

TACTics

for Sales ProfessionalsSM



Sandler Sales Institute
180° From Traditional Sales Training[®]

WEEK 37

INTEREST, PRESENTATION

The TACTIC: Get out your calendar.

The STORY:

Almost every salesperson in the world has some method of keeping track of appointments; most often it's a calendar of sorts. And, while it should come as no surprise, so do most people who make appointments with salespeople. Fortunately, Nick was reminded of this by his prospect.

Nick had cold-called Mary and had gotten through the secretarial screen. But Nick was having a problem with Mary. He wanted to make an appointment to see her but wasn't sure how to go about it.

"So," said Nick, "based on what you have told me, it appears we might be able to do business."

"I think you're right Nick. And to be honest with you, when you got past my secretary, I first thought you'd waste my time."

"Why's that," asked Nick.

"Most of the salespeople who get to me have no idea why they are calling and never ask me what my needs are."

"You're not serious," responded Nick, hoping this was going somewhere."

"Yes, I am," she responded.

Then the ensuing silence seemed to last forever.

"Nick, get out your calendar. How's next Thursday at 9:00 a.m.?"

"Great. Thursday at 9:00 a.m."

"Looking forward to it Nick; see you then."

The RESULT:

Getting the appointment is not as difficult as most salespeople would believe. The top performing salespeople don't have a problem getting them because they just assume one will be made. So they tell the prospect to take out the calendar instead of hoping the prospect will mention it.

DISCUSSION:

Why do salespeople engage in conversations during which they hope that the prospect will see the wisdom of making an appointment? One reason is that they consider any other approach as pushy or perhaps impolite. The end result is that at best, the salesperson asks, "Would you like to make an appointment?"

Consider this question from the prospect's point of view. Is the salesperson asking this because of one or more of the following reasons:

1. He doesn't think it important enough for me to schedule some time, so I won't.
2. He doesn't care whether I need it or not and leaves it up to me to find out.
3. He's already made his monthly quota and needs to show his sales manager he's still in there plugging. He wants to waste my time.

Unfair? Consider what runs through your mind when a salesperson asks you the same question.

APPROACH:

Come out and state that you want the prospect to take out her calendar. Do not ask, state. What is the absolute worst thing that could happen when you do this? The prospect will state, "I don't think we need to make an appointment." At that point you can come back with, "Oh, I'm sorry I offended you; I guess I had the wrong impression . . . why do you think that was?" Regardless of what comes next, you are now in a position to find out what the prospect's "stall" is.

And what is the best thing that could happen? You get the appointment.

By stating that you want the prospect to take out her calendar, you will very quickly find that your number of appointments rises rapidly.

THOUGHT:

Asking for the appointment is no more difficult than stating, "Get out your calendar."

TACTics

for Sales ProfessionalsSM



Sandler Sales Institute
180° From Traditional Sales Training[®]

WEEK 38

INTEREST, PRESENTATION

The TACTIC: Warm referrals from cold calls.

The STORY:

Tim was getting more and more frustrated with cold calling. For the past three days, no matter what he did, the result was always the same — no one wanted to make an appointment. Thumbing through the index cards one more time, he realized he was on the last one.

Using the tactics he had learned, getting past the secretarial screen was easy. Now Judy was on the line.

“Judy, I don’t know if we can do business,” he waited. The seconds passed but he was determined not to speak first — he was going to outwait Judy.

Success.

“Tim..., right?” she tentatively asked, “just why are you calling me?”

Tim spent the next few moments questioning Judy, only to find that she, just like the others, probably did not have a need for his product. His frustration was high and then, for some reason he could not explain, he decided to ask her one last question before hanging up.

“Judy, I appreciate that it looks like we aren’t going to do any business. But I have a problem; maybe you can help.”

“Sure. What is it?” she responded.

“For the past three days I’ve been calling folks only to find that none of them has a need for my product. Here’s my question — If you were me, whom would you call?”

There were a few moments of silence and then she responded, “You’ve got a pencil and paper; here are a couple of folks I know that would be interested.”

The RESULT:

Tim got warm referrals from a cold call because he asked for them. A simple tactic but one that works more often than not.

DISCUSSION:

This is not a complicated tactic to use. The difficult part of using this tactic is the salesperson overcoming his overwhelming desire to conclude the conversation as quickly as possible once he learns there is no interest.

In this story Tim was comfortable with what he was doing, and did not immediately bail out when he found the prospect had no use for his product. Keep in mind that even though she had no use for it for whatever reason, she knew what it was and what to do with it. In addition, unless she had just landed here from Pluto, she knew of others who used the same product. These other people could have a need for what Tim was selling. Tim was not asking her if they had a need, just for who they were.

By putting herself in Tim's situation for a moment, she began to think of who else Tim could call on.

APPROACH:

Do you know people who use laser printers? They probably have a need for toner cartridges. Do you know people who have a car? They probably have a need for a good mechanic. Whom do you know with children? They probably have a need for kids' clothing at reasonable prices.

Just by reading these questions, you probably thought of a few people. That's all a warm referral is. If you were me, whom would you call?

And when you call that referral, consider saying this, "Mary Smith thought I should contact you about (your product); why do you think she did that?" And if you get another warm referral from a referral, consider this opening line, "Mary Smith and Jill Blazer both thought I should contact you about (your product); do you think they were right?"

THOUGHT:

Getting warm referrals from cold calls is as simple to do as asking for them — "If you were me, whom would you call?"

TACTics

for Sales Professionals SM



Sandler Sales Institute
180° From Traditional Sales Training [®]

WEEK 39

INTEREST, CLOSING

The TACTIC: Traffic cops keep it moving — you should, too.

The STORY:

The traffic on the floor had been non-existent since earlier that morning. Bill and the other three salespeople had even given up talking with each other and just sat staring out the window. Not having anything else to do, Bill got up and walked to the door leading out. The other salespeople, alert to this sudden movement, quickly saw that no prospect was in the offing. Then, from out of nowhere, Bill saw someone headed toward the door. Timing is everything, thought Bill.

Bill held the door open, and Jack walked in.

“Must be pretty slow, “ Jack said, walking through the door, “if you’re standing here holding the door open.”

“Let me tell you, “ said Bill and then proceeded to spend ten minutes explaining just how slow it was. As he was talking, the other salespeople came over and added their comments.

Without realizing it, the four salespeople had taken twenty minutes to explain just how bad it was.

“So,” Bill finally said, “now that we have told you our sad tale, what can I do for you?”

Jack glanced at his watch.

“Actually I came in looking for something for my wife, but I’ve got to get going. I’ve run out of time.”

“Well,” said Bill, “we’re open until eight tonight.”

“If I can, I’ll try to stop back tonight,” responded Jack as he headed out the door.

The RESULT:

The prospect came in to buy, got a conversation about slow business from four salespeople and left. The salespeople were focused on their needs, not the prospect’s needs.

DISCUSSION:

Have you ever noticed that the top performing salespeople are always doing something, and that it's a rare day, if ever, when they just sit and do nothing? Why do you suppose that is the case?

One answer is that they are constantly busy taking care of their customers. Usually this statement is paired with, "and when I have a lot of customers, I'll be busy all the time, too." But as he speaks, the salesperson sits down and stares at the door, waiting for something to happen.

The top performing salespeople did not get to the top and stay there by just dreaming. They did things to get those customers and are continually doing the same things to get more.

The major difference between the top performing salespeople and everyone else is that they are always attending to details. Nothing escapes their attention. They are constantly on the move mentally and in many instances, physically.

APPROACH:

There is no such thing as a slow day in sales. In the story, if folks are not coming through the door, how about calling some folks who did come through the door in the past and asking them for warm referrals? Not difficult to do.

The best approach to take, assuming the top performing salesperson will allow it, is to tag along with him for a week. Note about every fifteen minutes what the person is doing. After one week, assuming you made the notes, you will have a wealth of things you also should be doing.

THOUGHT:

If you are not focused on keeping the customers you have and gaining more, then you will never succeed in sales to the level you thought possible.

TACTics

for Sales ProfessionalsSM



Sandler Sales Institute
180° From Traditional Sales Training®

WEEK 40

INTEREST, CLOSING

The TACTIC: The best presentation you're ever going to give, the prospect is never going to see.

The STORY:

George was excited about doing his first full-length sales presentation. Getting past the secretary, getting the first appointment and now going back to meet with the committee, this is what sales is all about, he thought. And to make sure that everything went well, Harold, his sales manager was going with him.

"Well, George, are you all set for your first dog and pony?" asked Harold.

"My what?" responded George.

"Dog and pony, that's what salespeople call sales presentations. You trot out the dog, show the audience all the tricks. Bring on the pony and show how the dog does tricks with the pony."

"Well, I suppose . . . I never thought of a sales presentation that way."

"Get used to it. The prospects like to be entertained a bit before you go in for the close."

George gave his presentation, and unfortunately, the prospects did not place an order. Coming back in the car, Harold offered some words of advice.

"George, you certainly know the product well enough, but you didn't do enough flash. Not enough dog and pony. You've got to make the presentation more entertaining, get them excited."

"Yeah, I guess so," nodded George glumly.

"Hey, don't worry. That's why I went with you. There are some jokes I think you ought to try on the next show-and-tell. Get them laughing and then get them signing, that's my motto."

The RESULT:

If the prospect is trying to decide on buying a dog or a pony, then doing a dog and pony show might be appropriate.

DISCUSSION:

Sales presentations are, nine times out of ten, a meeting during which the salesperson does the following:

1. Throws as much information as possible about his company, his products and his past customers at the wall.
2. Tries to determine what sticks on the wall and, as a result, seems to be of interest to the assembled.
3. Hopes that the products of interest are the ones for which he has the brochures.
4. Prays that when it is confirmed which products are of interest, they are in stock or immediately available.

This method of doing sales presentations is exhausting, frustrating, and while it will result in sales about two times out of ten, it generally does not produce a decent income for the salesperson.

APPROACH:

A sales presentation should consist of only the following:

1. The four or five problems the prospect has that you can solve.
2. A restatement that your solution is within the dollar range the prospect can afford.
3. Confidence that you are making this presentation to the person who will make the decision.

To include anything else in the presentation is self-defeating. At the conclusion of your presentation, you need only ask one question, "What would you like to do now?"

THOUGHT:

If you are selling dogs and ponies, then by all means give a dog and pony presentation. If you are selling anything else, then why are you doing a dog and pony?