

Plan Conclusions that Get Action

To achieve maximum value from your next sales meeting, prepare the ending first.

Throughout history, great leaders have inspired others to action by preparing, then delivering carefully constructed conclusions to speeches. Lincoln's, "Government of the people, by the people, for the people . . .," Patrick Henry's, "Give me liberty or give me death," and John Kennedy's, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" are a few examples.

Great speakers have a clear understanding about specifically what they want the audience to do as a result. So, when you sit down to prepare your meeting, write the ending first. What should salespeople be able to do after the meeting? What will they need to do different in the future? What does your top salesperson do that your other salespeople don't? When you write the ending first, it will be much easier to plan the introduction and body of your meeting.

Here is a step by step method to plan your next sales meeting.

1. Be very specific about what you want your salespeople to do. Avoid vague words like "understand" and "appreciate." List no more than two or three actions, anymore will be difficult to remember. Tell them what you want them to do and when. For instance:
 - Schedule five face-to-face appointments with new prospects next week.
 - Ask each prospect what he likes best and least about his present method.
 - Ask each prospect to speculate on future time, money, and productivity costs if she doesn't solve their problem now.
2. Make at least one of the actions something simple your salespeople can do immediately. As the saying goes, "well begun is half done." If your salespeople leave was something simple to do they are more likely to do it. With they take action and achieve results they will be more likely to act on the other things you asked them to do.
3. Outline your conclusion as follows:
 - Summarize key points into short, but memorable, sentences.
 - Restate the main benefit and appeal to salespeople's emotion as well as logic. Emotional appeals include financial freedom, health vitality, safety, romance, piece of mind, and personal fulfillment.
 - Tell your salespeople specifically what you want them to do.
4. Save your best "Ah ha!" points for last. Too many sales meeting flow like a bell curve, up but the beginning and down at the end. This brings your audience down just before the most important part - your conclusion. Pull out a pad of Post-it notes and right just one topic on each note. Arrange your topics to ensure that you build up to a conclusion and not down.
5. Follow-up to measure the action taken. Great speakers know that their success is measured by the action that the audience takes as a result. Be specific in your follow-up. For instance, in the example cited earlier you might ask, "How many new face-to-face appointments did you set for last week? What questions did you ask? What were your results?"

What you say last in your sales meeting is what your salespeople will remember most. A well planned and presented conclusion can inspire your team to action. When you follow these simple steps your meetings will be more effective. Plus, you'll feel great sense of accomplishment when you see your

ideas actually being implemented in the field.