



# Sales Academy



PART THREE



Do exactly as it says on the tin and plan a sales call the way you would paint your house! By Pro-Train4Results' Paul Rowland.

**B**efore we progress into section three lets review what has been covered in the previous two issues.

In the first issue we confirmed the DNA profile of a sales person and how attitude is intrinsically linked to high performance; then in last month's article we defined what selling is and the three points that underpin that statement.

We then moved on to establish why having full comprehension of a sales process is a prerequisite if we are to succeed in sales and the introduction to the ABC© sales process 'Attention, Build and Conclude' created by Pro-Train4Results.

With this in mind and over the next three issues, commencing with this one, we will begin to break down this process beginning with 'Attention'.

Quite simply this focuses on what you should do prior to speaking with the customer to ensure that when the conversation starts you capture the attention of the customer and control the meeting. So how can this be achieved?

For those of you that have painted at home, there is a direct correlation between that activity and sales success (probably something unknown to you until now)!

**Question:** how long does it take you to prepare the surface you are about to paint versus the time to put gloss on the same area?

**Answer:** maybe as much as three to four times longer if you do it properly when including the sanding, filling of gaps, applying the primer, then the undercoat and finally the gloss. Ultimately, why do you do this? To make sure you get the right result/finish.

Why is it then that the majority of sales people begin a conversation or meeting without the right preparation (and just charge in with a 'bull in a china shop' approach) which would help significantly in ensuring a constructive and positive discussion takes place, whether face-to-face or over the telephone?

So, having established that point, what should we be doing? Quite simply we need to plan the call, why?



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- To know what our objectives are
- To be able to review those objectives against the outcomes of the meeting/discussion
- It allows us to set the direction of the meeting and talk constructively about the key areas associated with the 'game plan' of converting or increasing the business from the customer
- It gives a systematic and disciplined approach at the beginning of the sales cycle
- Psychologically we feel in control
- Probably the biggest reason of all, it will give you a competitive edge over the competition as the vast majority of so called 'sales professionals' don't do it!

Those are a few reasons why we should plan the call. Let's however take the view that we haven't done, or in many cases can't be bothered to do this; what are some of the likely effects?

- The customer, who we are trying to build trust and credibility with, will not think of us as a professional
- It stops you from developing or opening the account
- Without a plan /agenda for the conversation hands the customer control of the meeting/conversation where it becomes easy for them to 'fob' you off
- In many cases it gives rise to one of the worst sales calls that could ever be made with content such as 'Hello X, just giving you a call to see if you would like to place any orders with me today'. Arghh! If you don't know what is wrong with this, get on a training course (preferably one of mine!), read a book or ask somebody for advice as this is a guaranteed road to nowhere.

So taking it as 'a done deal' that we need to plan a call, what should be contained in the plan? As an example, let us assume that we are about to call/see a prospect.

We need to confirm the name of the decision maker, their responsibilities, how they fit into the overall purchasing structure and who else could be involved in the decision making process. This latter point makes sure you are talking to the right person/ people when you come to the closing stages of the sale.

In addition, you will also need to establish their decision making criteria; what are the 'must haves' and 'would like to haves'? How much do they purchase of your products and the timelines associated with these purchases or products you have in your portfolio which they do not currently purchase. In summary, what questions do we need to ask relating to their business and the products we are selling? Then in order to supply the products effectively we also need to confirm the logistical requirements of the customer including IT support and infrastructure if relevant.

So to ensure your coat of paint is resilient and not just a superficial layer of gloss, remember the sales version of the '6 P's', Proper Planning Prevents Pxxs Poor Performance, or the '3 P's' created by Gary at Trendex at a recent 'in house' sales course held by us which are Plan, Prioritise and Perform.

Until next month have a great sales month in June and remember 'Attitude conquers everything'. Go out there and make it happen! ■

**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.**

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