

# TACTics

for Sales Professionals<sup>SM</sup>



Sandler Sales Institute  
180° From Traditional Sales Training®

## WEEK 13

## INTEREST

***The TACTIC: People do not buy features and benefits, they buy ways to avoid or overcome pain.***

### **The STORY:**

Tim arrived at the prospect's office fifteen minutes before the appointment so that he could sit in the car and mentally review what he was going to say. Tim very carefully visualized each step of his presentation making sure that the benefits of buying from him and his companies were crystal clear. Looking at his watch, he took a deep breath, let it out slowly, and proceeded in to the appointment.

Once the pleasantries were over, Tim got right down to business.

"For the past five years, I have represented my company, which has been in business for over 50 years and provided to businesses like yours, the products and service which enable you to meet your customers' demands."

"That why I agreed to see you Tim," responded the prospect and then added, "I have a real need for what you are selling. In fact, I have to have it or staying in business will be almost impossible."

"I'm glad you agreed to meet with me. Our products have the longest mean time to failure in the industry and as a result, your downtime will be reduced by 75% within the first two years."

"Tim, that's great to know. But my engineering department is not sure that we can retro-fit your devices onto our equipment."

"That's something I'm sure we'll take care of later."

The prospect went on. "My production manager is very concerned, and so am I, that retraining our workers will take a long time. We can't afford to let production slip.

"I understand everything you are telling me. My advice is this: Don't worry. We've handled bigger problems than yours."

Twenty minutes later, the prospect thanked Tim for coming by and promised to review the proposal when Tim sent it over. Once Tim left the office, the prospect sat behind his desk with a nagging feeling that got more ominous the more he thought about it. "That salesperson," he thought, "didn't listen to anything I said." He picked up the phone, pressed a button and said, "Maggie, when and if Tim calls in the next few weeks, tell him I'm out of the office...and he's probably going to send along a proposal, just file it. Thanks."

**The RESULT:**

Tim ignored three chances handed to him by the prospect that would have led to the prospect believing that what he said mattered. The prospect was in pain, Tim ignored the pain, and now the prospect is going to ignore Tim.

**DISCUSSION:**

Despite what customers and prospects say, they buy from you to get rid of some pain that either is present or will be present without your product/service. They do not buy the product/service because you are a wonderful person. Of course, this does not mean that you should be anything less than wonderful. The point is that your customers and prospects can buy what you are selling from any number of other vendors at anytime. So why do they buy from you?

**APPROACH:**

The story on the reverse side contains prospect pain statements that Tim ignores in his rush to make his presentation. Tim's need to present causes him to completely ignore what the prospect is saying. For example, "I have a real need for what you are selling. In fact, I have to have it or staying in business will be almost impossible."

Tim goes right on ignoring this pain statement. He should have stopped the prospect and asked, "Staying in business will be almost impossible?" By asking this question, Tim is increasing the prospect's pain. Once the prospect is ready for a trip to the hospital, Tim will then present the solution to the pain.

You cannot ignore a prospect, or a customer who is in pain, and get away with it. If you do, he will take it out on you because from his point of view, you were insensitive and did not listen.

Instead of Tim making his presentation, he should have listened to the presentation that the prospect was making.

**THOUGHT:**

People in pain resent people who cannot take the pain away. You sell pain relief.

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## **WEEK 14**

## **CLOSING**

### ***The TACTIC: What you know can hurt you, so dummy up!***

#### **The STORY:**

Nick had just been hired and as yet, had not been sent out to the sales training seminars. If it were not for the fact that two of the salespeople called in sick, Nick would never have been on the floor. But there he was, with only the most basic information about the products he was supposed to sell.

"Hi," said the prospect coming up to Nick, "I'm interested in the grey one over there."

Nick was in a panic and before he could help himself, he blurted out, "Oh, that grey one over there, that's good...I guess."

"Yeah, it is good. Been looking for awhile."

Once again Nick found his mouth working independently of his brain. "I guess you must not really need it...since you've been looking for awhile."

"Well," responded the prospect, "now that you mention it, I really do need it. Just wanted to make sure."

"Oh," said Nick, "then you're not really sure..."

The prospect just stared at Nick for moment and turned to look at the grey one. Nick had no idea what to do next. So he found himself just standing there like some sort of dummy.

"Tell you what," said the prospect, "I'll take it."

"You'll take it?" asked an astonished Nick.

"Definitely, my mind's made up."

After the customer left, Nick decided that as soon as he got the sales training, he'd really know what to do. He never again wanted to feel like such a dummy.

#### **The RESULT:**

With any luck and enough time, Nick will learn that professional salespeople do exactly what neophyte salespeople do, but learn to do it on purpose. And when the two ailing salespeople return and learn of Nick's successful sale, it will be attributed to beginner's luck. Nick succeeded in this case because he stumbled into a way to let the prospect close himself — Nick did not get in the way of the prospect.

**DISCUSSION:**

Being a dummy does not mean you immediately forget everything you know about the products and services that you sell. In many instances, forgetting this information could get you into quite a serious situation. Think of the pharmaceutical salespeople.

Once you have this information, the vast majority of salespeople now believe that by telling anyone who will listen what this information is, a sale will be made.

Consider this for a moment: people buy a product because it solves some pain they have. People do not buy because some salesperson educates them. People in pain want relief, not an education.

**APPROACH:**

Do not assume that you know what the prospect is looking for nor that the prospect has any interest in knowing what you know about a product/service.

How do you go about doing this?

Ask questions. Then take the answers and reflect them back to the prospect.

The prospect makes the decision to buy based on his level of pain and budget. The sale is NEVER made based on the intelligence and knowledge of the salesperson.

If the prospect feels that your solution to his pain is within the budget, he will be convinced that you are the best salesperson in the world. His perception has nothing to do with what you actually have or don't have in your head.

**THOUGHT:**

The most successful salesperson is an educated dummy.

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## **WEEK 15**

## **CLOSING**

***The TACTIC: Give pain solutions, not educational solutions.***

### **The STORY:**

The table in the conference room at the prospect's office was the biggest one Tim had ever seen. A highly polished finish reflected even the muted lighting. Tim was prepared to present his solution to the ten people gathered there. Knowing it was going to be either his solution or the competitor's, Tim had a presentation that would answer every last question. During the past week, Tim had done little else than prepare for this moment.

"Well," started the committee head, "I think we should get going. Tim, could you make your presentation?"

"Certainly," responded Tim. For the next hour and a half, Tim provided a dazzling array of charts, slides, and even a demonstration of how his product was the most cost effective. At the end, he had left fifteen minutes to handle any possible questions.

"Now, I would like to give the committee the chance to ask any questions that might not have been covered."

The committee head nodded and said, "Tim, I think everyone here is completely impressed. I, for one, have never seen such a thorough explanation of what your product does. It truly is impressive."

"Thank you," responded Tim, thinking to himself that this sale was in the bag.

"But I have one question, Tim," said the committee head looking around the table, "Do you always give such insightful presentations?"

And before Tim could respond, the committee head went on, "Just kidding. Of course you do. Unless someone else has a question, I think we should move on to the next one."

Tim left the conference room knowing this sale was done. As he walked by the competitor, he felt a twinge of sorrow knowing the fellow had no chance.

### **The RESULT:**

A week later, Tim found out that the competitor had made the sale. He called the committee head and asked what had happened. What Tim learned was disheartening. Everyone felt Tim's product knowledge was unmatched, but the committee felt that the competitor really answered their questions.

**DISCUSSION:**

Most sales presentations, whether they be involved and extensive in a conference room or short and informal while leaning over a washing machine, are educational. The mistaken assumption is that if you can educate the prospect about your product/service, he will buy it. This is not the case.

Unless the prospect is hiring you to educate him, you are wasting your time and his using an educational presentation.

**APPROACH:**

Before you make a presentation, you should know what the prospect's pains are. Knowing what the pains are allows you to develop a solution that will take the pain away. This is precisely how you make the presentation.

The first step in the presentation is to go over the pains to make sure they are still there and still hurt.

The second step is to present the solution for pain number one. Then ask, did this solution solve the pain? If it did, move on to pain two.

Continue in this manner until you have presented your solutions for each pain. Now you ask the prospect what she would like to do next. Wait until you get an answer.

That really is all there is to a presentation.

Tim was told that the committee felt his competitor really answered their questions. What the competitor did was tell them their pain and how his solution would make the pain go away.

Tim just educated. Tim didn't make the sale.

**THOUGHT:**

Pain solutions sell — educational solutions create headaches.

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## **WEEK 16**

## **CLOSING**

***The TACTIC: Only give a presentation to confirm an order.***

### **The STORY:**

Nick had planned on attending his first sales training course but the course had been canceled at the last minute. Just my rotten luck, he thought.

And today, instead of being in the course, he was in the middle of the sales floor. Oh no, he said to himself, here comes that old lady that all of the salespeople have endless stories about. She never buys anything but has a million questions.

"Young man!" she barked, "Yes, you. Whenever I come in here it is impossible to get any help."

"Well," said Nick wishing he was anywhere but here, "I doubt I'm going to be able to do anything for you."

"Really?" she questioned. "How refreshing."

"How about this," asked Nick, "You tell me what you want to know, I'll try to help you, and maybe you can decide."

She looked at him for moment. "Hmmm, that sounds reasonable." With that she proceeded to tell poor Nick about the terrible problems she had and how she hoped what he was selling would do something for them.

"I kinda think it will do what you want, do you?" asked Nick.

"You know, it probably will."

"It costs too much, doesn't it?" asked Nick who then immediately decided that he had lost his mind asking such a question.

"No, not really."

"Oh. What do you want me to do now?" asked Nick, feeling he had made every mistake possible.

"Wrap it up. I'll take it. And do you want to know why I'm buying it from you?"

"Why?"

"You're the only one here who has ever answered my questions."

**The RESULT:**

Nick may decide the woman is crazy. He didn't answer any questions. But what Nick did do, was establish a contract at the beginning without realizing it. And then the prospect made her own presentation. And at the end, she had only one path to take. She had to buy. Nick kept his end of the contract, she had to keep hers.

**DISCUSSION:**

How many salespeople get a contract established up-front with a prospect? Very few. There are two reasons why this is so. First, salespeople just don't establish one hoping that the prospect, by some miracle, will buy. Second, previous attempts at establishing a contract didn't work.

**THOUGHT:**

Unless you establish a contract up-front, the prospect has no reason to buy from you, regardless of your price, your quality or any other reason. And if the prospect does buy anyway, you were just lucky.



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## **WEEK 17**

## **CLOSING**

### ***The TACTIC: What would you like me to do now?***

#### **The STORY:**

It was now 4:30 on Friday afternoon, and it was the last day of the month. Tim had been trying to close the sale for the past two hours. If he closed, he'd not only meet his monthly quota, but earn a bonus. Tim was under a lot of pressure.

"So," said Tim, "I probably shouldn't tell you this . . . but I will."

"Tell me what?" asked the prospect.

"Monday starts a new month, and I've been told that a 10% price increase goes into effect. If you sign now, I can ensure that you'll get the price we've discussed."

The prospect started laughing, and when he saw the look on Tim's face, explained.

"Tim, I was in sales once. The 'impending event' close isn't going to work on me. Let me ask you, if I show you the door, tell you to come back Monday, and then when you do come back, have a check written for today's price, you're going to refuse it?"

"Well . . ." began Tim.

"Please, Tim, don't try to pressure me because it won't work. Every insurance salesperson in the country has beaten that close to death."

"Well, if you add up the pluses and minuses . . ." stammered Tim.

"That's the Ben Franklin. And it's as old as Ben Franklin. Tell you what Tim, give me a call next week sometime."

#### **The RESULT:**

Not every prospect knows the name of the closing techniques salespeople use, but almost every prospect has been unmercifully subjected to the same techniques over and over and over.

I'm sure you've heard the phrase, familiarity breeds contempt. That's what you are facing when you try the tried-and-true closing techniques. Prospect contempt.

When you get to the point where you want to ask the prospect if he is going to buy or not, ask the following question without changing a single word: "What would you like me to do now?"

Then wait until you get a response. Wait no matter how long it takes. What you hear will amaze you.

**DISCUSSION:**

Prospects may not know the name of the closing line, but they are aware that the closing lines are used by hundreds, if not thousands, of salespeople. But these well-worn closings still work. Why change?

First, prospects become either consciously or unconsciously suspicious when they hear the standard closing lines. Using the standard closing lines reminds the prospects that you are a salesperson who is trying to take their money. This reminder causes prospects to raise objections to the sale. Of course, you can answer the objections and try the close again. But wouldn't it be better to do something that keeps prospects from coming up with objections?

Second, if your closing strategy is different from all the other salespeople the prospect has dealt with over the years, the prospect's ability to automatically reject you and your product/service is greatly reduced. The likelihood of making the sale will increase.

**APPROACH:**

List every closing line that you currently use. Once you have that list, imagine yourself in the last sales situation where one of those closing lines did not work. Now imagine yourself instead saying, "What would you like me to do now?"

Think about this. The answer is not "yes" or "no." The prospect will be forced to come up with a statement. Unless the statement is some variation of "wrap it up," take the statement and turn it into a question. For example, "I really like it, but the price is too high," reflected back to the prospect becomes, "By 'really like' and 'too high,' you mean...?"

This approach keeps you in control of the sales situation by allowing you to end the meeting if you find the prospect is just "kicking tires."

**THOUGHT:**

The goal of every salesperson should be to place the responsibility of closing the sale on the prospect.

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## **WEEK 18**

## **PROSPECTING, CLOSING**

***The TACTIC: Your client is my prospect.***

### **The STORY:**

In the past three years, Bob has made top salesperson 10 times. He guards his customer list. New hires quickly learn which people not to approach. If calls come in from those people, well, they belong to Bob, since he already put in the work.

And should someone new call, and Bob's customer referred the prospect, the referral call belongs to Bob.

Bob knows his constant monitoring of other salespeople in the office sometimes annoys them, but he has put in the time and deserves the rewards. After all, no one else has been top salesperson as many times.

In the past two months, Bob has become more emphatic about keeping his customers and the leads that they generate.

The dark secret is that Bob is losing sales to competitors; a lot of sales. After working so hard to get people to buy from him, more than a few are now turning their backs on him and going elsewhere.

Fortunately, he has kept this from everyone at the office. In the past when this happened, and as it often has in the past three years, his sales plummeted.

Hey, he thinks to himself, that's what sales is all about. Boom and bust. Right now, I'm on the bust side. I'll just push harder like I've done before, and before you know it, I'll be top dog again. I'll get out there and pound on even more doors to get new customers. I'm really good at getting new customers. I always get more than anyone else.

### **The RESULT:**

Bob may get out of his slump. Bob may get new customers. But can he keep them? Instead of worrying about people in his office "moving in" on him, he should spend some time figuring out that his customers are someone else's prospects. Then he must devise a plan to keep them. Keeping a customer for life is cheaper than finding new ones every month.

**DISCUSSION:**

One amazing characteristic of salespeople is the belief that once you have a customer, that customer is yours for the rest of time. Of course, as time goes by and additional orders are not forthcoming, the salesperson begins to suspect that perhaps he cannot depend on this customer for regular orders. Then, as irregular or no orders come in, the salesperson accepts the customer's excuses for not placing orders as legitimate reasons for a lack of business: the budget is cut; new upper management; wrong time of year; when I get back from vacation. The list goes on.

The reason the salesperson is not getting more orders? It is really simple. Some other salesperson is making the sales that you could have made, because to the other salesperson, your customer was his prospect. The other salesperson had nothing to lose by going after your customer. Unless your customer dies or his business closes, you have no excuse for not making additional sales.

**APPROACH:**

Sit down with a list of your customers. Picture each one. As you picture each, also picture yourself doing something for that person within the next seven days. Write down what you pictured.

You have accomplished two things that 98% of the salespeople out there have never done. First, you have chosen some action you will take. You have an objective. Second, you have established a time frame in which to accomplish the objective.

All you have to do now is go out and do what you have pictured. If you don't, know that some other salesperson will.

**THOUGHT:**

Customers do not pledge undying loyalty to you. Either you sell your customers every day or watch them walk away, because every day someone else is wooing them.

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## WEEK 19

## CLOSING

***The TACTIC: Deal with “buyer’s remorse” while you’re still in front of your prospect.***

### **The STORY:**

Nick was having a real string of successful closes. The experienced salespeople were jealous. But then Nick started having a problem.

The last three sales were canceled within days of being made. In one instance, the color was all wrong. In another, the customer said that she couldn’t wait two weeks. Finally, although the quality of the product was first rate, the customer decided she couldn’t afford it. In every instance, none of the folks wanted to have any further discussion—the orders were canceled. Period.

Nick decided that he really needed to attend the company sales training program.

Later that same day, a young couple came in and chose the highest-quality and most expensive product in the store.

“This is the one we want. We’ll order it now.”

As Nick was writing up the order, he stopped and stared at the couple. He could not believe the words coming out of his mouth.

“I hope you don’t change your mind, but let me ask you something. When you first came in, you were looking for a moderately priced item, and you’ve selected the most expensive item in the store. Are you sure you really want to do this?”

“You’re right,” replied the woman, “I’d probably think that tomorrow, but looking at it now, I know the price is worth it. Yes. We want it. No doubts.”

### **The RESULT:**

Without knowing what he was doing, Nick gave the customer a chance to deal with buyer’s remorse. Every customer gets buyer’s remorse, which is nothing more than asking the question, “Did I do the right thing buying?” In this instance, Nick allowed the customer to express doubt while he could do something about it.

**DISCUSSION:**

Buyer's remorse is a given with any significant purchase. The buyer will always ask himself, "Did I do the right thing?"

As Nick found out, buyer's remorse, if left unattended, results in canceled orders.

There is also a more insidious version of this remorse which is even more detrimental. The order is not canceled, but the customer is not happy with the purchase. This does not mean the customer is badmouthing the product/service, but neither is the customer "good-mouthing" the product/service. This happens often.

The result of this form of buyer's remorse is the customer never comes back. He never tells you why; he just never shows up again. No repeat sales.

**APPROACH:**

The simplest, yet most difficult thing to do from the salesperson's point of view is to give the prospect a chance to "unbuy" once he buys. Here's the catch with this tactic: Don't just ask if the prospect wants to change his mind - pick out a minor item that once concerned your prospect and that he stated was no longer a problem, and ask about that. If the prospect starts to "unbuy" on a minor point, then you need to start asking questions.

"At the beginning you mentioned that the color wasn't right, but if I have it correct, you no longer feel that way and you still want to go ahead?"

Either the prospect will reconfirm her decision and not suffer from buyer's remorse, or the remorse will immediately surface. You control how you will handle the remorse. This is preferable to having the prospect return when you are not there at all and back out of the sale.

**THOUGHT:**

Dealing with buyer's remorse before you make the sale will result in a customer who will be happy to buy more products and services from you.

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## **WEEK 20**

## **CLOSING**

***The TACTIC: Get up to leave, then make the sale.***

### **The STORY:**

Nick was having trouble trying to close the prospect. Still never having attended any company sales training courses, he hit upon a solution to the problem. One of the most experienced salespeople was in the back, and Nick decided to go and ask his advice.

"If you could excuse me for one moment," Nick said, "I just remembered that I have an important message for one of the other fellows who is in the back room . . . I forgot to give it to him earlier."

"You are going to come back, aren't you?" asked the prospect.

"Of course," responded Nick, "why would you think I wouldn't?"

"Oh, I know I'm a royal pain in the butt when it comes to making a decision about buying something," responded the prospect. "Most of the time, the salespeople get tired of trying to convince me and wander away, and I never see them again."

Nick wasn't sure what to say. He really needed to get the experienced salesperson's advice so he turned and headed toward the back room.

"Wait a minute," said the prospect, "I don't want you to leave. I'll buy it."

"You're sure?" asked Nick, hoping he hadn't said too much.

"Definitely. Wrap it up."

When the customer is out the door, thought Nick, I'll go back and ask the experienced salesperson what to do the next time this happens.

### **The RESULT:**

Nick did something very important for the wrong reason. From the prospect's point of view, which is the only one that counts in selling, Nick was getting up to leave, never to be seen again. Again, the prospect would be left standing alone, not having bought anything. This pressure on the prospect, which Nick applied without realizing it, was enough to make the prospect give up and buy. Unfortunately, if Nick does ask for advice, he'll probably be told the wrong thing.

**DISCUSSION:**

Getting up and leaving a prospect is almost impossible for a salesperson to consider. Why would you ever want to give the impression that you are going to walk out the door?

The reason for getting up and leaving is to let the prospect know it is time to make a decision. The pressure is now on the prospect where it belongs.

This is not a tactic that you want to try with every prospect you come across. But if you have reached the “end of your rope” with one, you have nothing to lose by trying. The worst that could happen is you won’t make the sale. But then, you had no chance anyway.

**APPROACH:**

There are many ways to get up and leave. One approach is to physically start to move away. Another is to simply look at the prospect and say, “Off the record . . . I get the impression that you haven’t come to a decision. Let’s assume that you decide it’s over. You don’t buy. What happens now?”

This verbal getting up and leaving forces the prospect to see a future in which he does not have your product/service. If he is in enough pain to be seriously considering buying, then looking at a future without buying is more painful. The only catch to the verbal leaving is that you **MUST** wait for a response. Do not rescue him or physically leave him.

Do not change “What happens now?” to “What happens then?” The word “now” brings the future, without your product/service, into the present, and as a result, pressure to decide becomes overwhelming.

**THOUGHT:**

“Leaving” the prospect makes the prospect want to come to a decision.