

Special Management Series

58 Ways to Improve Your Sales Presentations

This is a series of Training for your
Management TEAM

Presented by J.W. Owens



A Management
Perspective 303 Series



Management - JWO 343

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- 1. **Before you start** your presentation ask, “*What’s changed since the last time we spoke?*” This is particularly valuable when you deal with the same customers or accounts on a regular basis.
- 2. **Start your presentation by summarizing** your understanding of your prospect or customer’s situation. This not only captures your prospect’s attention, it also demonstrates that you have a good understanding of their specific situation, challenges, concerns, issues, etc.
- 3. **Adapt your presentation** to the customer’s natural personality style (Driver, Influencer, Supportive, Analytical). Get additional insights on this topic here.
- 4. **Don’t waste the customer’s time** by talking about aspects of your business, product or service that have little or no relevance to their specific situation. Focus ONLY on discussing what’s important to the prospect.

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- **5. NEVER, EVER open a sales presentation by talking about your company.** Contrary to popular belief your prospects don't care about you; all they want to know is how you can help them solve a particular problem. Talking about your company does not achieve this.
- **6. The only exception to the above rule** is when you are presenting to someone who has never heard of you and the rule to follow is to spend no more than 60 seconds talking about your company.
- **7. Do not force your customers to be passive bystanders.** Get them involved in the presentation. Ask them questions, get their opinion, check in with them; in other words, get them involved!
- **8. Whenever possible encourage your prospect/customer to pick up your product, touch and feel it.** This creates an emotional bond and is a powerful way to engage them.

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- **9. Practice your presentation.** Develop your presentation skills so you can keep your customer's attention. Too many sales people "wing it" when they need to deliver a presentation and this often leads to an unfocused presentation that causes people to quickly tune out.
- **10. Record your presentations preferably on video, so you can review them.** This can be a painful process but it is definitely worth it. You will quickly notice distracting body motions and movements that you were completely unaware of.
- **11. People like to hear their name so learn your customer's name early in the sales process** and use it during your conversation. Use their name when you want to make or reinforce a specific point. This approach can help you gain and keep their attention. However, do not make a **fatal mistake of over-using their name.** I once had a sales person call me and he used my name six times in 45 seconds. **Instead of sounding natural, he sounded sleazy.**

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- **12. Develop a natural style.** Watch top performers present their product or service and pay attention to what they do well. Then incorporate what they do well into your style and make it your own.
- **13. Use your own words—don't recite from memory.** Never try to memorize a sales presentation word-for-word.
- **14. Anticipate objections.** Virtually every customer or prospect will have at least one objection and you need to be prepared for those objections. One of the most effective ways to achieve that is to look at your presentation from your prospect's perspective. Put yourself in their shoes and ask what you might potentially be concerned about. Then, plan your response accordingly.
- **15. Put yourself in the customer's shoes.** Learn what is important to them. Position your product, service or solution to show them how it will save them money or time, increase their sales, reduce their expenses, make their life more enjoyable, less stressful, etc. Focus on tangible benefits and outcomes.

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- **16. Focus on discussing benefits rather than features.** Most sales people fall into the trap of presenting just the features of a product but people buy benefits.
- **17. Discuss ROI.** This is critical if you present to C-level executives. These individuals demand to know how they will get a return on their investment for virtually every buying decision. Be specific. Use numbers, facts, figures, case studies, customer testimonials, etc. to drive this point home.
- **18. Be prepared to answer, “*Why should I buy from you?*”** Virtually everyone you sell to will have this question on their mind so it makes sense to deal with it proactively.
- **19. Address the question, “*So what?*”** This typically follows the response(s) to the above point.

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- **20. Increase the number of presentations you make.** The more people you present to, the better you will get. However, avoid falling into the trap of thinking you can't improve.
- **21. Vary your pace.** Most people develop a pattern of speaking and maintain the same pace throughout their entire presentation. Changing your pace helps keep your group's attention and makes you more interesting to listen to.
- **22. Learn to be comfortable with silence.** Great presenters know the impact and powerful of a well-timed pause. However, many people are uncomfortable with the silence that follows.
- **23. Be conversational.** Speak as though you are talking with a friend. It changes the dynamics and tone of the presentation and gives it more impact.

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- **24. Maintain your natural tone and pitch.** I've noticed many sales people raise their voice an octave or two when they are talking to customers. Your sales voice should be the same as the tone you use with your friends and coworkers.
- **25. Pause before responding to a question.** Give thought to your response and avoid spewing out a response. Many a sale has been lost or a concession made by someone who has spoken without thinking.
- **26. Believe in your product or service.** If you don't, your customer won't either. Your confidence increases when you believe in what you sell and that confidence is very noticeable to others.
- **27. Be passionate.** Your passion for your product or service must shine through in your presentations.

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- **28. Be prepared.** Preparation is THE more important aspect of a success sales presentation. What information MUST be included and what details are „nice-to-have”? What objections might be expressed? What concerns could your prospect have?
- **29. Establish your objectives before EVERY sales presentation.** Presentations can have a variety of objectives including; educational, business review, forecasting, new product information, relationship building, etc. Each type of presentation requires a slightly different approach.
- **30. Consider your audience.** Who will be attending the presentation? What is their knowledge of the topic? What is their position/title in the company? Different people require different information and delivery which means you need to modify your approach accordingly.
- **31. Plan your approach.** For example, if most of the people attending the presentation are technical people, make sure you provide plenty of detail and information. Your presentation and approach will be different if you are presenting to shop floor managers instead of an office manager or a Vice President of Sales.

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- 32. **Learn everything about your product** and be able to answer any question that you are asked.
- 33. **Arrive early.** This is particularly important if you need time to set up. Don't use precious presentation time to get ready. Arrive early and reduce your stress.
- 34. **Confirm the time allocation BEFORE you start.** *“Bob, when we spoke last week, you mentioned that you allocated 60 minutes for this meeting, is that still good?”* This prevents you from having to rush through your presentation at the last minute.
- 35. **Wrap up early.** Just because you have 60 minutes allotted for your sales presentation, does not mean you NEED to use it. I have never had a prospect complain because a sales person finished their presentation ahead of schedule. Finish early and gain additional credibility.

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- 36. **Invest the time learning about your prospect's company** and refer to that research by saying something like, ***"I noticed on your website that you...What progress are you making on that initiative?"***
- 37. **Learn how to present yourself effectively.** Take a Dale Carnegie course in public speaking or join a local chapter of Toastmasters International. The investment will pay for itself immediately.
- 38. **Remember that every sales presentation must have an opening, body, and conclusion.** Your opening needs to capture your prospect's attention, the body should highlight how your product, service or solution will benefit them, and your closing is your call to action or next steps.
- 39. **Develop the ability to clearly present yourself.** People want to buy from sales people who demonstrate confidence and poise.

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- 40. **Write out the key points of your presentation** and practice them until your presentation flows naturally and comfortably.
- 41. **When you're planning your presentation**, consider what information is essential and **must** be included. This includes critical data about the customer's situation, their goals & objectives, and how your offering will address these issues. These become your key talking points and the focus of your presentation.
- 42. **Show your customers that you differ from your competitors; don't just tell them.** Use your entire presentation to achieve that goal.
- 43. **People don't always believe what they hear**, particularly from someone who's selling a product or service. Use testimonial letters, offer written proof, or give them brochures or pamphlets.

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- 44. **Find out what concerns your prospect might have** about moving forward by learning to ask, “*What concerns do you have?*” Many sales people resist asking question like this and end up losing the sale because they failed to address a key issue.
- 45. **Reduce the risk factor.** People are often reluctant to do business with someone they have never bought from. Offer a guarantee of some nature. Give them a test run or trial period. Reduce the risk of buying from you.
- 46. **Be aware of your words, tone and body language.** Most sales people deliver their presentation verbally and neglect to use their hands, arms and facial gestures. Use appropriate gestures and facial expressions to reinforce key points and keep the attention of your audience.

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- 47. **People believe what they see more than what they hear.** Provide copies of written testimonials and endorsements. Even better, offer video testimonials.
- 48. **Relax.** If you are rushing through the sales presentation in order to try and close a sale, your prospect or customer will feel it and they will resist.
- 49. **Differentiate yourself from your competitors** by knowing the value of your product or service.
- 50. **Differentiate yourself from your competitors** by being able to present your value in terms that are relevant to your customer.

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- **51. Give people a reason to buy from you** instead of your competition during your presentation. The more effectively you can demonstrate how your product, service or solution can help them solve a problem, the more you will achieve this goal.
- **52. Develop a great PowerPoint presentation.** Get an article about this topic.
- **53. Knowledge is power when used appropriately.** What makes you stand out from your competition? Do you know what your competitors offer? Why should someone buy from you versus your competitor?
- **54. Think before you speak.** The pause will give you time to process the information you just heard. You can then think of the best way to position your response. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't fake it. Tell the prospect you don't know and that you will find out the answer.

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- **55. Vary your tone of voice.** Many salespeople unconsciously slip into a monotone voice during their presentation. Make a conscious effort to vary your tone regularly throughout your presentation.
- **56. Record a mock presentation and listen to how you sound.** Make notes about what you don't like and take action to improve. Even better, video tape it and critique yourself afterwards.
- **57. Include a call to action.** What do you want the other person/people to do as a result of your presentation? Make it clear and make sure you ask. Don't leave it to chance.
- **58. Never mislead a customer.** Be completely honest in all your dealings, all the time. When you always tell the truth you never have to remember what you said.

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Integrate these ideas and strategies into your **next sales presentation** and you will see a **noticeable improvement** in your **results**.

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This is a series of Training for
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Good Selling !



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