Effective Selling Chapter

Effective selling has three main requirements:

First, the salesperson must understand him or herself, and how to build on strengths and develop any areas of weakness, aware of how different customers perceive him or her.

Secondly, the salesperson must understand others - particularly customers - who are different. Customers will often have opposing needs, expectations, desires and motivations than those of the salesperson. These distinctions need to be appreciated and respected.

Thirdly, the salesperson must learn to adapt his or her behaviour to relate to, connect effectively with, and influence, the customer.

This chapter is designed to support the development of each of these requirements at each stage of the sales process.

The model below illustrates the conceptual overview of each of these different stages and the corresponding sections explored in this chapter.

Use the Effective Selling Chapter to develop strategies for improved customer relationships, greater self-understanding and more & greater sales.

Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Selling Style Overview

These statements provide a broad understanding of John's selling style. Use this section to gain a better understanding of his approaches to his customer relationships.

Selling Style Overview

Customers see John as somewhat talkative, easy-going, yet practical. He can be relied on to make the appropriate comment to ease a buying decision. Always aware of the wants of his customer, he is naturally sympathetic to those in the greatest need. Displaying modesty and reserve, he is a warm person who tends not to show that warmth to customers except after he knows them and trusts them.

His generosity may result in the giving of assistance without getting an immediate sale. He is alert and curious and enjoys assimilating the viewpoints of others in helping to broaden his own outlook. His enthusiasm and loyalty to his work encourages co-operation and harmony within team members. He is highly accepting of others due to his desire for the maintenance of happy customer relationships. He may believe he will remember the details of an appointment after the event and later wish he had written more notes.

As a salesperson, he is skilled at blending planned outcomes with an interest in, and compassion for the customer. John is particularly sympathetic and generous in meeting a customer's needs in a time of customer hardship. Perceptive to the needs of his customers, he seeks to bring a win/win situation into every sale. John is seen as generally relaxed, but capable of rising to a challenge. He is best relating to customers when there is the opportunity to convey aspects of his specialist knowledge.

Personal Notes

Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Before The Sale Begins

The sale begins long before the formal sales process starts and continues long after it ends. Here are some of the key ideas that John needs to be aware of in the initial stages when planning and approaching the customer.

John's key strengths before the sale begins:

- Exercises a disciplined approach to prospecting.
- Enjoys a team approach to business generation.
- Will mentally rehearse presentations to ensure a good personal performance.
- Builds connections and long-term relationships through the sales process.
- Feels an in-built loyalty to his organisation and customers.
- Realises the importance of the account planning process.

Before the sale begins John could:

- Practise offering compliments to promote positive self-esteem in the customer.
- Focus more on the task, not just people issues.
- Visualise positive outcomes at every opportunity.
- Set personally testing activity standards.
- Focus as much energy on completing the task as on building the relationship.
- Research the strengths and weaknesses of competition in advance.

Personal Notes

Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Identifying Needs

In identifying needs, the goal is to find out what the customer's real problems are. Here is an overview and some advice relating to how John may identify customer needs.

John's key strengths in identifying sales needs:

- Quickly tunes in to the customer's concerns.
- Builds client confidence with his attention to customer satisfaction.
- Sets customers at ease with his low-key, approachable style.
- Finds it easy to assume the role of the trusted partner.
- Encourages customers to be themselves, often enabling him to discover important details.
- Can listen sympathetically for long periods.

When identifying needs John could:

- Spend less time on administration and more on "face-to-face" interaction.
- Use closed questions more frequently to hone in on key issues.
- Get down to business issues, some times more quickly.
- Call on the team to support when in new or unfamiliar territory.
- Spend less time with people who aren't key decision-makers.
- Stay objective.

Personal Notes

Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Proposing

Having identified the customer's needs, the proposing phase should close the gap between their needs and the current situation. Here are some of the keys for John to develop a powerful and effective proposing style.

John's key strengths in proposing:

- Provides practical, customer-focussed solutions.
- Can deliver substantive text-based proposals.
- Presents recommendations thoroughly.
- Rarely upsets customers by his manner.
- Delivers timely outputs, dependably.
- Proposes efficient ways to solve problems.

When proposing John could:

- Occasionally propose untried or novel solutions.
- Use more pace and animation in his presentations.
- Allow for some of the detail to be determined later.
- Promote the benefits of his product and service more vigorously.
- Express his thoughts and ideas earlier and more openly.
- Be less reliant on personal experience and involve others, especially when presenting to a team.

Personal Notes

Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Handling Buying Resistance

If the customer relationship has been built effectively, buying resistance should be low. However, this section suggests strategies for John to deal effectively with buying resistance.

John's key strengths in dealing with buying resistance:

- Produces sound solutions for customer resistance through solid reasoning.
- Listens to his customers and their objections from an early stage in the process.
- Identifies innate needs and deals with them appropriately.
- Can distinguish between genuine and false objections.
- Identifies genuine objections through careful listening.
- Is perceptive and empathetic in identifying potential resistance.

When dealing with buying resistance John could:

- See objections less as a refusal and more as a potential buying signal.
- Learn to anticipate common objections and how to address them.
- Recognise that objections are sometimes a sign of interest, not disinterest.
- Be less sensitive to tougher objections.
- Welcome every comment as an opportunity for a helpful response.
- Realise that a disagreement is not the same as a conflict.

Personal Notes

Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Gaining Commitment

The close should be the natural progression of the sale, not the conflict at the end! When your customer trusts you, is clear about what they are buying and needs what you have to sell, you are ready to propose commitment. Here are the strengths and suggestions for development in John's closing style.

John's key strengths in gaining commitment to the sale:

- Over time, gains strong commitment for his recommendations.
- Considers patient listening to be a critical requirement.
- Checks the effectiveness of previous outcomes.
- Uses his flexible nature to deal with the unexpected.
- Approaches completion as the logical and systematic end to the sales process.
- Helps the customer to prioritise options.

When gaining commitment John could:

- Focus on business outcomes.
- Inject a greater sense of urgency into the decision-making timeframe.
- Be straightforward when asking for the business.
- Recognise that often customers would prefer it if he took the initiative.
- Talk confidently about money issues rather than showing embarrassment about the matter.
- Develop a more assertive range of closing questions.

Personal Notes

Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Follow-up and Follow Through

It is your job, having built a relationship with your customer, to continue that relationship and to be of service to your customer beyond the initial sale. Here are some ideas which John can use to support, inform and follow-up with the customer.

John's key strengths in sales follow-up and follow through:

- Generates repeat business by willingly servicing the sale.
- Seeks commitment through gaining consensus rather than asserting the facts.
- Will always honour commitments to his customers.
- Constantly verifies the effectiveness of what he has sold.
- Obtains detailed feedback at every stage.
- Always completes any task he starts.

When following-up and following through John could:

- Keep the follow-up agenda and objective clearly in mind.
- Recognise that some customers might take advantage of his good nature.
- Accept that not everything needs to be perfect.
- Create a system to help him remember and action the commitments he makes.
- Ask for testimonials recognising a job well done.
- Develop an effective system for keeping the customer more informed.

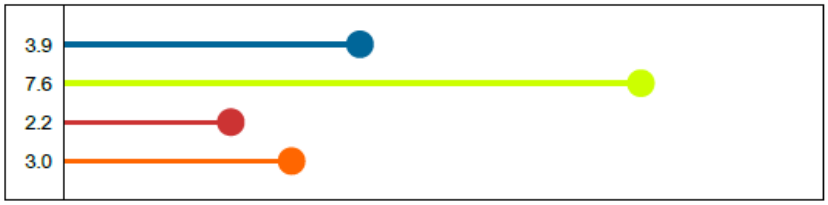
Personal Notes

Sample Copy

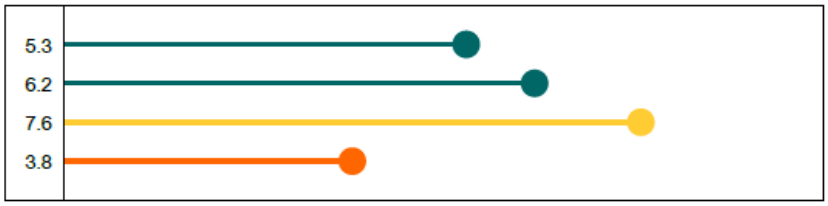
© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.

Sales Preference Indicators

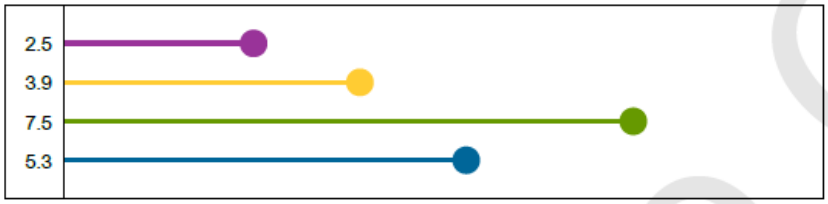
Before The Sale Begins



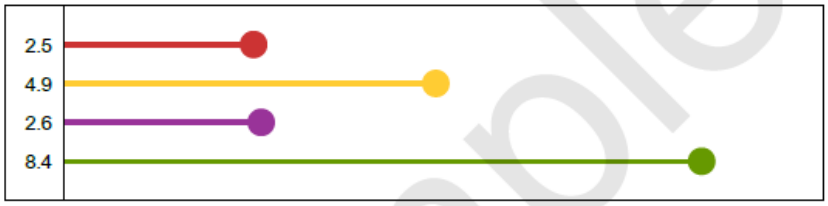
Identifying Needs



Proposing

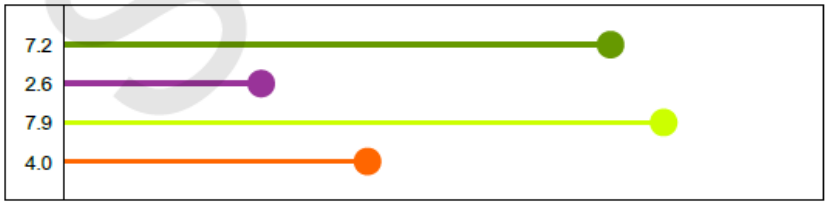


Handling Buying Resistance



Gaining Commitment

Follow-up and Follow Through



Sample Copy

© The Insights Group Ltd, 1992-2021. All rights reserved.