

Sales Styles – Do you know your style and what it means?

By Kurt Newman

Sales Consultants Pty Ltd

Introduction

As a salesperson have you ever felt flat after a sales call because you really didn't know what went wrong even though you followed the sales process? Everyone in sales has felt this way at one time or another. So what did go wrong? It more than likely has to do with your selling style. Let me explain...

We all have a preferred way of selling and for the salesperson who isn't aware of what their preference is (and sadly most are not) they will tend to use the one style for all prospects and clients. This is because it feels comfortable. So to achieve their sales target they need to either have prospects and clients who are very flexible in how they buy or the salesperson has many clients who buy the way the salesperson sells. Both scenarios are not likely in any large numbers.

Wouldn't it be easier to be able to identify how the prospect or client wants to buy and adapt accordingly? Commonsense? No. It's a learnt skill.

Overview

There are 21 validated sales styles and each has its own unique characteristic. There is no perfect sales style or one better than another. However, if a salesperson wants to become a top producer, particularly in this current economic climate, they need to know what their selling style is, what the buying style of the prospect or client is and finally the ability to style shift. 'Style shift' is the term used to describe the process whereby a salesperson has adapted their selling style to the prospect's or client's buying style. It's easy to write about but can be challenging to implement.

The 21 sales styles are:

Forceful, Individualistic, Committed, Assertive, Probing, Investigative, Efficient, Astute, Congenial, Dependable, Considerate, Eager, Enthusiastic, Intensive, Ingenious, Convincing, Persistent, Compelling, Venturesome, Dynamic and Synergistic.

So what can go wrong when a salesperson's selling style is incompatible with the prospect's or client's buying style? The following brief examples shouldn't be interpreted as a complete list of selling style and buying style related problems and answers:

The Enthusiastic sales person interviewing an analytical prospect or client will tend to:

- Talk too much
- Move ahead too quickly
- Be vague with their answers

What they should be doing is:

- Giving detailed information
- Asking for the client's or prospect's opinion
- Treating the client/prospect with respect

The Assertive salesperson interviewing a harmonious prospect or client will tend to:

- Demand they decide quickly
- Apply pressure and take advantage of the prospect's good nature
- Be impatient and show frustration or anger

What they should be doing is:

- Being patient during the sales process
- Making the prospect feel important and effective
- Helping the prospect with important decisions

The Probing salesperson interviewing an expressive prospect or client will tend to:

- Be too task orientated
- Be overly structured
- Bore the prospect with too much detail

What they should be doing is:

- Listening: giving them plenty of time and opportunities to speak
- Admiring their achievements
- Taking care of detail for them

The Congenial salesperson interviewing a task orientated prospect or client will tend to:

- Be slow in applying the sales process
- Be passive in their presentation
- Lose control of the sales interview

What they should be doing is:

- Giving them summarised facts as well as the big picture
- Respecting their judgments
- Cooperating with them fully

When a salesperson doesn't style shift they end up attracting other selling related problems such as unnecessary sales objections and poor client rapport.

Effective style shifting will meet the prospect's or client's core needs and values. For example an analytical prospect or client has a need for order, understanding and perfection and they value quality, expertise and instruction. If these are not offered the likelihood is that this prospect will feel confused, frustrated and inclined to see the salesperson as incompetent. The net outcome is a lost sale.

The ability to style shift is as integral to professional selling as are other core skills such as ability to apply the sales process.

If want more information call me direct on 0412 252 236 or email kurt@salesconsultants.com.au. Alternatively, you can purchase a Sales Style Indicator and an In-Depth Interpretation manual by clicking onto the tools/products icon on the home page.



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 other sales awards for outstanding performance.

