

# 5 Basics for an Elegant Sales Proposal

Successful B2B selling means offering value propositions that are perceived as elegant solutions from the point of view of the buyer. Elegant means "of fine quality", so refinement and simplicity are implied.

An elegant solution is one in which the maximum desired effect is achieved with the smallest or simplest effort. For example, in engineering, the elegant solution takes care of a problem with the least possible waste of materials and effort.

Assuming that you can make a deal work by adding more and more "moving parts" is simply a mistake in today's business environment.

Simplicity sells. Efficiency sells. Anything else invites skepticism, suspicion, or a lack of interest in what's being offered. Proceed down that path at your own risk.



***Here are the 5 essentials for conveying an elegant sales proposal:***

## **1. Clear and direct**

Make a clear and direct connection between the problem and the solution. Think A to B, not A to B to C etc.

Your elevator pitch is a good test. Two sentences should cover the problem, the solution, and the principal benefit. The cause and effect relationship should be plainly obvious.

Any qualifiers and/or disclaimers should be eliminated.

## 2. Use active language

Stay away from dependent clauses and passive verbs in both written and oral communication.

Simple sentences that put the subject first followed by the verb and the object work best. Conditional language will only jeopardize the credibility of your elegant solution.

That doesn't mean that you should make false claims—it simply means stating clearly what can be solved, nothing more, nothing less.

## 3. Understanding

Constantly probe for comprehension and clarity with the buyer. Don't ever assume that just because the solution is clear to you that it's also clear in the mind of the buyer.

Without sounding condescending or impatient, keep checking for a critical degree of clarity. If that means repeating yourself or rephrasing parts of your solution, so be it. A clear understanding of your elegant solution must be established before you can actually sell it.

## 4. Focus on the outcome

Spend more time on the desired outcome than on the process itself. It's easy to get caught up in selling the process instead of the objective.

The more time you and your buyer spend discussing the results, the closer you are to making a sale. Disputes about the process are a diversion often used by buyers to prolong the negotiation. It's the salesperson's job to keep everyone's eyes on the prize.

## 5. Less is more

When proposing elegant solutions, let's remember that less is more. Buyers are much more attracted to value propositions that feature simplicity and efficiency.

Selling is a challenging profession under any circumstances—let's not make it even tougher than it needs to be.