sustain a viable business, you need to increase #1 in order to meet the client's expectations relating to #2 and #3.

If your business activity includes selling, you are always better off charging your prospective client more if doing so means providing a higher level of service in a professional and timely manner. If you sell using the techniques offered in this book, you will overcome the concern of having a prospect object to a higher price. Price becomes insignificant when the amount being paid provides equitable value.

Put the Prospects Needs First

The "kill or be killed" mantra need not be followed in order to perform sales. If you want to be successful as a salesperson, do not just think about what YOU yourself have to gain from selling. Make sure you are conscious about providing value to your prospect every step of the way.

We mention several times throughout this book that you should not waste time with callers that provide no value to you. You should think this way in reverse when considering the needs of a qualified lead.

If you pay attention to what your prospective client's needs are, and you are able to show that you can provide a solution to ease their "pain", you will not only create a business alliance, but will also create a trustworthy ally committed to you.

Sell "Your" Brand

When engaging a prospective client, you need to determine what motivated them to call you. Maybe you are a certified public



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accountant, lawyer, enrolled agent, wealth advisor, insurance agent, realtor or one of the many other professionals that provide services to your clients. Maybe you are great at what you do on a professional level.

Assuming this is true, it is important to remember that there are thousands if not tens of thousands of professionals that do your job at least adequately in the location where you conduct your business.

So you probably ask yourself, why did the caller contact you? Instead of focusing on “why” they called you, figure out how you can distinguish yourself and not your services from the others.

The key here is "you" can distinguish yourself rather than what you do or how you do it. This tip may seem broad in scope, but it is just as important to keep in mind as some of the more specific tips when engaging a potential client.

Set the Expectation of the Meeting/Call Up Front^{xiii}

Assume you are going to be receiving a call from someone with whom you have had prior contact at least one time before. Prior to the upcoming call, you should set parameters as to what will be discussed.



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You should agree on a specific day and time to speak. You want to request permission to ask questions of a personal nature.

In addition, you want to ask the caller to agree to say “NO” if you are not the right fit; and then ask them to agree to say “YES” and allow you to move forward with your representation if you are a good fit. Let them know that it is not acceptable at the end of the call for you to hear

"let me think about" it or some version of that.

Be clear and make sure these points are understood. In addition, ask if anyone else needs to be on the call in order to come to a decision (the “decision-maker”) about hiring you. You can accomplish this by asking something simple like "who besides yourself, who will be involved in the decision making process?"

Slow Down...Don't be Over Enthusiastic^{xiv}

Once a salesperson acquires the sufficient amount of knowledge and experience to understand how their company performs its duties, it is difficult to fight the urge tell the caller everything he or she knows about the process; especially for someone that also provides professional services themselves.

If a potential client calls with a case that is right up your alley, you must remember to slow down and follow only the sales process. You will get much further building rapport and trust with your prospective client by selling properly, than you would otherwise gain by proving "how" you are able to solve their case. By avoiding the mistake of selling features and benefits, you can effectively differentiate yourself from the herd and will ultimately gain more business.

If you approach each sales call as an opportunity to be seen as a trusted advisor instead of a salesperson, you will reap the benefits for years to come.

Under Promise and Over Deliver^{xv}

"Under promise and over deliver" is an expression most have come across at least once in their professional lives. The question is, do you know what this expression means in the sales sense?

In sales, under promise and over deliver refers to setting the expectations of your prospective client at a level that you know you can meet with little to no resistance. By doing so, it eliminates the necessity to have a conversation down the road as to why something took longer, cost more or did not come out as well as expected.

One place this expression relates directly to the sales process is price quoting. Be careful not to "lowball" prices. Lowballing prices is a form of over promising and under delivering that will eventually lead to a very unhappy client.

Value vs Price - What is the Perceived Benefit?^{xvi}

Have you been in a situation where a client or prospective client tells you that you do not charge enough for your services? We are guessing your answer is "No". It would be nice if a prospective client let you know ahead of time so that you could have charged higher rates. Although this never happens, it does touch upon a very important point.



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The amount that you charge for your product or service is not too high if the prospect is willing to pay. At least from an empirical standpoint.

Here is why. If you are able to properly express the overall value the caller stands to gain by hiring you,

price no longer becomes an issue. People will pay fairly for what they perceive is offered in value. It is only when your prospective client fails to believe that the benefit they will receive by enlisting your services is valuable, that price becomes an issue.

This explains why some professionals are able to bill at \$95 per hour while others performing the exact same work can bill at \$1,000 per hour. What is the difference between the two? Perceived benefit.

Chapter 2:

Advance Preparation

Growing up, Peter Stephan joined the Boy Scouts and achieved the prestigious rank of “Eagle Scout”. Having made the commitment necessary which included putting in the long hours, Peter clearly understands the importance of “being prepared”. After all, that is the motto of the Boy Scouts.

When we say “be prepared” we mean, you need to understand how the sales process works and require that you adhere to a set of rules that will allow you to control the process without placing undue pressure on your prospective client.

If done properly, your new client will feel relieved that they just enlisted in your services and will not feel uneasy wondering if they just sold their soul to do business with you.

As you read through this section, note the points that resonate with you. Make a sub-list and be sure to reference it frequently. Items you choose from this section should be memorized and practiced each time you begin the sales process with a new prospect.

Be prepared - Learn as Much as You Can up Front



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When receiving an unsolicited call for your services, it is impossible to do specific research about the prospective client prior to initial contact. That being said it does not mean you cannot learn general information relating to the demographic that purchases your services. Especially if you focus on

specific areas relating to your field. That is, there may be a specific

type of client that seeks your services. If this is the case, it makes sense to learn as much as you can in advance so that you may reduce the time necessary to find the caller's "pain" (see Quick Reference Guide).

On the other hand, if you have the opportunity to make an appointment with someone in advance to speak at a later time, you have the opportunity to do specific research. Do not be afraid to look at social media (i.e. LinkedIn and Facebook) to learn about the potential client's business as well as their personal interests.

If you discover valuable information in the process, don't "creep out" the prospect by mentioning that you were "stalking" them on the internet. Rather use the information to mirror (see Quick Reference Guide) them in your sales process. If someone feels they share common interests with you, they will be more likely to trust you and in turn give you business.

Does the Scope of Work Warrant the Professional Fees?

Before you begin the process of prequalifying a prospective client, you need to set parameters as to what level of work you are willing to complete at both the low end and the high end. If a prospective client comes to you requesting a job that is too small for you to handle, you want to disengage them as quickly as possible.

You are much better off discovering this information in a 10-minute prequalification interview rather than spending hours interacting with the prospective client only to find out the project itself is not worth your time.

Do Not Rely on Your Sales Materials

It does not hurt to have high quality marketing materials to use IN SUPPORT of your interaction with a prospective client. Even if you sell your services over the phone, you still have the opportunity to follow up with a prospective client by providing them with something that reflects your level of professionalism.

For example, a professionally produced 4-color brochure gives the impression that your company earns enough to allow for a marketing budget.

That being said, having materials such as brochures, promotional giveaways and a highly produced PowerPoint slides may impress a prospective client, but the prospect will ultimately decide to enlist your services based upon the level of trust they have in YOU to meet their needs and not how attractive your promotional materials are. Also remember that having "sloppy" promotional materials is worse than none at all. If you have to rely on either a competent salesperson or nice materials, forget the materials.



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Find out What the Prospect Needs Before Deciding What to Sell

In order to do a good job of selling, you need to first determine what you are selling. It seems like it should be simple to determine. But when you are asked that question "what do you sell?", your answer should differ immensely depending on who is asking the question. If you are asking yourself, the answer is not professional services.

Rather it should be trust, confidence and peace of mind. If you are able to offer these things to your prospective clients, you will become a great salesperson. It takes time to be able to master this task so do not become frustrated early on.

Note that we said it takes time and not that it is difficult. If you are in the proper mindset, you can become a successful salesperson with minimal effort. The good news is that you will see results early on and will continue to do better as you perfect your skills. The more comfortable you become, the less time it will take to improve.

Chapter 3:
Initial Contact

Have you ever heard the expression, “you only get one chance to make a first impression?” This statement is extremely relatable in the sales sense. In most cases, you have only one opportunity to make a sale with a prospective client. Assuming your specific sales process takes longer, it is still imperative that you create enough interest in the initial meeting to keep the prospect interested enough so that you may set up subsequent meetings.

Learning how to traverse the seemingly complex sales process is learned and does not come naturally to most. Without question however, this skill does come naturally to some more than others. To illustrate, let’s look at Michael Cohen, Mathew Cohen’s father. Michael was born and raised in Kansas City Missouri and moved to California to attend college. Michael graduated with a degree in engineering from California State University Los Angeles and remained in the greater Los Angeles area for the balance of his fruitful existence on this planet. An anomaly to most, Michael was a natural-born salesperson.

For those of you that know engineers personally, you would assume that someone wired to be an engineer would not be cut out to perform sales. This was however not the case for Michael. Michael was the kind of person that was not afraid to strike up a conversation with anyone he encountered. In fact, coming back from a sales meeting in Dallas one time, Michael was walking down the long concourse at LAX from his plane to the baggage claim area. On his journey, Michael came upon Robert Redford, the actor. Mr. Redford looking down, was tired and seemed anxious to grab his baggage and leave the airport.

Michael, walking briskly at this point caught up with Mr. Redford and proceeded to walk alongside him for a minute or so. Michael then turned toward the fatigued actor and said “I have the funniest feeling everyone is turning to look at me”. As you may guess this was enough to cause Mr. Redford to lift his head and smile back at Michael.

Based upon this story, you can see that Michael was a “salesperson” at heart who happened to obtain an engineering degree.

Michael was naturally able to interact with prospective clients much easier than most. This did not mean that he could sell without having knowledge of how to read people, but he clearly had a head start. For the rest of us, this skill must be learned and practiced. That being said, anyone can perform sales if they know how to read people. In this section you will learn how to begin the process.

"Yes" or "No" is Acceptable... "Maybe" is Not^{xvii}

When your prospective client agrees to commit the time necessary to discuss their issues, make sure you that you make the most of each call. Use the tools provided in this guide to prequalify the lead, have a productive discussion and most importantly do not let the person you are speaking with walk away or hang up without providing you with a definitive response as to whether they will hire you.

Nothing is more frustrating than spending a substantial amount of time with someone only to have the phone call or meeting end with them saying "I'll get back to you" or "let me speak with my spouse to make sure we can proceed".

Start off your conversation by indicating that you will discuss your process with them. As the call progresses you will provide them with a price or at least an estimate based upon services you will provide. Then follow up this statement by asking something specific of the prospect. Ask that they agree to either decline your services (ask this first...) or agree accept your proposal to proceed with your services. Be clear that “maybe” is not an acceptable response.

You will quickly determine whether the caller is fishing for free advice or is serious about hiring someone (you) to provide them services.

Address "Buyer's Remorse" up Front

If you have ever been involved in the negotiation of a large ticket item such as buying an automobile or renovating your home, there is a good chance you encountered buyer's remorse on some level.

Even if you did not experience buyer's remorse, you probably had to address it. In California as well as several other States, if you enter into a home improvement contract, the building contractor is required to give you three days to change your mind. This is required to address undue pressure and buyer's remorse.

Automobile dealerships make you sign something indicating you are aware that there is no rescission period and in this case, buyer's remorse is on you.

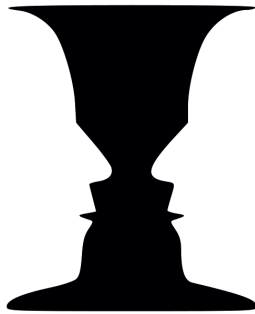
If you sell based upon easing "pain", your buyer should have no remorse. In fact, they should feel excited with the idea of moving forward. This is accomplished by removing the underlying concern that caused them to contact you in the first place.

To ensure you minimize the chance of buyer's remorse, post-sell the prospective client if necessary (see Closing the Sale).

Be Mindful of how the Prospective Client Perceives YOU

When a prospective client first contacts you, they are often under a tremendous amount of stress or pressure. Even if their situation does not warrant pressure, they will often place it upon themselves.

In our business prospects may have had their bank accounts levied, their wages garnished or may have received notices threatening the same. In these cases it does not help if you are perceived as just another salesperson looking to cash in on someone's unfortunate situation.



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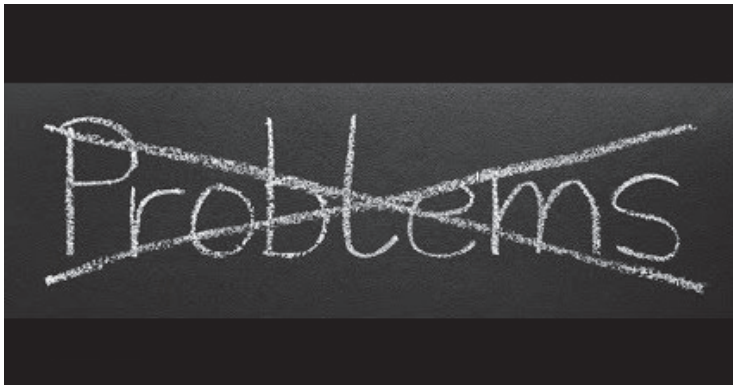
A prospective client is going to want to know that you are looking out for their best interest. For example, there are several former IRS agents that go into the tax resolution business. They market their previous experience with the IRS touting how their experience will benefit someone under the pretense that they know more

about how the IRS works than a typical practitioner.

While this angle may help promote someone as an industry expert, any positive effect gained by marketing in this manner may be outweighed by the perception that the IRS is difficult to work with. The point is, a salesperson should not guess a what their prospect wants to hear.

You want the perception of how people see you to help and not hinder your ability to attract new clients. This is why it is crucial that during your initial consultation you not only demonstrate your ability to solve their problem (on a basic level), but just as important if not more, you must convey that first and foremost you represent their best interest.

Effectively demonstrating to your prospective client that you are their advocate can mean the difference of closing the deal or losing it to a competitor.



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Don't Solve the Problem Before You Gain a Client

You may see this principle come up more than once in this guide because it cannot be stressed enough. Your job as a salesperson is to

sell peace of mind and trust, not educate your caller. Many if not most prospective clients are liars. This may sound harsh but it is true.

Salespeople have a bad reputation and many consumers do not hesitate to take advantage of a salesperson where they may be more apprehensive in other situations. The purchaser assumes you are lying and will do the same to you to gain an advantage. They may indicate that they are ready to proceed in the first 5 minutes of your conversation when they are actually just looking for free advice.

As a salesperson you want to be genuine without providing too much information. If you ease a prospect's "pain" too much on the sales call by educating them, they may not proceed with your services or anyone else's for that matter. You will have lost the sale if you removed their motivation to hire you. Once they become your client, you will have ample opportunity to show off. Save it for later.

Don't Waste your time with Wishy-Washy Prospects^{xviii}

This topic relates back to prequalifying your caller. Remember that "buyers are liars". If your prospect is serious about needing your services, using these principles you will improve your chances of closing the sale. If they are just fishing for information and have no intention of buying, you have next to no chance to close the sale.

In addition to finding out if the caller is intending to buy, you need to determine (1) if the prospective client can afford your services and (2) if the scope of work falls within your wheelhouse. DON'T WASTE TIME SPEAKING WITH SOMEONE THAT IS NOT INTERESTED IN PROVIDING YOUR VALUE. Your time is too valuable.

Find Out What is Causing the "Pain"^{xix}

The theory that sales guru David Sandler^{xx} based his sales system upon is finding a prospective client's pain. In some cases, pain may stem from something tangible such as the IRS levying a taxpayer's bank account. In this particular case the pain the caller is experiencing is most likely not the bank levy itself but rather what he or she is not able to pay for by not having the funds be available in their account. It may also be concern the prospect that someone will find out that they have a tax problem.

Other types of pain may not be as obvious. For example, someone may be calling you because they fear that the professional handling their account currently is about to retire. In this case the pain

they feel may stem from their concern that their account will not be treated with the same level of service to which they have become accustomed. Again, regardless of where someone's pain point lies, let them be the person to tell you. Do not guess.

Listen 70% of the Time and Talk 30% of the Time^{xxi}

Let's start out with a question here. Please read this question and answer it to be best of your ability before you read on. What is the main reason a prospective client calls you when considering enlisting your services?(spoiler alert!)

The answer is, only the caller knows. Sales guru David Sandler^{xxii} determined that in order to maximize the chance of closing a sale, you are better off listening rather than talking. His principles suggest that a salesperson listen 70% of the time while speaking only 30% of the time.

The idea is that you should find out what motivated the prospective client to call you and let them tell YOU what you need to do to ease their pain (see "Find Out What is Causing the Pain"). No matter from where the source of pain comes, let the prospective client

tell you. If you try and make a guess, you have only a 1 in infinity chance of getting it right.



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Set up an Appointment if "Now" is not the Right Time

When you first engage a prospective client you want to make

sure you have their undivided attention.

Just as important you want to ensure that both you and the lead have set aside enough time for you to complete everything you need to maximize your chance of soliciting new business.

Before you provide any information, ask the caller if they have 'xx' minutes (where 'xx' is the amount of time it takes you to complete the sales process) to spend with you to discuss their case. Without doing this you take the chance that they are fishing for information and may cut you off once they receive the information they were looking for. By making them commit you gain two things.

First you ensure that they are willing to spend the amount of time you need to properly sell your services. Second, you determine at least at some level whether they are or are not serious buyers. If the prospective client indicates to you they do not have enough time to speak now, make an appointment for a time in the near future. Make the time and date specific to keep them honest.

Try suggesting two specific alternatives (i.e. "Are you available to speak tomorrow at 2pm or Thursday at 10am?"). Even if the lead seems to have time, if they do not come across as serious buyers, you may suggest setting up an appointment for a later time just to see if they are willing to commit to said time in the future.

In addition, you may consider setting up an appointment to try and meet the prospect in person. There are advantages to meeting in person including being able to assess someone's body language. If you have the opportunity, you may want to turn a phone call in to a live meeting.

Use a "Monkey's Paw" to Gain Trust^{xxiii}

For hundreds of years, sailors have used this tool to assist them in tying down their ships when they come into dock. Large ships need



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large ropes when docking to ensure they stay secure.

These ropes are very heavy and hard to handle. A "Monkey's Paw" is a much smaller rope with a ball tied to the end of the larger rope. A sailor onboard ship will throw the Monkey's Paw to

someone on shore so they may ensure that they are able to accurately reach their intended recipient. The recipient then pulls in both the small and much larger ropes so that they may tie down the ship as intended.

Sales guru David Sandler^{xxiv} is credited with creating the analogy relating this rudimentary but effective tool to fit into a sales situation. If you are selling a service that requires a substantial financial outlay or a great deal of time for your prospective client to invest, you may have more difficulty that would otherwise be the case in closing the sale. In this case you should consider offering a down-scaled version of what your client needs...a "Monkey's Paw".

For example, if you are proposing to complete work for a client that will require hundreds of hours work (billed on an hourly basis) to complete the project and you are getting some pushback, you may consider suggest having them hire you to investigate their options for a nominal fixed fee. This will allow you to gain an adequate level of their trust which you may have not been able to obtain in your initial consultation.

Typically, a client will continue with your services in cases such as these assuming you were diligent in completing your scaled-down task (even if it was small) and did not over-charge them. Be fair with your pricing at this stage of your engagement.

Chapter 4:

**Sizing up the
Prospective Client**

Just as important as what you think of your prospect you must know what they are thinking about you. Again we will highlight a Michael Cohen story. When Michael was in the midst of selling fiber optics, he set up an appointment with a prospective client for 2pm, a time following his lunch.

If you are familiar with fiber optics, you know that they involve among other things “strings” of a glass-like material combined to accomplish several amazing feats including passing through light and being able to see around corners. As part of his sales presentation, Michael would point one end of a fiber optic rope, bend it and have his prospective client look into the other end to see a view of what item Mike was point to with the rope.

In most cases this demonstration garnered amazement from the presentation’s recipients. On this particular day, Michael proceeded to place the end of the fiber optic rope in front of his prospective client and the client lurched back.

Confused Michael again placed the viewing end of the fiber optic rope in front of the prospect and again the prospect lurched back. Curious as to what was concerning the hopefully soon-to-be client, Michael looked into the scope and his stomach dropped once Michael had realized what was wrong.

His hands wreaked of Tommy’s® Chili (and onions) from the lunch he took prior to the meeting. For those of you unfamiliar with Tommy’s, it was and arguably still is the best chili burger joint in the greater Los Angeles area. Michael had decided to eat there without considering the repercussions of presenting to a client afterward. By the way, if you are not from the greater Los Angeles area but find yourself in town, we highly recommend you try Tommy’s; however, not before a sales meeting.

Ask Open Ended Questions^{xxv}

Again we are going to address uncovering the "pain". Uncovering pain is your goal in finding out what your prospective client seeks so that you can ease said pain and close the sale. To do this you need to let the prospect talk openly.

If you ask only "yes" and "no" questions, you will only get one word answers that give you little information. You are better off asking open ended questions followed up with transition questions (see Quick Reference). These types of questions will get the prospect to open up and expose their concerns.

Become an "Active" Listener

When it comes to performing sales, "plain" listening is not enough. To be effective, you must be "actively" listening. What do



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we mean by actively listening? In addition to hearing what a prospective client is saying you must make sure you understand and interpret what they are telling you.

The ideal way to ensure this is accomplished is to confirm what you just heard. For example, a prospective client says to you "...for the last 3 years we've been having trouble filling our orders on time". To this you can then reply with something along the lines of "Just to clarify, you are saying that the orders continue to come in and you stand to benefit from improving your fulfillment process. What do you need to make that happen?"

By restating their concern, you demonstrate to the prospective client that you are not only listening to what they are saying but also thinking of ways to help them resolve their concern. Remember, selling is not always about YOU selling but rather having the prospect sell themselves.

Be Honest...Don't Try to Sell a "Bill of Goods"^{xxvi}

Have you ever encountered a situation where someone is trying to push a product or solution that you know will not work? When you explain that the product or service does not meet specific needs, the salesperson attempts to cover their tracks by making claims that you know are not true.

What does that do to your willingness to continue the sales process? Do you feel you can trust them? Will you ever come to them again if you need assistance in the future? Most definitely not. It is extremely important that you be honest with your prospective client at all times. If your product or service cannot solve their problem or does not benefit your prospective client be up front about it.

Instead, offer an alternative product or service or maybe even refer someone that can help provide the solution the best fits their need. This may not yield an immediate sale but will do much more. The prospective client will see you as a valued partner that they know they can trust. Believe us that when the time comes, they will think of you first to meet their needs.

Buyers are Liars

Have you attempted to purchase a product or service and assumed the salesperson was lying to you? If so you can imagine what the person calling you assumes when you are conducting a sales



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call. People tend to distrust salespeople and therefore think it is okay to lie in return.

Although they may not be forthright, many consumers are calling professionals such as you to obtain free advice. Others have all but made up their mind to hire

someone else and are calling you just to confirm that a price they received is fair. In either of the aforementioned cases, they will most likely indicate something different than the truth in an attempt to entice you to "spill the beans". For this reason, you must pre-qualify (see Quick Reference Guide) your potential client. Assuming you determine they are worthy, proceed by selling them trust and confidence in YOU, not your services.

Can the Prospective Client Afford to Pay Your Fees?

For most if not all of you, providing your services falls within your comfort zone. Because this is the case, it becomes the path of least resistance to discuss your services and provide advice without finding out in advance if the lead is able to afford your services.

We are taught in society that it is impolite if not worse to talk to someone about money. In business however, it is foolish to have a conversation with a prospective client without doing so. As a purchaser you would not be comfortable hiring someone without knowing what you would pay.

On the other hand, you would probably be more than happy to extract free advice from the professional with whom you are speaking. Keep that in mind when selling to a prospective client. Without being rude (or providing them direct price quotes up front), determine if they can afford your services.

Good questions to ask pertaining to this information may include "what are you paying for this service now?" or "...my services are something that most people don't budget for...have you put money aside to get this work done?"

Demonstrate That You Are the Best Option to Ease the "Pain"

The decision that all buyers will ultimately make is "do I want to buy from THIS person?" or "do I trust THIS person enough to buy _____". THIS person being you, the salesperson.

This is why the impression you make is extremely important. You must be personable, sincere, inquisitive and most importantly really understand and care about the prospective client's needs. Being sincere and empathetic to their needs will make the difference between being a successful salesperson or at best, a mediocre one.

Determine "Where" in the Process the Prospective Client Lies^{xxvii}

When first engaging a prospective client, many salespeople neglect to determine where in the buying process the prospective client lies.

Just because you are starting out with them, does not mean they are at the beginning of the emotional processing necessary to make a decision to purchase. How do you determine this? Simple...ask them. You can try starting with questions such as "What



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steps have you taken so far in your decision making process?" or "Can you share with me how you will determine who you are going to hire for this task?"

What you are trying to figure out is whether or not the prospect has just started thinking about the idea of hiring someone or are they further along. This process indicates how serious they are in moving forward.

Just as important, you will determine if the caller has already met with the competition and are now shopping around. Now loaded with this valuable information you can tailor your presentation accordingly in order to be most effective.

Don't Argue with the Caller...You're Guaranteed to Lose the Sale^{xxviii}

During your sales call or presentation there will be the occasional disagreement with your prospective client as to what may seem like an obvious point you are trying to make. A key factor to consider when speaking to your prospective client is that although differences in opinion may occur; say on fundamental processes or approaches, as the professional you should never “argue” your point with the prospective client. If you think it will help you sell your client, you may politely ask questions to try and get them to see your point of view.

If you become combative, the prospective client will most likely become defensive and this will at least hinder and more likely remove any chance you had of closing the sale. Remember that the caller is looking to ease their pain and the last thing you want to do is cause more. As hard as it may be to let go, you must refrain from expressing disagreement with the client's desires, demands, motives or behaviors.

You should listen with an open mind, remain calm at all times and this will help you rationalize the situation better. You must remember that you are seeking an opportunity to communicate to the prospective client to discover their “pain” and show you can ease it.

It is important to note that arguing with your client and disagreeing with them are not necessarily the same thing. If you disagree with something that will help make them trust you more, go ahead and politely steer them in the right direction.

For example, if your client explains to you how they think you should handle their case and are wrong, it may behoove you to indicate that based upon your experience you would handle things differently to ensure obtain the same great results you have experienced over time. Be polite and under no circumstance "teach" them how to do your job. By acting this way, you both place a level of doubt into their mind with regard to how they had been thinking and ease said doubt by asking them to rely on you.

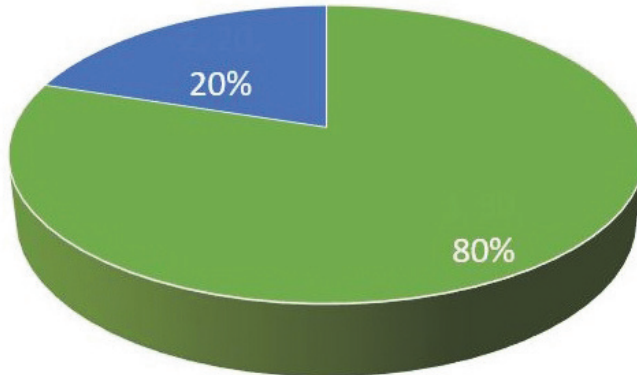
Gain the Prospective Client's Trust by Expressing Sympathy

We have mentioned that it is a crucial part of the sale process to build trust if you are interested in closing a sale. You may be asking "how do I do that?" One very effective way of building trust is to sympathize with your prospective client. This can be accomplished by mirroring what they say and do.

Discussing your similar personal experiences is a good example of how to mirror. To put it simply, mirroring is putting yourself in the caller's shoes and letting them know you are doing so.

Know that 80% of Revenue Comes from 20% of Clients (the 80/20 Rule)^{xxix}

Studies have shown that 80% of a company's revenue comes from 20% of their clients. This is important because it indicates that a company (and subsequently their sales team) should focus on the bigger fish.



This is not to say that you should ignore smaller prospects but rather you should use your time wisely. We feel this information is better used to weed out unqualified consumers rather than ones you are

willing to service but may fall into your lower 80%. That being said, if you become a star salesperson, be sure to use your time even more wisely by focusing on potential clients that stand to pay your higher fees.

Learn How to “Read” your Prospect^{xxx}



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It would be nice for a salesperson to have a crystal ball so they could know exactly what their prospective client was thinking. If only they could get in the caller's head and listen to what they were thinking, it would make selling much easier. Well guess what? You may not be able to read someone's mind directly but you can pick up on a caller's prompts that

in essence accomplishes the same thing.

For example, examining someone's body language is a natural way of seeing what someone is thinking. For instance, if during your presentation you notice that the purchaser crosses their arms and leans back in their chair, you can assume that you just said something that they disagree with and you may be beginning to lose them.

On the other hand, if they lean toward you and are actively asking questions this means that they are engaged and are extremely interested in what you have to say.

There are several verbal and non-verbal signs to look for when communicating with potential clients. If you master reading these verbal and non-verbal clues, you will become a successful salesperson.

Make Sure You Are Speaking to the Decision-Maker

What should be one of the first questions you ask someone when beginning a sales call? We mention sales call and not meeting in this case because if you have not asked this question prior to setting up a live meeting, you should get an answer as soon as possible or reschedule the meeting.

The question is "if you are happy with what we discuss today, can you alone decide to proceed with my services?" It is important to note that "you" in this case may be a group of people and "my" may be you and your colleagues. We mention this because it does not make sense for you to do a pitch without the decision-maker in the room or



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on the phone. You are in the business of providing professional services and not to make multiple sales pitches to unqualified recipients.

If someone replies to your question with something like "my boss needs to make the final decision but I am narrowing down the candidates", you need to politely state that you will discuss your services with both of them when the "boss" is available. You may get some pushback from the person with whom you are speaking but the "boss" will respect your tenacity.

Remember, do not come across as disrespectful toward the person with which you are speaking. Your goal is not to win an argument but rather to close a sale.

Make Yourself and Advocate for your Prospective Client^{xxxix}

When a prospective client finally decides to pick up the phone



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to call you, you have to be careful to make sure you make them feel that you are the right person to resolve their problem (ease their “pain) and continue to do so indefinitely, or at least until the sale is closed. It is not unusual for someone seeking your services to be facing

a great deal of stress or other forms of pressure.

Even when purchasing something positive such as a new car or new house, the process still remains scary to many consumers. Be sure to come across as the person out to help your clients, not the one that is looking to maximize revenue at their expense.

Mimic the Prospective Client^{xxxii}

Assume you think that your product or service is the best on the market. As you would guess, just mentioning this will not equate to making an easy sale. An important method you can practice to ensure of your prospective client becomes engaged and comfortable with you is to mimic their speech and tone patterns by speaking their "language". For instance, you may be speaking to someone who speaks very fast using descriptive adjectives.



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communication you will make them feel comfortable and have a much more productive sales call.

If you reply by speaking slowly and do not describe things thoroughly, the prospective client will become impatient and lose interest in continuing the conversation. If you mimic their form of

Understand the Caller's Goals^{xxxiii}

When conducting a sales call with a prospective client the salesperson will often focus solely on what we assume to be the caller's immediate need. They end the call never getting around to determining what the overall goal of the call is and subsequently do not end up focusing on a long-term plan to ease the "pain".

Let's think about this for a minute...imagine how much more effective you would be if ahead of time, you knew the ultimate goal of the prospective client. You would know how to act and more importantly, what to do to meet not only their current needs, but also how to gain their future business. You must ask the right questions in order to determine what the caller is seeking. Do not be shy to share with them your goals, assuming they align with what the caller is looking for. Mention that it appears you share long term goals and tie this into building a long-term relationship in order to gain trust.

After all, the primary goal of many professionals is to build lasting relationships with clients and tying this idea into your sales process makes perfect sense.

Ask Open Ended Questions^{xxxiv}

If you are a successful salesperson, you most likely are well versed in asking open ended questions. Open ended questions move conversations forward. If asked properly, these type of questions will get a prospective client to talk in detail about themselves and their troubles.



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If you understand and properly practice this process, you will see that these types of questions prohibit the salesperson from speaking when it is the caller's turn to speak (remember...speak only 30% of the time). Examples of good open ended questions include "Why?", "Tell me more...", "Share with me an example...", "Can you explain that further?" and "Do you have any examples?" You should be asking no less than 10 open ended questions throughout your sales process in order to truly understand your prospective client.

W.I.I.F.M. (What's in it for me?)^{xxxv}

You may have heard this expression before or even asked this question yourself. Most salespeople forget to put themselves in the prospective client's shoes by reminding themselves that the client is probably asking "what's in it for me?"

You should assume that every caller is listening to your pitch with that question front and center in their minds. By talking about the features and benefits of your services rather than addressing the caller's pain, you will push them away every time.

Why Did They Call You TODAY? Determine Their "Pain"

If a client is calling you to speak or set up a time to come into your office, you can assume that it was not a random thought that motivated them to pick up the phone. Something motivated them to take initiative. Whatever their "something" is...is the key to making the sale. You need to pinpoint their motivation or what is commonly referred to in this book as discovering their "pain".



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If you are an attorney and someone is calling you to represent them, of course there is some item (most likely pending litigation) that is the presumed reason they are calling you, but this is not the reason. If someone is getting sued they are scared.

Not scared of getting sued as much as the repercussions of what will come of the suit. For example, someone may be afraid that their spouse will find out and is going to divorce them.

Others may be afraid they will lose an important asset such as their home. Once you find out what is causing their pain, you can "ease" the pain by explaining that YOU and not your services will help ease their pain. See the Quick Reference Guide that the end of this book for questions to extract your caller's pain.

What to do if the Caller's Project is Too Large for You to Handle

Once in a while a prospective client will come to you with a project that is outside your "wheelhouse". What we mean by this is the project is too big for you to handle. What we suggest you do in this case is not to cut them off right away. First you may want to continue the pre-qualification process to determine you are reading them correctly.

Assuming your first assumption was correct, we suggest you indicate that you want to research their situation further and set up a time in the near future to follow up. Once off the phone see if you know a colleague that can handle the prospect's case. When you get back on the phone with the prospect you can indicate that you decided this work is outside your comfort level and refer the colleague who, if you choose can be on the call.

By doing this you come across as an advisor which may lead to future work from the prospect or other referrals from the prospect's connections. You also maintain a level of professionalism that may otherwise be lost if you seem afraid to complete the task at hand.

YOU Should be the Only One Leading the Conversation

By now you have heard us say more than once that a successful salesperson listens more than they speak. This is an extremely important part of the sales process. That being said you still must learn how to control the conversation and steer it in the direction that meets your needs.

Do not let the prospective client go on a tangent that does not provide the information or clues you are seeking. Instead prepare in

advance by crafting questions (see Quick Reference Guide) that will push the conversation within the path you have laid and close the sale.



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Chapter 5:
Closing the Sale

Statistics show that most people practicing sales are more nervous when it comes to closing a sale. Let's look at Michael Cohen again. Back in the 1980's Michael held a sales position at a company that sold fiber optics. A stellar salesperson, Michael secured several new accounts and earned continually growing commissions. Michael's sales manager decided that he did not like the fact that Michael was earning more than him and proceed to let Michael go and hire a new up and coming "star".

Based upon his ability to sell, Michael soon secured a new position at his prior company's competitor and was off to the races. Several months had passed and Michael received a call from the "go getter" at the prior company asking if he would like to get together for lunch.

As it happens, Michael's old boss asked the young "protégé" to ask Michael for sales tips. The items being sold have a high price point and can be used only for a narrow focus of applications. Michael knew this and was nonetheless able to find his client's "pain" and sell plenty of product.

Acting as a true professional, Michael offered the young man some sage advice "...if you want to succeed as I did, work hard and keep your nose to the grindstone". We assume the protégé was no long for the sales world.

Ask the "Right" Questions

When selling as with anything else, it is important to remember what your ultimate goal is. Are you looking to teach the caller about what you do? Are you looking to listen to their "life story"? In either

case the answer most definitely is "NO". You are trying to have them purchase your services.



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The key is to do this in a way that is both efficient and effective. You cannot just pick up the phone and say "buy my services" and expect to close the deal. You also do not want to invest hours or days with

someone only to find out that they are not going to use your services or just as bad, discover that your costs to recapture your time outweigh any profit you stand to make in getting the deal. As you have read throughout this book, you should listen to your prospective client 70% of the time and speak only 30% of the time.

The question is "what do you say in your 30% allotment?" The answer is you say little to nothing. Instead of "saying" anything, you should spend most of this time asking questions. These questions should guide your prospect into providing you the information you are looking for (see Quick Reference Guide).

Once again you want to find out why they feel the "pain they do; and, properly phrased questions is the best way to do so. For example, ask "how does that make you feel? or "...and are you okay with that?" to garner an emotionally based response. Asking the right questions can greatly increase your chance of closing a sale.

Be Careful When You Quote Pricing

Without a doubt, in most cases your potential client is going to ask you about pricing. It is important not to give them any pricing too early in the sales process. Remember your goal is to gain their trust and confidence by finding their "pain" (see Quick Reference Guide). If you give them pricing early on, you will not only fail in gaining trust and confidence but will most likely lose their attention relating to everything else going forward.

Discussing money is a sensitive subject and if handled poorly, it will cause you to lose a sale. When quoting a price there are a few different approaches. One approach involves offering a price range. You must be careful when using this technique as many consumers process a price quote in this manner. Assume you have reached the right time in the sales process to discuss pricing, which is after you have discovered the "pain" as well as once you have discussed how you can ease said pain. In addition, assume you have pre-qualified the caller and asked money questions to gauge what they can afford to pay you.

You are now ready to discuss your price. You may say "to do this type of work, it typically costs between four and five thousand dollars". You must understand that what the consumer usually hears in this case is you can do the work for \$4,000. If you are willing to do the work for this amount you may be satisfied, but this is not what we suggest.

Rather, try mentioning to the client that this type of work takes two different courses. While neither are simple, one involves less work than the other. If you can complete the work taking the simpler route, it will cost around \$4,000 and if you need to take the more complex route it may exceed \$6,000. Then ask them which route they believe you will need to take. Regardless of their answer...sound surprised. By doing this you throw them off guard somewhat but in

doing so you will see with a fair amount of accuracy what they expect and are willing to pay you.

Focus on a Permanent Solution

This topic should be analyzed carefully. When we say "permanent solution" we are not referring to providing a solution to their surface problem but rather to offer what you can do to ease their "pain" and keep that pain from coming back.



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Remember that prospective clients are calling you because they have an underlying issue ("pain") that needs to be resolved. To clarify by example, we do not mean you should offer to find an acceptable end to an

impending lawsuit, but rather you should offer to stop the worry the caller is feeling with regard to what a less-than-acceptable outcome to the same lawsuit may bring.

It is important to remember that someone involved in a lawsuit is probably under a fair amount of stress and although it may seem like the stress is related to the lawsuit itself, it comes from other things such as fear of losing assets if unsuccessful or having one's spouse leave them if they have a judgment entered against them. Once you determine someone's "pain", you must then convince them that you are able to ease the pain indefinitely. If you offer short-term comfort, the prospect's trust and confidence in you will fade quickly.

Let the Prospective Client Sell Themselves^{xxxvi}

This topic should not be mistaken as an excuse to be lazy. It should also not be mistaken as some hypnosis trick you need to perform to get prospects to hire you. What we mean by having the “prospect sell themselves” relates back to a few principles covered earlier in this book.

First, let the prospect speak 70% of the time. When we say this it is for a very good reason. You need to determine what "pain" the caller has and just as important determine what remedy you can provide to ease their pain. Unless you can enter into their psyche, there is no way you alone can determine either of these things. Your job is to steer the "sales" ship. Not to fuel it.

Using the right questions (see the Quick Reference Guide) you will see that the caller will not only provide you with the source causing them pain but will give you clues as to what you should offer to make them feel better. As an aside, you need to remember that during the sales process you want to mention that you WILL make them feel better by enlisting in your services but be careful not to take away their pain before they become your client.

Place the "Right" Amount of Pressure^{xxxvii}

When selling to a potential client, in order to be successful you must know how to navigate the process. This means knowing when to speak (30% of the time) and knowing when to listen (70% of the time). The process we use to gain new clients relies on finding their "pain".

Once the pain has been discovered, we then discuss how trusting in us will eliminate the pain. The key word in our discussion is "will". Assuming you are on the right track in the sales process, you will be walking a fine line between promising to make them feel better and making them feel better right away. If you make them feel better before they become a client, your call or meeting will most likely go cold and you will lose the sale.

By no means do we want you to pressure a client into enlisting in your services. If you do try and pressure a prospective client, on the off chance that this method works and your prospect becomes a client, you then have to worry about keeping them as a client because you never gained their trust.

Rather we want you to use the pressure they place on themselves as leverage to gain your trust and confidence.

Post-Sell if Necessary

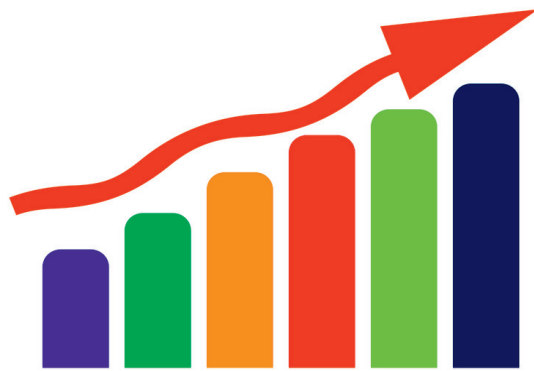
Having a client commit to you verbally and signing on the dotted line are not always the same thing. Also for those of you who do not begin work right away; especially those practicing with a statutory rescission period need to maintain your new client's trust and confidence until the possibility of buyer's remorse is gone.

This can best be accomplished by making sufficient contact with the client and saying the right thing. One thing you may consider is contacting the newly signed client to layout a preliminary schedule. This does not mean overwhelming them with timelines and demands but rather discussing what will occur up to the time work commences. For example, you may mention that their case file is being created and you are reviewing the documents they sent you.

This shows you are not going to forget about them after the check clears without stressing them out and scaring them off (see Quick Reference Guide).

Track your Metrics^{xxxviii}

It is not uncommon to see a novice salesperson try and shoot from the hip. You will find in cases such as these that the salesperson will "go with the flow" when it comes to their sales process. If you sit



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down with successful seasoned salespeople and ask them how they sell, 100% of them will say that it is vital to set realistic goals and track results on a regular basis. Unless you track your process and the impending results, you will not know if your activities are fruitful.

This is the most efficient way to determine how well or how badly you are performing. By gauging the results, you can (1) adjust your process to perform better and (2) adjust your goals to be more realistic.

To be specific, try and measure your results by tracking the number of calls you make/receive, the number of appointments you land, and the number of sales you generate. In addition to measuring sales success, this information can be used to help you manage your pipeline.

Quick Reference Guide

Creating Rapport and Bonding^{xxxix}

1. Match & Mirror – Tonality, Pace, Energy, & Vocabulary
2. Discuss Points in Common
3. Empathize
4. 70/30 Rule – ASK QUESTIONS (Lots of them)
5. Never be more “okay” than the caller is
6. Practice “Active” listening

Pain Questions - (questions to find a prospective client's "pain")^{x1}

1. What is the problem?
2. Why don't you tell me what's going on?
3. Anything else?
4. How did that happen?
5. How did it get to this point?
6. How long has this been going on?
7. What have you tried to do about it?
8. What happens if it doesn't get fixed?
9. Are you OK with that?
10. Do you have kids?
11. Is this a joint liability?
12. What is your family size?
13. Any college plans for the kids?
14. How does that make you feel?

Post Selling^{xli}

1. After money is collected, thank the prospect for their confidence in allowing you to service them.
2. Address biggest question, concern or hesitation they have about hiring you.
3. Use statements like “before I run your credit card, something still concerns me, you mentioned I want to be sure you are comfortable with your decision”

Prequalify your prospective client

1. Are you speaking with the decision-maker?
2. Does the person with whom you are speaking have the time necessary to finish the sales process?
3. Will the caller give you a firm “yes” or “no” but not “maybe” at the end of your call/meeting?
4. Can the caller afford your services?
5. Does the scope of work sought by the prospective client warrant your fees?
6. Are you able to handle the level of work being sought?

Transition Statements/Questions^{xlii}

1. “Shall I start?”
2. Ask the reason they are calling you today
3. What is at risk?
4. What is the exposure?
5. Determine what the consequences are of the caller’s inaction
6. First uncover the surface pain and subsequently the deeper pain
7. Ask “how does that make you feel?”
8. Ask “what should we do?”

Setting the terms of the call/meeting^{xliii}

1. Set Parameters for call
2. Agree on how long the call or meeting will take
3. Ask permission to ask Questions of a Personal nature
4. Ask them to agree to say “NO” if we are not the right fit
5. Ask them to agree to say “YES” and allow us to move forward with our representation if we are the perfect fit
6. It is not acceptable at the end of this call is to hear let me think about it or some version of that. Be Clear and make sure this point is understood.
7. Ask if anyone else needs to be on the call (Decision Maker). Who besides yourself will be involved in the decision making process?

Glossary

Account

A synonym for client, this term is usually used in a business-to-business (“B2B”) context.

Active Listening

This term is used to indicate that the salesperson is hyper-aware to not only what the prospective client is saying but how they are saying it. This is often combined with interpreting body language in order to better evaluate a prospective client.

Added Value

This is accomplished by providing additional benefits (either tangible or intangible) to the primary product or service being sold. A “top notch” reputation is an example of an added value.

Advantage

This is something (either tangible or intangible) that gives one an edge over their competition. Being referred by an associate is often an advantage over having someone call you out of the blue.

Advertising

This is the act of using a media outlet such as television broadcasting, magazines or the internet to market a product or service to prospective buyers/users.

Benefit

Similar to “features” (see below) this term is used to describe the positive aspects of a product or service. Selling benefits is not recommended.

Brand

An intangible, this is what a company creates from several items to tie in with how they want to be perceived. Several items including logos, slogans and jingles contribute to a company’s overall brand.

Business to Business (“B2B”)

This term is used to describe transactions between one company and another company.

Business to Consumer (“B2C”)

This term is used to describe transactions between a company and a consumer.

Closing

This is the part of the sales process in which the salesperson receives a commitment from the prospective client. This is often mistaken as the final step in the selling process.

Client

This is the person seeking the product or service being offered. We prefer this term over “customer” when selling services as it comes across more professionally. It is important to understand that the person contacting you to purchase may not be the true prospective client (see “Decision-maker”).

Decision-maker

This is a person who has been given the authority to enlist your services. Be sure you are speaking with a decision-maker when taking a sales call or meeting.

Deliverable

The item or items one commits to provide. These may be tangible or intangible.

Demographic

This is used to describe the make-up of one's living style. Among other things, this may include a person's job, hobbies, consumables, economic standing and education. It is helpful to know the demographic of your prospective clients.

Digital Media Marketing

Marketing a product or service via the internet.

Direct Mail

Using "snail mail" to market a product or service to a target audience.

Empathy

Having the ability to understand and share what another person is feeling. This is a valuable sales tool when trying to discover a prospective client's pain.

Ethics

This is the practice of acting within societal guidelines. Acting ethically over time will yield much better results than any short-term gain that may be accomplished by acting otherwise.

Feature

Similar to “benefits” (see above) a feature is an aspect of a product or service that distinguishes it from other similar products or services. It is very difficult to sell a product or service based upon features.

Field

A term used to describe any location outside one’s home base be it an actual office or one’s residence.

Forecast

A synonym for “prediction”, this term is used to predict how well sales efforts will be. It is important to note that forecasting should be used as a loose guide as many outside factors can vary the accuracy of a forecast.

Influencer

This is a person or people with the ability to assist a decision-maker in choosing a product or service.

Intangible

In the context of sales, this is a non-physical attribute that relates to a product or service.

Introduction

In the sales context this relates to a third party bringing a salesperson and a prospective client together.

Listening

One of the most important aspects in selling, this trait must be practiced in order to obtain the best results. Just as important as listening, is knowing how to react to what one hears.

Marketing

Often confused with sales and advertising, marketing is the process in which a company uses tools to make people aware of the product or service they are offering. This is done in hopes of having prospective clients be placed in front of a salesperson to begin the sales process.

Profit margin

This is the difference between what an item costs and at what price the item is sold. It is important to note that indirect costs such as taxes and overhead may or may not have been included in one's profit calculations.

Mark-up

The amount added over the cost of a product or service attributed toward profit.

Negotiation

The act performed by a purchaser and a provider in which a compromise is sought by both parties. This process assumes the parties begin the process with differing goals. The better negotiator will usually end up closer to their original goal than a lesser skilled negotiator.

Networking

A highly effective means to garner new business by meeting with associates in order to refer business back and forth. These types of meetings are most effective when done face-to-face in a live setting.

Sales objection/s

Issue or issues a prospective client voices that is keeping them from purchasing a product or service. It is difficult to make a sale by directly trying to address individual objections.

Opening

The beginning stage of a sales call or sales meeting.

Perceived

This describes how a prospective client views a given item such as a product, a service, the salesperson or the company as a whole. Being able to influence a prospective client's perception is a valuable sales tool.

Presentation

The package a salesperson uses to address a prospective client. The presentation may include a pitch, visuals, slides (i.e. PowerPoint) and brochures. Although these tools may add some value, presentations do not sell by themselves.

Product

A product may be tangible or intangible and usually refers to what product or service the provider is offering.

Proposal

An offer (either written or oral) provided by the seller to the prospective client setting forth what will be delivered and under what terms.

Prospective client

A person or company that a provider deems may be interested in purchasing the provider's product or service.

Questioning

The point in the sales process where a prospective client raises objections.

Rapport

A bond created between a salesperson and a prospective client. Good rapport is often an integral part of creating trust.

Referral

A prospective client referred by an outside (usually trusted) source

Sales pipeline

A term used to describe where in the sale process a prospective client lies.

Segment

A portion of the overall sales market used to target marketing or sales. This is often done by creating vertical sectors.

Tangible

In the sales sense this is a product that has physical traits or a service that can be measured.

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