

## How to create the right customer impact

Why is it that if two salespeople sell exactly the same product, same price, share the same level of product and industry knowledge but one succeeds and gets the business and the other fails? From a customer's perspective most products and services are a commodity so why buy from one and not the other salesperson?

At the heart of success is the differentiator created by the successful salesperson. The differentiator being the impact they made that the other was not able to.

The following is a guide to creating the differentiator:

### **Norms and perceptions**

Don't infringe upon the customers' norms and perceptions. This for example could be not to stand too close when greeting or to initiate a hand shake of a female customer in some cultures.

### **Dress and appearance**

This can vary depending on the industry and the level of management you interact with. Your clothing should complement your appearance, fit well and be clean. The aim of this is for the customer to feel comfortable in your presence.

### **Colour**

Colour for men and women do vary due to the different materials and blends on offer; however core business colours are: black, navy blue and charcoal grey. Less conservative colours are the lighter shades of grey. Salespeople who deal with executive management, lawyers and accountants often wear pin striped suits to reflect this market.

### **Quality**

Quality is essential and an integral part of looking and feeling good. It can provide added polish - conversely a poor quality item draws attention to itself.

### **Grooming**

These are the finishing touches and include basics such as: clean and neat hairstyle, use of underarm deodorant, mouth freshener to mask any food or nicotine odor, well-manicured fingernails, clean and squared off heeled shoes, stain free and pressed clothing and a minimal amount of jewelry worn.

### **Body language**

Non-verbal or body language accounts for between 70-80% and verbal 20-30% of interpersonal communication. Research in the US found that body language has more effect than verbal language does in both accuracy and validity. Developing body language skills will help you to inspire, influence and create long term relationships. Pay attention to:

#### **- Posture**

Stand straight with your shoulders back, with both feet firmly on the ground and your body trunk squarely facing the customer

#### **- Eye contact**

Eye contact can be an indicator of your self-confidence. Good eye contact is to look at the center of customer's forehead then in a triangle formation the left or right eye sweeping across the bridge of the nose to the other eye then back to the center forehead. Your chin should be tilted slightly upward. In a personal situation the triangle is inverted with the point of the triangle at the tip of the person's nose and the base of the triangle across the eyes.

Women generally hold eye contact longer than men do. Eye contact should happen slightly ahead of the handshake and remain until prior to disengagement. Reduce the amount of eye blink to project credibility. Rapid blinking can communicate nervousness

### **- Introduction and the handshake**

Projecting confidence begins by assertively extending your arm and open hand just before the customer does. Allow personal space for the customer to feel comfortable and smile slowly. Smiling too quickly can be interpreted as lacking in sincerity. Your handshake should be firm and painless, the arch of your thumb and forefinger connected with your customer's and your fingers wrapped around the bottom edge of their hand. Lean slightly forward

### **- Voice and vocal expression**

Your voice is a unique signature of your personality and can project energy. The energy transmitted and the words you use can excite, enthuse and motivate your customers.

Example: when a customer asks, *"How are you?"* Do you respond with words that create positive feelings such as *"great...fantastic?"* These words communicate strong feelings of happiness and can have an uplifting impact on the customer.

Most people use words such as *"Okay...Fine...Reasonable...Not bad"* and *"All right."* These words don't inspire confidence and if the customer has been experiencing a challenging day these words can only add to their feelings of unhappiness.

Speech rate is vital in building trust and rapport. Talk too fast and you could be perceived as too smart or sharp. Talk too slowly and you could be perceived as being dumb. Be sensitive to the customer's speech rate by tuning into it and adjust your speech rate accordingly.

There is an old saying - people buy from those whom they like trust and believe so make a point of difference by creating the right customer impact.

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*Kurt's expertise is in sales strategy, sales management development; group structured sales training and infield sales coaching. As a sales person he has successfully sold products and services in 4 major market/product segments: new product sales, consultative sales, relationship sales and retail. During his selling career he created sales records for three companies in two industries and won many sales awards for outstanding performance*