Smart Strategies for Sales Communication Success

- Slideshare Edition -
Welcome

- Your Presenter:
  - Deb Brown
- Practice focus:
  - Sales coaching
  - Sales training
- Clients include:
  - Small businesses
  - Growing companies
  - Fortune 500
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- Sales and customer service training and coaching.
- Rooted in our 4-step methodology.
- Proven results for business owners and sales teams from small companies to the Fortune 500.
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Our Services

- Applied leadership and sales approach.
- Sell in a way that aligns with your values.
- Dynamic and holistic approach based on the example of Jesus of Nazareth.
- Sales training & coaching integrated with leadership development.
Our Services

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Today’s Agenda

- The Role of Sales Communication
- Strategy #1: Asking Questions
- Strategy #2: Active Listening
  - Three steps to active listening success
- Strategy #3: Provide a Template
- Strategy #4: Adjust Marketing
- Strategy #5: Sales as a Process
- Key Takeaways
The Role of Sales Communication
Sales Communication

- Sales is about communication
  - If customers could make purchase decisions without communication, they would not need salespeople
  - Sales professionals exist to communicate effectively, and to facilitate effective communication (both to, and from, the customer)
  - Your ability to communicate and your company’s ability to, are both critical
Sales Communication

- Elements of sales communication
  - Your personal communication skills;
    - Speak clearly and effectively;
    - Describe things in a manner that is easily understood
    - Listen to others effectively
    - Observe non-verbal cues
    - Read and write interactively
  - Your prospect’s communication skills
  - Your company’s communication skills
Sales Communication

- There is a lot to this!
  - Your role is to facilitate and guide:
    - Communication between your company and your prospect
    - Communication between your company and the marketplace
  - Better communication directly leads to:
    - Attracting more highly qualified prospects
    - Educating and engaging prospects
    - More efficient and effective sales cycles
Strategy #1: Ask Questions
Strategy #1: Ask Questions

- Ask questions early...and often
  - When your next sales cycle begins, talk less...
    - Features
    - Benefits
    - Product details and specifications
  - Instead, ask more questions:
    - Background, reasons, drivers, needs/goals, etc.
  - Remember, the sales cycle begins with a question!
Strategy #2: Active Listening
Strategy #2: Active Listening

- Practice active listening
  - Active listening is the process of engaging powerfully and consciously in what the other person is saying
  - Typically, we only listen for what we want to hear, missing subtle queues and deeper meanings
  - In sales, this can lead to high levels of confusion, and a mis-qualified opportunity (a lost prospect)
  - Active listening has three steps...
Strategy #2: Active Listening

- **Step One: Eliminate distractions**
  - When you ask a question...
    - Look at the person you addressed the question to directly
    - Don’t look to the left or to the right
    - Patiently address the question
    - Wait calmly for the answer
  - **Things to avoid:**
    - Checking your phone
    - Mulling over your next question
    - Letting your mind wander
Strategy #2: Active Listening

- **Step Two: Embrace silence**
  - We assume that silence means hesitation or signifies that a person is unsure
  - This is incorrect: silence often means the other person is seriously considering what you are asking or preparing a detailed answer
  - Let silence follow from your question
    - Do not put words in the other person’s mouth or otherwise answer for them!
Strategy #2: Active Listening

- **Step Three: Paraphrase and confirm**
  - Ask a question. After the other person answers...
  - Pause for a moment (embrace the silence)
    - Think through what they have said and
  - Acknowledge by paraphrasing to confirm accuracy of understanding
    - Give time for them to clarify nuances and
  - Ask your next question based on their response.
  - Again, pause and reflect
  - Acknowledge by paraphrasing to confirm understanding
    - Give time for them to clarify nuances...
Strategy #3: Provide a Template
Strategy #3: Provide Template

- Provide the customer with a template for effective communication
  - Chances are, your prospect is just as concerned about becoming confused during the sales process as you are about losing clarity
  - Customers buy from people the like and trust
  - Clear communication increases trust
  - Provide tools and steps to guide them
    - Checklist for the sales decision process
    - Points to consider
    - Worksheet to fill out as they proceed
Strategy #4: Adjust Marketing
Strategy #4: Adjust Marketing

- Evaluate and adjust marketing against the prospect’s or customer’s feedback
  - Marketing is only valuable if it is effective
  - If customers are not responding to marketing messages or communications, change them
  - Encourage marketing team to pilot-test new concepts or deliverables
  - Ask your prospects for their evaluation of the clarity and value of your company’s marketing communications
  - Focus on what prospects need first
Strategy #5: Sales as a Process
Strategy #5: Sales Process

- Treat the sales cycle itself as a communication process
  - At the beginning:
    - Prospect communicates some level of interest to your company
  - In the middle:
    - Communication is the bridge from the beginning of the sales cycle to its conclusion
  - At the end:
    - Prospect communicates their purchasing decision
Strategy #5: Sales Process

- Key communications in sales cycles:
  - Qualifying questions and their answers
  - Alignment check (does the company’s product or service align with prospect needs)
  - Process steps themselves
    - Does the prospect return calls/emails? Is this an indication of interest or just that they are busy?
    - Is the salesperson consistently responding to customer questions and proposing next steps?
    - Do the prospect and salesperson agree on the decision factors and process, and if so, does this increase mutual trust?
Strategy #5: Sales Process

Why focusing on process helps sales:

- First, it communicates that you are a professional
- Second, it communicates that you are willing to adjust the sales process by mutual agreement if warranted by new circumstances
- Third, it shows that you are willing to put aside deal specifics to ensure that you and the prospect are communicating effectively
Key Takeaways
Key Takeaways

- Effective communication is the core purpose and objective for professional salespeople.

- Communication is complex and has many moving parts. It is also bi-directional.

- Sales communication should begin with the prospect speaking, not the salesperson.

- Five strategies are available to enhance sales communication success.

- Active listening is a powerful skill. Practice it!

- Use the sales process itself to guide and support effective sales communication.
Companion Worksheet

- Free worksheet
- Available on our website under the Resources tab
- Includes key points & ideas
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