

## 10 Tips for Winning Sales Presentations

The sales presentation is your chance to show and tell, but it's not all show and tell. You also need to think strategically about the customer's buying process and their needs, your competitors' offerings and why your solution is best. Here are 10 keys to planning a delivering a winning sales presentation.

1. Find out in advance how much time you'll have. Have you ever had a key decision-maker leave in the middle of your presentation because he or she was out of time? You aren't holding the attention of a prospect who is looking at the clock! At the beginning of the call, ask how much time the prospect has set aside. Then adjust your presentation to take no more than 60 percent of the allotted time. Why only 60 percent? Because your prospect's decisions to act typically occur at the end of a meeting, so you want to allow enough time to resolve any remaining issues and reach an agreement.
2. Another question I ask at the beginning of every sales presentation is, "Since the last time we met, has anything changed?" If your competitor gave them a presentation yesterday you may have a few new hurdles to overcome. And the sooner you know what those hurdles are, the more time you have to plan a response.
3. The next question you want to ask is "Where are you in your decision process?" If they tell me they have scheduled presentations with three suppliers, and I'm the first presenter, I know the chances of them agreeing to a decision at the end of my presentation are virtually nil. Why? You play the customer. Suppose you schedule appointments with three suppliers - would you make a decision at the end of the first presentation? No, because it would take more time, energy and stress to cancel the appointments than it would to just go ahead with them. Also, you wouldn't cancel them because comparison is necessary to recognize value. Recently one of my clients showed me his new sales brochure - he was obviously very pleased with it. My immediate reaction was that it looked okay but it did not strike me one way or the other. Then I asked him to show me what he was using before - and then I KNEW how much better this brochure was than the last! It was the comparison that allowed me to recognize the improvement. Your customers need comparison too, to recognize your value. So if it happens that you're the first presenter, don't go for the close - because you would be asking for something you can't get - and your customer will think you are pushy. Instead, come up with a reason to come back and see them after their other presentations - when they will likely be in a position to make a decision. For this reason I prefer to present last because it's closest to the customer's point of decision. And that's . . .
4. The 4th key to effective presentations - try to be the last presenter. If I'm the final supplier to present, and I've shown why I'm their best choice, it's only reasonable to ask for a commitment to buy. In one of the largest sales opportunities I've ever worked on - I was the third of three presenters to a committee of seven decision makers, the most senior of whom was the executive vice president, a Mr. Burns. About 10 minutes before the conclusion of my presentation the phone rang - Mr. Burns' cab had arrived - he had a plane to catch. As he stood up I said, "Mr. Burns, before you leave, may I ask you one final question? He said, "Sure." I asked him, "Now that you've evaluated all the options, is there any reason why my solution is not your best option?" He said, "Yep!" And out it came - his final concern about my solution.... It was a concern that I was ready for - I had anticipated that it would be a concern - but I never got the chance to respond to it because his comment triggered a firestorm of conversation around the conference table. Mr. Burns missed his cab - but several other decision-makers drove him to the airport so they could continue their discussion. A few weeks later I learned that, in the car, a lower-level decision-maker had resolved his concern - and I won the sale! This example also points out that today, as much as 90 percent of the sale takes place when you're not there. So you've got to make sure that the prospect(s) championing your cause have the tools to sell other decision-makers for you.
5. A good sales presentation starts with a quick review of the customers' goals and objectives. Then list on a flip chart each of the customer's buying criteria. This list of criteria is your outline for an

effective sales presentation. Show how your solution meets and exceeds each decision factor.

6. Throughout your presentation, get reaction from your prospects. After demonstrating a capability you could ask, "How would this be an improvement?" or "How would this help?" Interactive presentations keep prospects more involved and interested.
7. Communicate all of your unique strengths. Today, it's not enough to show that you can meet your customer's needs. Your customer wants to know two things: can you do what we need done and how can you do it better than the other options we are considering? So, you must have some reasons why you are their best choice. And to ensure that my strengths are understood, I always prepare a flip chart titled "Why We're Your Best Choice." Here, I put at least three reasons why I am the customer's best choice. Many times I'll list seven or eight reasons. The more reasons you have, and the more compelling those reasons are - the better your chances of winning the sale.
8. Use visuals in your presentations because a picture is worth a thousand words. Support your important ideas with a picture, show images on an overhead, flip chart, or laptop computer. Keep your visuals simple. One idea per image. Make it interesting, relevant and readable.
9. If your customer is not in a position to make a decision at the end of your presentation, schedule another appointment. Come up with a reason to get back in there.
0. Last, but not least, have fun and be yourself. If you want to persuade other people, you must connect with them on personal level first. Think of John Madden, the football commentator. Madden is successful because he makes emotional contact with by just being who he is. To put more impact in your sales presentations, connect with your prospects by just being YOU.

In sports, when two teams are evenly matched, the winner will be the team that executes its plays the best – the team that makes the fewest mistakes. To deliver a winning sales presentation, you must do the same. When you implement these 10 tips in your sales presentations you'll win more sales!