

Increase sales through sales style flexibility

Have you ever wondered why in some selling situations the sale comes together so effortlessly and yet at other times it ends as a no sale even though you know that you followed the sales process and did everything right?

You could put the former down to the fact that you are a good salesperson, have a long term trusting relationship and your pricing is competitive. The latter perhaps excuses such as the prospect hadn't dealt with your company before and they felt unsure or your competitors offered a lower price. All these reasons may be true but are they really valid? Would these reasons stand up to scrutiny if evaluated by a third party?

Based on our sales coaching experience we have found that many salespeople firmly believe they are flexible sellers, meaning they are able to adapt how they sell to the way their customer or prospect wants to buy. Some have said '*it's common sense*'. But is it?

To state the obvious, one of the traits we need in order to succeed in sales is the ability to influence others. Everyone has some flexibility to influence. Some more than others and it is dependent on contributing factors such as attitude, motivation and skills.

Most of us have 2 or 3 innate sales styles that we use consciously and or unconsciously. What this means is our success hinges on finding enough customers that will buy the way we sell unless we develop a wider range of sales style flexibility. If not, our success in sales can be severely limited.

We need to be able to identify a wider range of customer buying behaviours and then intentionally shift into a selling behaviour that makes the customer feel comfortable in our presence? In reality it's more difficult than just reading about it because in some cases you can feel your range of selling behaviours stretched.

Developing greater sales style flexibility doesn't mean you will be someone you are not but you will learn more about yourself and be able to effectively adapt to more people. This in turn will impact on your sales success.

So how do you shift your selling style?

This is a three step process:

1. Put yourself into neutral

We are often in a rush going from one sales call to the next and can fall into the trap of using a one does all approach to get through the volume of work. Stop! Before your next sales call, take a deep breath, relax and put yourself into neutral mode. Like the manual gear box in a car you will then be able to shift into any gear you need.

2. Identify the buying style of the customer

As a guide refer to a previous article titled Sales Styles – do you know your style and what it means? This will provide you with examples.

3. Shift into the right selling style

Once you have identified the customer's buying style it's a matter of adjusting your selling style. For example, your natural style might be to be warm and friendly and ask many personal questions to build rapport. However if the customer's buying style is very task orientated (Action), this approach will annoy them. What you would need to do in this example is to slow down your speech rate and ask business related questions they will respond to. Their main focus is how a product or service will either help them increase their revenue or save them money. An effective way to close this buying style is to offer two alternatives and let the customer decide.

The most common reason why a salesperson doesn't style shift even though they may correctly identify the customer's buying style is they failed to put themselves into neutral.

Selling is a competitive and demanding profession and the greatest differentiator and competitive edge you can create is having the ability to style shift. You will find your sales conversion rate increase dramatically.

If you have any questions about this article or other relating to sales or sales management then contact Sales Consultants Pty Ltd on + 61 2 4861 4016 or email info@salesconsultants.com.au.



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.