



Sales Academy

Part six

Keep fit in sales – exercise your FABs! So says Pro-Train4Results' Paul Rowland.

In last month's issue we reviewed the importance of building the relationship with our customer and how the different questioning techniques can help in this process. We move on now to working our USPs (Unique Selling Points) and exercising our FABs (Feature Advantage Benefits).

This is the part of the sales process when we need to sell; not tell and in doing so link all the information you have retrieved from your questions with the customer and match their answers with the USPs and FABs of your business.

Before we look at these in more detail, I would like to offer you a tip – make sure you sell your assets not your liabilities. This might sound on the face of things quite basic advice. I have though, encountered situations where a customer may ask if you can fulfil a specific service or supply a particular product. No problem if you can, but what happens if you can't? This is where sometimes the sales person will then launch into a whole tirade of reasons why their company cannot satisfy the customer's needs; consequently and inadvertently giving much valuable

'air time' confirming the liabilities and not the assets of their company and thus dampening the interest level substantially.

So what should you do in this case? If, as suggested in the earlier articles you have planned your call, simply reply back to the customer: "That is something we currently cannot offer you but could we cover this question in more detail a little further in our discussions."

Why are you doing this? When you are speaking to your customer, especially if it is the first time, you are trying to build their appetite to do business with you or, like building a fire, initially you start with a spark from which your objective is to build an almighty inferno that cannot be extinguished. If then, at the beginning of the conversation, you concentrate on your liabilities, potentially you stand the risk of prematurely, at the very least, dousing your flames or completely extinguishing the reasons why the customer should do business with you!

We talked in the earlier articles on how better we perform when we are in control and this tactic does exactly that. Furthermore when we then answer the



reasons why we cannot achieve what the customer needed towards the end of the conversation, we should be in a position where the things that we can do far outweigh the things we can't do and, therefore, has a minimal effect on reducing our inferno.

So how do we go about creating this inferno? Yes, you've got it, through USPs and FABs. Here are some questions then that you will need to find the answers to that will help in creating your own USPs:

- *Why do customers buy your product?*
- *Why select you over the competition?*
- *How did it benefit them and what problems did it solve?*
- *What were the consequences/implications of purchasing your product/service?*
- *What effect have you had on operational efficiencies and the company bottom line?*
- *A key point here: if you cannot find answers to any of the above you will struggle to make your product or company seem attractive to your customer. However don't just stop there, be proactive, you have to go and find something that will begin to ignite that fire. Remember also though that well known expression 'people buy people'; this could be a key USP so make sure you make full use of it!*

Once we have established these USPs, the final part of the equation is to link these to features and how they can benefit the customer in line with their needs qualified earlier in the questioning phase of the process.

Once this cycle is completed the customer will then be able to see how your supply solution meets their needs and, potentially, are ready to agree to your solution. Key words in this process are 'which', 'this' and 'means'.

Let's take a look at an example of a feature advantage benefit statement and how we can exercise our FABs!

FEATURE

"We have our own fleet of delivery vehicles and van drivers."

ADVANTAGE

"Which means our drivers operate under complete control of our business, all of whom have been with our company

now for over five years and know about our products and company; focusing on exceeding customers' expectations and achieving the customer KPIs previously mentioned."

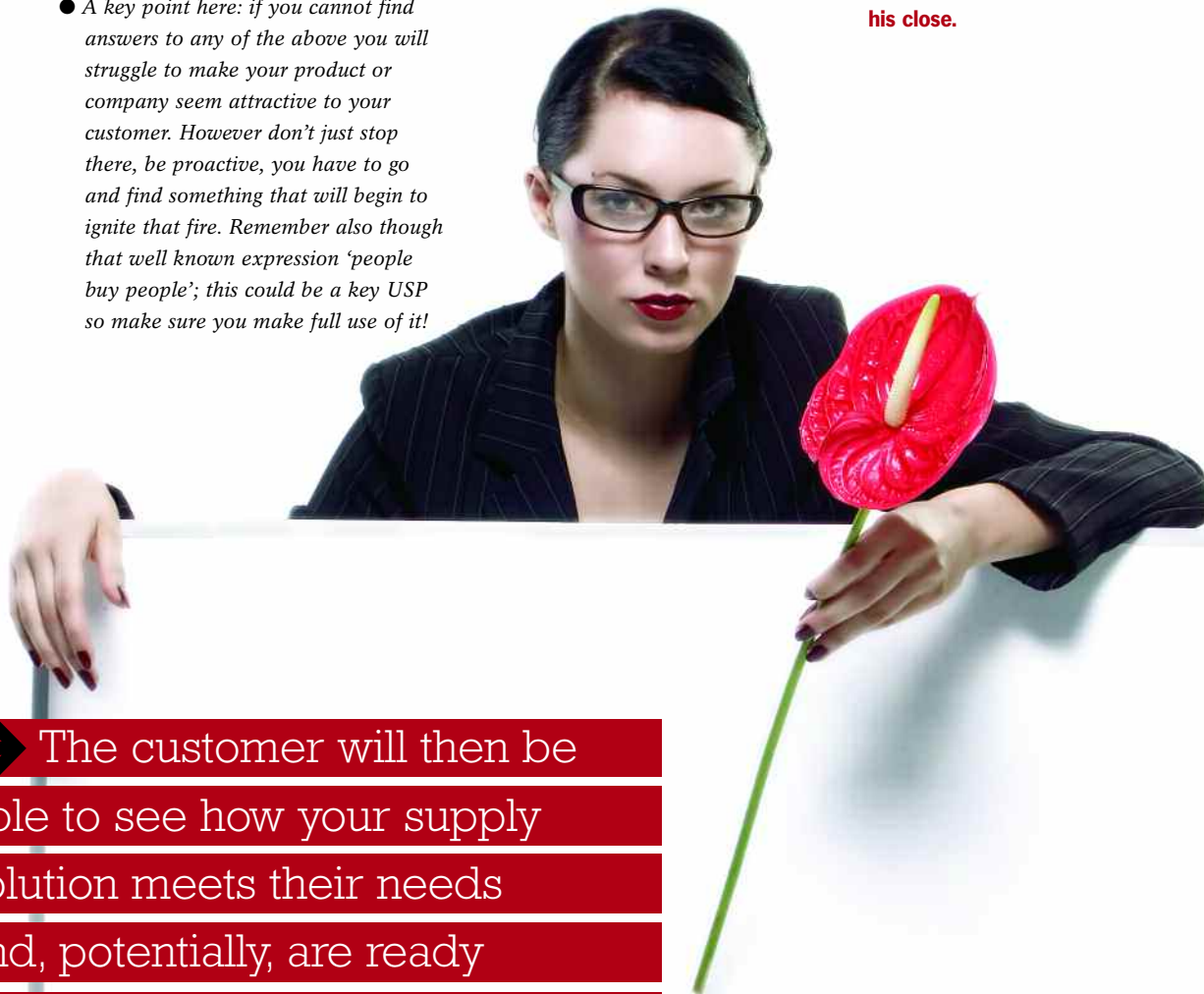
BENEFIT

"This means that we will be able to meet your requirements of delivering into your two locations by 10am every morning, however, should there be any urgent delivery needs outside of the 'norm', because we have control of our transport logistics we should be in a situation to resolve any urgent delivery requirements also."

One final tip to leave you with: customers will always buy benefits not features.

Until next month, which concludes this series of the Sales Academy, as always – 'Attitude conquers everything'. Go out there and make it happen! ●

Next month Paul Rowland makes his close.



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