

CONSULTATIVE SALES SIMPLIFIED

B2C

PRESENTED BY JOHN SPENCE

In this workbook I am going to teach you about what it truly takes to be a very successful professional sales person. I have a company belief that Sales is a noble profession. If you take it seriously, being a fantastic sales person can be fun, rewarding and something to be proud of. In my opinion, the entire foundation of excellent sales rests on being completely customer focused and 100% honest at all time.

There are several different names for this type of sales: consultative sales, collaborative sales, value-added selling, win-win sales, relationships sales...and on and on. But my point is simple; if you take your role in sales very seriously, truly care about your customers, are well-prepared and highly professional, and tell the truth, you can become a superior professional sales person.

But this is not the way people have always looked at the profession of sales.

Fill out the left column with everything you can think of, then in the right column write the exact opposite of what is on the left.

Typical negative stereotypes of sales people	Consultative sales people

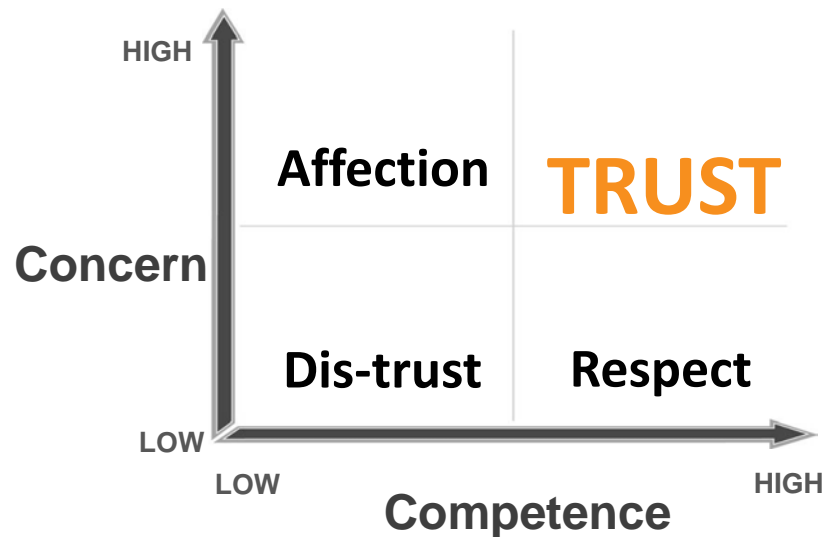
Now: ONLY do the things in the right column!!

THE SALES PYRAMID



At the lowest level on the pyramid you have a solid grounding in general business knowledge and are staying up on business and economic trends that might impact your company or your customers. Moving up one level, you are an absolute EXPERT on your products and services, you have a deep knowledge of what your company offers and how it adds value to your customers. At the next level, you are an expert on your industry and your competitors. You understand major trends emerging in your industry and how your competitors are positioning themselves against you, with a solid understanding of your competitor's products and services so you can make logical in fact based comparisons for your customers. These first three levels get you no extra credit at all, this is the minimum for being a professional salesperson. At the next level, you truly become an expert on your customer, at this level you're adding real value as a salesperson. However, at the highest level, of the Sales Pyramid you are taking the first four levels and combining them to proactively bring your customers unique and customized solutions to their stated needs and offering innovative solutions and ideas for problems or opportunities they did not even know they had. At this level, you become a true trusted advisor and someone they see as extremely valuable because of your expertise, insight and professionalism.

If we are truly interested in helping our customers, we'll need to create a high level of open, honest dialogue. This dialogue will be dramatically impacted by how safe the customer feels in communicating with us and in how much TRUST we can develop.



WORKSHOP

What do you have to do to consistently communicate to your customer that you are very competent and you genuinely care about them?

A CONCEPT THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR ENTIRE SALES APPROACH

I would like to share with you several concepts from sales guru Mahan Kahalsa that are so simple it is almost embarrassing, yet I feel these are some the most powerful pieces of sales training I can possibly teach you. These ideas come from Mahan's amazing book, "Let's Get Real or Let's Not Play." Like SPIN selling, I would consider this one of the best sales books ever written and I very strongly encourage you to get it and study it carefully. It will dramatically increase your sales success.

TECHNIQUE IS NOTHING...INTENT IS EVERYTHING

Buyers are smart today; they have heard all of the sales techniques taught by high-pressure sales trainers. The "Impending Deadline" close, the "My pen or yours?" close, the "Puppy Dog" close, "The Porcupine", "The Ben Franklin". **These techniques will no longer work.** What does work is telling the truth, demonstrating you are extremely professional, proving you are an expert, and showing you actually care about your customer and you are doing everything you can to help them. If your intent is totally focused on helping them, you can actually make a few mistakes during the sales interaction, and not have the greatest technique in the world, but they will trust you because they believe you are sincere in your efforts to help them.

But if your intent is completely focused on meeting the customer's needs, isn't there a chance you will not do what is in your company's best interests? No, because the goal is to develop the **Exact Right Solution** for both parties.

- Sell them the wrong product does not exactly meet their needs — you both lose.
- Sell them the right product — too expensive — they go elsewhere — you lose.
- The right product — too cheap — you go out of business and they cannot buy from you in the future — you both lose.
- Sell them the right product — at a fair price — deliver late or fail to follow-up — you lose.

The only way it works in the long term, is for both of you to find the exact right solution that meets both of your needs. When I finally understood this idea it completely changed the way I approached sales. In my early days I felt as if it was me versus the customer, I had to win the sale, I had to make the sale and get a signed contract. But then when I realized we both want the same thing, the exact right solution, it became much more of a partnership, where I worked hard to ensure both the customer and my company got exactly what we both wanted. Highly valuable products and services at a fair and reasonable price. If you honestly want to help the customer get the right solution, it will always work out well in the end.

GROUND RULES FOR GREAT SALES

NO GUESSING

It is frightening to realize just how much most sales people are completely guessing about important things they need to know to close the sale.

- They guess about what the customer really wants.
- They guess about what problems the customer is trying to solve.
- A guess about whether the customer actually understands the problems.
- They guess about the exact right solution for the customer.
- They guess about setting the pricing.
- They guess about whether the customer has the money to afford the solution.
- They guess about the total purchasing potential of the customer.
- They guess about if they can actually deliver the product and services the customer wants.
- They guess about who will make the decision.
- They guess about the specific criteria will be used to make the decision.
- They guess about who or what else might be involved in the decision.
- They guess about the level of urgency or importance of the decision.
- They guess about who the competition is in the sales situation.
- It's about what the competition is offering and how they are pricing it...

With all the guessing going on, what do you think is the chance we will be able to come up with the right solution that will exactly meet their needs? I guess it would be pretty low!

Keep this in mind: as a trusted advisor you have to ask important questions. There are certain things you need to know if you're going to be able to help them. Never feel uncomfortable about asking for relevant information. If they're going to treat you as a partner, they have to be willing to share the necessary information in order for you to develop the exact right solution. If they are not willing to share this information with you, you are either talking to the wrong person or they see you as "just a salesperson" not as a trusted advisor.

FORGET ABOUT YOUR COMPANY!

How do you stop guessing and find a way to determine the exact right solution? By turning your entire focus on the customer and their wants, needs, desires, concerns, problems, and requirements.

For just a little while forget about your products and services. Forget about your sales numbers. Forget about your commission — and focus completely on exploring your customer's needs. I absolutely promise there will be plenty of time later to give them a pitch, sell them your stuff, get them on board with your company—but for now you have to put all of that behind you, stop guessing and start asking focused questions, listening intently to every word they say and taking superb notes.

If you pretend that you have nothing to sell, that you are there as a trusted advisor focus only on helping your customer get exactly what they need, three amazing things will happen:

YOU WILL BE FEARLESS

If you have nothing to sell, no hidden agenda, nothing to prove — you have nothing to lose. You can be completely confident in your ability to listen with empathy and zero in on what the customer truly requires to exactly meet their needs.

YOU WILL BE FLEXIBLE

When you are not wedded to one solution, when you do not assume that you already know what is best for the customer before they even say a word, you will become much more flexible in finding solutions and products that delight, surprise and satisfy your customers.

YOU WILL HAVE FUN

If you remove the pressure of having to “sell” and simply go in with an earnest desire to help the customer - you will have a lot more fun. Because it is always fun to help people.

OBJECTIONS ARE GREAT

This is another idea, when I figured it out, it changed everything about the way I sold. Objections do not mean “I do not want to buy from you,” they mean “I would like to buy from you if you can just answer this question for me.” In other words, objections are actually buying signals dressed up in a scary costume. If you can do a superb job of giving your prospect or customer a focused, factual and logical answer to their objection, and they accept it, you have just moved the sale one step closer to completion. There are many people who teach all kinds of objection handling techniques, the one I'm about to teach you is simple and powerful. Here it is: list the top three or four objections you get all the time, perhaps its price, customization, financing, delivery timing... whatever potential customers typically bring up. Then take your time to write out an absolutely stunning response which very clearly explains why the objection isn't valid. You need to create something so impressive and well-structured that after you deliver it your prospect says, “Wow, that makes total sense, I appreciate you taking a moment to explain it to me.” Write your answers in detail, make sure they are easy to understand and totally logical, then practice your answers over and over again so you can deliver them in a spontaneous, comfortable and thoughtful way. Sounds simple, but it takes a lot of effort to craft the perfect objection response.

WORKSHOP

Pick a few of the tough objections you hear often from customers, then write out a perfect reply that will help the customer understand why the objection is not something they need to worry about.

LOSE EARLY

I have seen more sales people waste vast amounts of time and money trying to win over a prospect that simply does not want to buy from them. Some customers do not want to work with you. Some deals do not make sense for them. Some deals are not right for your company. Sometimes they are not going to buy from you no matter what. Let it go, lose as early as possible so you can spend the time in front of customers who WILL buy from you.

If the customer wants very high levels of personal service, only the best product available, immediate delivery the next morning and all of this at the absolute lowest price on the market; the answer is no! The customer cannot demand to get everything—for nothing, it simply is not good business for your company. In situations like this it is much better to lose early and spend your time selling and servicing customers that see the value you bring to the table.

EXPERT QUESTIONING ADVANCED LISTENING SKILLS**A FEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU EVEN BEGIN TO ASK QUESTIONS**

I am now going to give you a tool that will increase your sales by 20% immediately! Wow, that is pretty amazing, but it is the truth. Here is what you do... take a felt marker and on the palm of your left hand write in big letters **So What?** Then every time you start talking about how great your company is, or your fantastic products, or your super delivery, or your golf game or the big fish you caught; take a look down at your hand, read what it says and... shut up!

Your customer does not care about you, what they are most interested in hearing is; “What is in this for me?” “How can this person help me?” You should spend the great majority of every sales interaction asking excellent questions and listening very carefully. If you do decide you have something important to say, make sure it answers the “so what?” question and adds significant value to the customer.

ALL BUYING DECISIONS ARE BASED ON: PAIN OR GAIN/LOGIC AND EMOTION

People buy for their own reasons, not yours. If you want to create a sense of urgency in the purchasing decision and build a high level of trust you have to find out what is motivating their buying decision.

At its most basic level, all motivation comes down to the overwhelming desire to either avoid pain or gain pleasure. People either go to the gym to lose weight or get in shape. They take vitamins to keep from getting sick or to be healthier.

To sell successfully, you must clearly understand in each specific instance if the customer is trying to avoid pain or gain pleasure. You also have to remember all decisions go through a cycle of emotions—logic—emotions, so you will need to build both aspects into all of your sales efforts. Every single sale, whether it is a cup of ice cream or brand-new car is driven by emotion first, justified by logic and then finally acted upon based on emotion.

Let's say you wanted to buy a new suit or dress. Perhaps the one you have now doesn't fit well or is getting a little worn and needs to be replaced. Or perhaps one of your colleagues just bought some fancy new clothes and you feel embarrassed you are not as stylish. Either way, you start with the emotion of dissatisfaction, you are not happy with your current wardrobe. So you go to the store to buy some new clothes and as you shop you go through a checklist of logical items to justify the purchase. Is it the right size? Does it fit in my price range? Do I have shoes that will match this outfit? Does the color look good on me? If you can answer all these questions in the affirmative, then the last question you ask yourself is: Do I like the salesperson and want to give them my business? If the salesperson has been rude and condescending, there is good chance you will leave the store and go someplace else to find a similar outfit. However, if the salesperson has been friendly and helpful you will likely buy the clothes from them, even if they are a little bit out of your price range. It's basically the same thing in every buying situation.

EMOTION	LOGIC	EMOTION
Want	Facts	Confidence
Desire	Data	Trust
Need	Specs	Belief
Dissatisfaction	Criteria	Comfort
Problem	Proof	Urgency
Challenge	Price	Desire
Opportunity	Requirements	Demand

So in every buying situation, and when crafting your objection handling replies, you need to be sure to build in emotional reasons for the customer to be comfortable with the purchase, logically justify the purchase with solid facts and data, and be sure to create an emotional bond with the customer so that they trust you and feel good about buying from you and your company. Many salespeople fail because they try to sell on one or the other, they attempt to close the deal based solely on relationship, or they bombard the customer with tons of data. It has to be a balance between both emotion and logic if you want to close more sales.

In today's competitive sales environment, we will be most successful when we are perceived by our customers as trusted advisors. This type of selling involves the use of skillful questioning to uncover and bring out customer needs, wants and expectations; jointly arrive at possible solutions; find real objections; and allow the prospect to make their own decisions that are favorable to the sale.

The key to finding the solution is in an understanding of the problem and questions are your tools for finding and understanding your customer's needs.

SKILLFUL QUESTIONING WILL HELP YOU:

- Uncover customer wants, needs, and expectations
- Clearly define the problem to be solved
- Allow you and your customer to arrive at a solution together
- Build your credibility and the customer's trust
- Determine if there is an opportunity for cross-selling

To win your customer's trust, to target their unique needs, to provide the best solution, to be a truly consultative salesperson, you should be able to answer most of the following questions.

What is the customer's perception of the situation?
What are the customer's perceived or stated needs?
What are the unstated or unrecognized needs?
Is anyone else involved in the purchasing decision?
What are your product's comparative strengths & weaknesses?
What would the ideal solution contain?
What proof can you bring to establish your credibility?

NOTE: I realize that you will not need this level of information for every single sale. If someone wants to make a very routine purchase, you don't need their entire history but the more information you have, the better chance you have of turning them into a happy and loyal customer.

HAVE A GOAL IN MIND

There is somewhat of an art to asking excellent questions. Good questions take time but they also save time. You should have a goal in mind for every question you ask. What specific information are you trying to get?

THE ANSWERS ARE IN THE QUESTIONS

Before you ask a customer a question, you must first ask yourself; "What am I going to learn from the answer to this question? Will it be something that helps me to move the sale forward or will it run me down a dead-end?" Often it can be helpful to think of the response you want to hear then craft a question that will provide you the answer. ** This is more important than you realize.

WHAT MESSAGE ARE YOU SENDING WITH YOUR QUESTIONS?

As well as soliciting information, questions can also be designed to deliver a message or an image. When you ask focused questions, you are not seen as a salesperson who is simply there to try to get an order, you are a consultant that should be treated as a peer.

CHOOSE YOUR QUESTIONS CAREFULLY

You only get to ask a limited number of questions before it becomes overwhelming to the customer, so be very thoughtful in choosing exactly which questions will get you the information you need to move the sale forward.

THE PURPOSE OF QUESTIONS

- Gather key information
- Introduce a line of reasoning
- Lead the customer to a specific conclusion
- Demonstrate your knowledge
- Build credibility
- Uncover pain or show potential gain
- Elicit emotions or demonstrate logic
- Earn the right to ask more questions
- Position yourself as a trusted advisor

One great danger in asking questions is that a salesperson will sometimes get caught in the trap of asking too many direct and close-ended questions. When this happens, what is supposed to be a conversation becomes an interrogation. To avoid this pitfall try improving your questions by taking advantage of the following “add-ons.”

CUSHIONS

Rather than jumping right from question to question, it can sometimes help to ease into a question with a cushioning phrase such as;

To better understand your situation, could you share with me ...

To get a better handle on the big picture, will you explain to me ...

I think I might be a little confused, would you explain ...

In order to better serve you ...

To see if we can help ...

To make sure I am on track with what is important to you ...

To get you exactly the right solution, I'll need to know more about...

This sounds like it is very important to you, could you give me a little more detail about...

QUALIFIERS

These are words or phrases you add to a question to “qualify” the sort of answer you want the customer to give you. A long answer, a short answer, a very detailed answer, only the key items; they narrow or expand the boundaries of a question. These are helpful when you have a customer who likes to go on and on talking about things that are not relevant to your meeting, or you have a customer that only gives you one-word answers. Using a qualifier are a you can help guide the customer's answer to give you the exact information you need.

In as much detail as possible...

As specifically as possible, could you share with me...

What are the top three or four most important issues?

What is the single most important thing you are focused on?

Very briefly, could tell me about...

What are all the reasons...

What is everything you think I need to know about...

Can you think of anything else?

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Because a great deal of the buying scenario is based on the relationship between the customer and the salesperson, it is important to monitor how the relationship is progressing. An excellent way to do this is to throw a relationship-centered question in from time to time.

How am I doing?
How are we doing?
Am I on track with what you want?
Am I handling this to your satisfaction?
Are things progressing the way you would like them to?
Are we moving in the direction you want to go?
Are you pleased with how things are going?
How do you feel about how things are going?

COMPARATIVE QUESTIONS

It is crucial to the sale that you understand how you and your product will be evaluated and also how you rank in comparison to alternative choices. One way to do this is to utilize these types of questions:

What is your criteria for making this decision?
What factors will you use in making your comparison?
How will we be judged?
How do you rank us compared to _____?
Next to how do we compare?
In comparison to ____ how do you feel about our product/services/programs?
What could we do to compare more favorably?
What would need to happen for you to rank us higher?
What would I need to do to increase your confidence in our company?

PERCEPTION CHECKING

To make sure you have the attention of the person you are talking to and that they are following what you say, try questions like:

Does that seem fair?
Does that sound reasonable to you?
Does this make sense?
Is this information helpful to you?
Am I covering the things that are important to you?
Does this feel right to you?
Does this seem logical to you?

MORE SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Will you describe for me in as much detail as possible how ?
What would have to happen to make you feel like the problem has been taken care of?
What are the main things you are concerned about?
What are some of the options you are thinking about?
Do you feel like I have a good understanding of what you are concerned about?
Is there anything else you would like to share with me?
Is there anything I might have forgotten?
How can we make this better?
Do you have everything you need? What else can I do to help you?
In your view... From your point of view... From where you are sitting...
What are the specific criteria you will use to make this decision?
Who else will be involved in making this decision?
What are the three most important things I will have to do to make sure you are happy?
What are your top priorities?
How will you measure success?
What would a perfect solution look like for you?

Can you think of a few more questions that would be relevant to what you sell?

The goal is to ask extremely good question to gather all of the information you will need to give your customer the exact right solution that turns them into a loyal customer that buys from you often and send lots of high-quality referral to your business.

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