

Sales Training: So Much to Tell, So Little Time

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We live in an age of information overload. The volume of data we are exposed to is in a steep growth spiral with no end in sight. A major challenge for sellers is to avoid overwhelming prospects with product information in 30-minute sales calls. I'd like to share an approach that allows buyers to steer the scope and direction of sales conversations.

Sellers are proud of their offerings. Hours of product training arm them with a staggering array of facts and features for offerings a buyer may (or may not) be interested in learning about. Some sellers believe their role is to "educate" buyers. That approach may be tolerated at lower levels, but won't align with higher levels. Most executives don't have the time nor desire to learn all about offerings. What can you accomplish in a 30-minute call on an executive prospect?

Let's assume during the first 5 minutes you introduce yourself, set objectives for the call and give a brief introduction of your company. That leaves 25 minutes to generate interest and hopefully gain traction with a buyer. How do you limit what is discussed and try to ensure it will be relevant to the buyer?

I suggest researching the company and prospect so that you can go into calls with a menu of business goals (usually 3-5) the buyer is likely to be responsible for that your offering can help them achieve. As mentioned in my previous blog, executives aren't interested in products (i.e. specifications of a drill). They're interested in outcomes (1/4" holes) with a conceptual idea of how they can be achieved.

In the next 5 minutes or so, your objective is to see if the buyer will share one or more business goals from on your menu.

This is consistent with the CustomerCentric Selling® definition that buying cycles begin when buyers share goals they are willing to spend money to achieve. The fact that an executive gives you 30 minutes increases the likelihood there is some business issue he or she is interested in addressing with your offerings.



Sellers that go into calls with the objective of uncovering buyer goals first will likely provide a better buying experience than those whose objective is to sell something. Once goals are shared there is a better chance of establishing value in the buyers' minds. Another major advantage is that the breadth of relevant product information is greatly reduced as it will focus on what you have that will help the buyer achieve the stated goal.

Initial calls should be mostly about the buyer. Until knowing an executive's objectives, sellers have no idea of what parts of their offerings are relevant to the buyer. In next week's blog, I'll offer ways to help buyers share goals and how to continue to make the call more about the buyer than your offerings.