



Sales Academy



PART TWO



In search of the salesperson's 'Holy Grail' – the Sales Process.
By Pro-Train4Results' Paul Rowland.

We finished off the article last month confirming what is the correct DNA profile of a salesperson and how attitude plays the significant 'lead role' if people want to succeed and be successful in the sales profession. Given then that we have that right attitude and the other constituent parts to achieve this goal (check last month's article for a refresher) what do we need to understand next?

How many times have you heard the statement, "oh, you'll make a good salesperson because you have the gift of the gab". Wrong, because if you talk longer than your customer and do not listen you will not be able to follow the sales process and build rapport with your existing or new customer in a way that will generate success and grind out results. (This area of building rapport with your customer is vital and something to be covered in greater detail in a future article).

Without having full comprehension of a sales process would be like trying to bake a cake without knowing the ingredients or for how long to pop it in the oven. In other words, you see the end product you would like to achieve but have no systematic approach or understanding of how to bake that cake. Basically the sales process is the 'Holy Grail' to all sales people and should be known inside out, backwards and sideways.

Before we look at the first building blocks of the sales process, let's define what selling is with the help of the Oxford Dictionary; firstly as a verb 'Exchange something for money' or secondly as a noun 'The manner of selling something'. Arguably this second definition is where the saying 'people buy people' could be firmly attributed.

The three elements that then support these definitions are; a) you need a product to sell; b) a potential customer and c) a customer to purchase the product. The key point now is how we mix the ingredients of these three elements to produce our cake or combine them in the sales process.

SEVEN POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THIS ARE:

- 1) *Ensure you know your company's products, service and logistical capabilities.*
- 2) *Make sure you plan your call and what your objectives are.*
- 3) *How are you going to gain the customer's interest?*
- 4) *Once the conversation has started, identify the customer's needs.*
- 5) *Propose your solution to match the customer's needs.*
- 6) *Close the sale.*
- 7) *Deliver your service and maintain a continual, meaningful communication to build longevity in the relationship.*



All of these you feel would be fairly simple to accomplish. Yet, when all of these areas are mixed together while speaking to a customer on the phone or face to face, especially where the customer interacts in various and unexpected ways linked to their character and/or the situation, the pressure that brings then makes this a more difficult proposition to enact.

It therefore becomes a prerequisite that you can link yourself to a method where you can confidently navigate the sales process and traverse from one area to another with confidence, competence and professionalism. In summary, something you know inside out, backwards and sideways.

Having trained and managed many salespeople both internally and externally the question I always ask them is "what sales process do you use?" Regrettably, the vast majority do not have one; some may have known component parts but could not necessarily link these in a simplistic, systematic way that underpins a process, something that is vital for sales success.

With this in mind, together with the challenges and difficulties I faced when I began in sales, I developed the ABC Selling Sequence which is outlined below:

A stands for Attention

This first section focuses on what you should do prior to speaking with the customer to gain their attention. This includes how you plan a call, what should the key points of the plan, preparation and fact find be? What is the overall objective for the call? Finally, how can you gain the customer's attention when you communicate with them enabling the discussion to lead naturally to the next phase that is:

B standing for Build

This is where you build the relationship running parallel with your overall objective for the account. For example, this could be to become the customer's first, second or third line supplier. (Different tactics and strategies are required to achieve all of these objectives). To accomplish this you will need to understand how to use open, closed and reflective questioning techniques. How to listen to the customer and why it is beneficial to do so. Utilise your USP's, FAB's and UPB's. If you are not sure what these are, all will be revealed in future articles. In summary, understand the customer's needs, develop their interest in your product and match both to lead you to the final section which is:

C standing for Conclude

No prizes here for knowing this is where you close the sale, answer objections if there are any and close again.

Many people have told me that the ABC Selling Sequence helps them to confidently navigate their discussions with their customers in a simple, highly effective and consultative manner.

In the next issue we will cover in greater detail the 'Attention' element of the sales process and how we should all consider ourselves as 'Doctors of sales' not sales aggressive 'quick buck' short term, short view salespeople. Until then have a great sales month in May and remember 'Attitude conquers everything'. Go out there and make it happen! ■

The sales process is the Holy Grail to all sales people and should be known inside out, backwards and sideways

For further information on sales, management ,marketing, Microsoft Office EOS and hardware product training contact Paul Rowland at paul@pro-train4results.com or on 0115 9827730.

Reproduction of any portion of this article for individual use is permitted if credit is given to Paul Rowland, author and director of Pro-Train4Results. Permission is required however for distribution by any means including inclusion in any other publication other than USP and Dealer Support or by multiple reproduction (photocopies, electronic, mechanical or otherwise).