

Is Video Conferencing the New Norm for Sales?

Video conferencing has grown exponentially and to such an extent that according to Gartner's forecast eighty percent of B-to-B sales will be virtual by 2025. Depending on your point of view the prediction can be a delight or dread.

The attraction:

- Lower costs. Salespeople can work from home, saving travel time, airfares, accommodation, client entertainment and vehicle maintenance.
- Productivity increase. Less non-sales time, for example travel, so the opportunity to connect to more prospective clients and clients.

I have seen good sales performers do poorly on video calls and feel under enormous pressure because they are not achieving their sales targets. **Selling via video is different than selling in person.** It is a two-dimensional verse a three-dimensional environment.

The challenges:

- **Eye contact.** This is key for a client to feel connected. When engaged the hormone Oxytocin is released and increases positive feelings. This can be the catalyst to developing a trusting relationship
- **Body language.** This is hampered two-fold. One, you are unable to gesture freely which can automatically impact on your vocal tone. Secondly, the inability to accurately read a client's body language because of screen size limitations
- **Passive engagement.** Watching a computer monitor feels subconsciously like watching television. Let me ask you, how do you feel when in front of a TV? When a client feels passive the sales objective/s can be impossible to achieve. The *"I will think it over"* objection is often attracted
- **Technical issues.** These can range from screen and vocal lag, webcam, headset, and monitor issues through to being disconnected. Any one or more of these issues act as a circuit breaker between the salesperson and client
- **Distractions.** You may have experienced some of these. Children screaming and running through the house, people walking past in the background, poor or too much lighting, a bed with a pile of clothing, a neighbour mowing their lawn, street traffic, and dogs barking
- **Behaviours.** If you have not been trained how to sell on video, there is the risk of projecting behaviours that result in the client winding up the call early or they feel detached creating its own problems. The behaviours are looking down, fidgeting, low energy appearing as tiredness, poor body posture, speaking rapidly and at a high pitch voice or monotone.

A video is a tool and like other tools, the mobile phone and the internet, you need to choose the most effective medium for any given sales situation. If it is a video, then make sure you have the skills including the ability to manage multiple client interactions on the screen.

If your aim is to develop a trusting relationship whether one-on-one; with multiple influencers or a major negotiation your best option by far is to meet the client in person. This will provide you with greater and more accurate verbal and non-verbal information as you move forward.

Is Video Conferencing the New Norm for Sales? In a B-to-B sales environment where the difference is often the relationship between the salesperson and client, the answer is *no*. Use video if it is the right tool for a given sales situation. To differentiate yourself from the pack you may need to step out and initiate in person client meetings where others do not.



Kurt is a sales practitioner who created sales records in five industries and won major sales awards including Salesperson of the Year. The products and services he sold were newly released, consultative, relationship and retail. He is a recognized sales expert, successful author and respected sales and personal development coach who has guided organizations and salespeople to vastly improved sales performance and profitability. His clients range from small to multinational companies in Australia, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe.

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