

1. Extreme sales negotiation scenario: practice dealing with extreme situations.

Many sports coaches “overtrain” their athletes. *"If you can run six miles in high altitudes,"* they reason, *"you'll be in great shape to run a race that's three miles at sea level."*

The same concept can apply in sales. Once you've successfully negotiated in an extreme situation, you'll be mentally and emotionally prepared for a straightforward one.

Players:

The salesperson

The prospect

(This role play is designed for two participants -- one salesperson and one prospect. If you want a challenge, have the salesperson negotiate with two-plus prospects.)

Guidelines:

Write down the most extreme negotiating situations you've ever experienced (tight deadline, massive deal, legal complications, and so forth) on pieces of paper. Shuffle the papers and randomly pick one.

Choose who will play the salesperson and who will play the prospect(s).

Run through the scenario. After an agreement is reached — or you reach a standstill — debrief. Which responses worked well? Which were

unsuccessful? How will you apply these takeaways to future negotiations?

You may choose to redo the negotiation with the same circumstances or pick another scenario from the options. Complete the entire exercise as many times as you'd like.

Sales Role Play Script:

In this scenario, the extreme scenario is that a prospect has just recently lost a supplier and is on a tight deadline to find a solution. You can adapt it to meet your individual needs.

The Prospect: "Hi! My business just recently had a contract end with our supplier for [insert something your business provides] and we're hoping to begin a new one within the next few days."

The Salesperson: "It's good to meet you! I can definitely help you out here. Can I ask what your specific needs are so I can answer any questions?"

The Prospect: "Yes! We have a fairly large list of clients, around 300, so we need enough [insert specific need here] to provide them with what they need on a weekly basis. Our last supplier was great with their [insert info here], but we always wished that we had [insert something your specific business offers]. I know that this is a bit of a tight time frame, but we're really hoping we can make something work!"

The Salesperson: “I understand the time constraints! While it is a bit of a quick turnaround, I think we can make it happen. We specifically [insert business’ value proposition], which sounds like what you’re looking for. Our rates are [insert business specific costs], and we bill on a monthly basis. As far as getting started, we usually need about a 3-week turnaround, but we may be able to get started sooner with an additional [insert extra cost] for the first month since we’ll be getting the ball rolling faster than normal. How does that sound?”

2. Letting a client go scenario: get comfortable breaking up with a prospect.

Breaking up is hard to do — and even harder when you must tell a customer (and their commission) goodbye.

It’s important to practice these scenarios because they can be nerve-wracking for new reps, and they can get tense. Role playing prospect breakups is a crucial part of sales training — and one that, if handled correctly, can win you more business in the future.

Players:

The salesperson

The prospect

Guidelines:

Write down a variety of situations in which you would need to break up with a prospect. Perhaps your product/service isn’t the right fit for their

business, they don't have the budget, or they're just not ready for your offering (but might be in a year or two).

On separate slips of paper, write down possible prospect responses, including anger, dismay, and thankfulness.

Choose who will play the salesperson and who will play the prospect(s), and cycle through these slips of paper, so your reps can get used to a variety of breakup scenarios and prospect responses.

At the end of each exercise (when a resolution has been reached), write down what worked and what didn't. Then, have the reps discuss what they would do differently next time.

Sales Role Play Script:

The Prospect: "We've been having trouble with [insert problem here] and want to use your tool to help us resolve that issue."

The Salesperson: "I understand that that is a tough scenario to deal with. Unfortunately our service isn't meant for [insert prospect need here], we tend to focus more on [insert actual usage for tool]. I don't think our product is the best fit for that specific situation, but maybe you have other pain points that relate more to what we have to offer?"

The Prospect: "No, that's our only need — you don't have any other options?"

The Salesperson: "Unfortunately not, I'm sorry that we won't be able to help you overcome that challenge. Please know that if you ever get to a point

where we can help you, I would be happy to have another conversation and discuss a potential partnership.”

3. Stalled deal scenario: challenge prospects on why they're stuck.

Every salesperson will experience stalled deals. The prospect might repeatedly reschedule the demo, ghost for weeks at a time, or drag their feet in returning a signed contract.

Whatever the situation, it costs reps time and money. It's important they be able to identify these situations and discover the root cause to successfully discern whether to cut ties or move the deal forward.

Players:

The salesperson

The stalled prospect

Guidelines:

The person playing the prospect should choose which stalled behavior they've been exhibiting. Are they calling to push back the demo again?

Are they resurfacing after six weeks of unresponsiveness? Are they asking for more minor tweaks to the contract in the eleventh hour?

On several pieces of paper, write down and distribute the real reason a prospect is stalling (i.e., their budget was slashed, their boss wants a different vendor, or they just don't know how to say “no”). Stalled

prospects have many different emotions when a salesperson pushes them to be honest. Anger, frustration, and relief should all be emotional responses each prospect is encouraged to exhibit.

Have each salesperson ask their prospect questions to understand why they're being evasive. Questions like, *"Usually, when someone pushes back the demo several times, it's just not a business priority for them at the moment. Is that the case here?"* can help your prospects confront whether they do or do not want to move forward.

Once the salesperson understands why the prospect is stalling, and have successfully either moved the deal forward or cut ties with the prospect, have reps discuss what went well, what made the prospects feel uncomfortable, and what they could do better next time.

Sales Role Play Script

The Salesperson: "Hi [customer name], I'm calling because we've scheduled a product demo for today. Is this still a good time?"

The Stalled Prospect: "Oh, hi, sorry I was in the middle of something. Can we push this demo until next week? My boss is out of town and I want to make sure they can participate as well."

The Salesperson: "That makes sense! I hear that you want to push the demo off, but we've rescheduled twice before. Can I ask if there are any hesitations on your end that I can help clear up to ensure we're on the same page?"

The Stalled Prospect: “We don’t have any hesitations, I just want everyone to know what’s going on.”

The Salesperson: “Okay, we’ll I’m here to answer any questions if you have them, even if there are hesitations.”

The Stalled Prospect: “I actually do have a question. [insert question]”

The Salesperson: “I’m glad you asked! [insert solution].”

4. Common objections scenario: get comfortable answering everyday questions.

Every sales team encounters a few of the same objections regularly. It's important to easily overcome those objections to move deals along. This exercise is great for new hires unfamiliar with these objections, and it's helpful for veteran salespeople to keep their responses sharp.

Players

The Salesperson

The prospect

Guidelines

One person is "it" as the rep.

The rest of the group acts as the prospects and take turns hurling common objections at the rep. The rep has a set amount of time — it could be 30 seconds or it could be two minutes — to respond to that

common objection in a way that satisfies the group and moves the deal forward.

Once one objection has been overcome, immediately throw out another until the rep's five- or 10-minute time in the hot seat is complete.

Sales Role Play Script:

The Salesperson: “Are there any questions you have for me today?”

The Prospect: “Yeah, I’ve read online that sometimes other people who use your tool have found that [insert common pain point].”

The Salesperson: “We’ve heard of people experiencing that. If a customer has that problem, we usually [insert solution].”

The Prospect: “That makes sense. But what if that doesn’t work?”

The Salesperson: “We haven’t had much documentation of that solution not working, but if it occurs we would [insert solution].”

The Prospect: “Well my specific problem is [insert pain point]. What if I solve that but I still want to keep doing [insert other common objection].”

The Salesperson: “You’re actually not the first to have that question! We go on a case-by-case basis, but in other scenarios we have [insert solution].”

5. Savvy customer scenario: working with a customer that has done their research.

Sometimes customers do a significant amount of research before they approach a sales rep, so they have knowledge about your business and the products and services you offer.

This exercise is great for learning how to communicate with customers who may have higher-level questions than the average customer, reminding reps of the importance of brushing up on their product knowledge to ensure they can answer questions at all levels of understanding.

Players:

The Salesperson

The Prospect

Guidelines:

One person is “it” as the rep, and someone else is a prospect.

The prospect should do a bit of research and come up with a higher-level question that is not commonly asked.

The prospect should approach the rep with the question and begin the conversation. They already have done a lot of research so the salesperson will ask questions that are specific to the specifications of certain products because the prospect already knows what they want.

Once the prospect feels satisfied with the response, the group can debrief and discuss how well they think the question was answered based on the prospect's level of knowledge.

Sales Role Play Script

In this example scenario a prospect is searching for a specific type of computer hard drive, while most customers just say that they want a hard drive with no specific expectations. You can fill in the script with examples more closely related to your business.

The Salesperson: “Hi there! How can I help you today?”

The Prospect: “Hi! Thank you. So, I work in video editing and I’m looking for an external harddrive that can handle large multimedia file transfers, sometimes multiple times per day, with little downtime. I edit on a desktop. It needs to have a USB 3 connection and I’m hoping for one that’s portable since I spend a lot of time traveling.”

The Salesperson: “Thank you for giving me your specific needs! I’m happy to help you find what you’re looking for. Just for further information, how much storage are you looking for? Enough for one or two large-sized video files?”

The Prospect: “Oh more than that, I’m looking for about 5TB minimum, hopefully closer to 8. It’s less about the number of files and more how much it can hold at a time, sometimes I need to switch between computers.”

The Salesperson: “That’s helpful! Let me take you to our options. These two that we have here will be your best bet, they have 8TB of storage, USB 3 and thunderbolt ports, 5400 rpm, and will run you around \$300. Most people who

come in here and buy these do a lot of photo editing and work with large scale multimedia files, which it seems like you need.”

Sales Negotiation Role Play Exercises

Build on your skills scenario: identify and overcome personal negotiation weaknesses.

Difficult prospect scenario: practice negotiating with demanding prospects.

Win-lose bargaining scenario: learn the value of mutually beneficial negotiations.

Varied tactics scenario: practice using different negotiating models.

Competitor aware scenario: practice negotiating with customers deciding between you and competitor.

6. Build on your skills scenario: identify and overcome personal negotiation weaknesses.

It's crucial to be aware of and prepared for your personal negotiation shortcomings. For example, maybe you tend to get nervous and offer discounts prematurely -- or conversely, your unwillingness to compromise leads many potential buyers to walk away.

Players:

The salesperson

The prospect

Guidelines:

Write down one personal area for improvement related to negotiating. Choose who will play the salesperson and who will play the prospect. (You can play multiple times so each team member has a turn as the salesperson.)

Go through a standard negotiation. The person playing the salesperson focuses on overcoming, avoiding, or dealing with their specific weakness.

After you come to an agreement or decide your needs are incompatible, debrief. The person playing the salesperson reviews their performance for their specific area of improvement. The person playing the prospect then gives their feedback.

Switch roles. The salesperson becomes the prospect, and the prospect becomes the salesperson. Complete the exercise again with the new salesperson focusing on their personal weakness.

Sales Role Play Script

In this situation, the salesperson is working on having trouble compromising, even when the client's value is clear.

The Salesperson: “Our standard pricing for [insert product, service] is [insert pricing]. That includes all of the features you’ll need to address [insert client pain points].”

The Prospect: “Given that we’re such a small company, that is a bit out of our budget range. Our budget is more in line with the pricing model for the lower tier, but we need the specific functions offered by the other. Is there anything we can do to make it work?”

The Salesperson: “Our price points aren’t able to change much; which specific tool do you need?”

The Prospect: “We will make the most use out of [insert commonly used tool]. We’ve found significant success doing this in the past and have doubled our revenue in less than a year. We will definitely make use of your tool, and we are willing to pay yearly instead of a month-to-month basis to show our commitment.”

The Salesperson: “I understand. Thank you for the additional insight into your situation. We don’t often make exceptions like this, so I will need to discuss with my team members to decide the best course of action.”

The Prospect: “Is there any more information I can provide to demonstrate our level of interest? We’d really like to do business with you.”

7. Difficult prospect scenario: practice negotiating with demanding prospects.

Normal negotiations are challenging enough. Negotiations with irrational or demanding buyers may be one of the most challenging situations you’ll face

as a salesperson. The more practice you have, the better your chances of crafting a mutually beneficial deal.

This exercise will give you experience staying calm and dealing with difficult personalities.

Players:

The salesperson

The “difficult” prospect

Guidelines:

The person playing the difficult customer chooses two to four behaviors to use during the role play. Ideas include frequently interrupting, making threats, delivering “all or nothing” ultimatums, abruptly changing your mind, bringing up irrelevant details, using critical language, becoming excessively loud, shutting down topics you don’t like, refusing to commit, and/or letting your attention wander.

Run a standard negotiation for 10 minutes.

Spend five minutes writing down which responses and techniques worked and which did not.

Switch roles and go through the exercise again.

Compare your notes. What worked? What didn't? Identify the most productive ways to respond to a hostile prospect.

Sales Role Play Script

This is an example of a scenario in which the prospect is dismissive and unwilling to negotiate different solutions. You can adapt this to meet your needs.

The Prospect: “I ordered this blender in the mail the other day, and it doesn’t work. I need a refund.”

The Salesperson: “Wow, I’m really sorry to hear that. That’s not up to the standard we hold ourselves to, so I’m happy to help you with that. Can I ask why it isn’t wo —”

The Prospect: “I just need a refund.”

The Salesperson: “I understand that this is frustrating; I wouldn’t want something to arrive faulty. I’m hoping to understand what the exact issue is so I can provide you with the best solution, which may end up being a refund.”

The Prospect: “The product is clearly bad if it arrived and didn’t work. I just want you to do your job and give me a refund — do I need to speak to your manager instead?”

The Salesperson: “I’m sorry I’m not providing the solutions you need, let me —”

The Prospect: “Please transfer me to your manager.”

8. Win-lose bargaining scenario: learn the value of mutually beneficial negotiations.

The three basic negotiation practices are win-lose bargaining (one person gains at the cost of the other), win-win bargaining (both people benefit), and mixed-motive bargaining (both people benefit by “expanding the pie.”) This exercise from MIT, known as the [Two Dollar Game](#), illustrates all three -- and shows mixed-motive bargaining usually leads to the most desirable outcomes.

The Two Dollar Game requires a moderator and at least six players, so ask your sales manager or another member of your team to lead it. (And don't read the guidelines below, or you won't be able to play.)

Players:

Three (or more) groups of two

Guidelines:

Tell everyone they'll be negotiating three times with three different partners.

Put everyone in random pairs. Each pair is told they have \$2. They must divide the \$2 between themselves.

Players typically first think, *"This is easy -- we can each have a dollar."*

However, every person receives a piece of paper with secret instructions. These instructions discourage a simple 50-50 compromise. (You can find a printable version of each participant's instructions on [this](#)

[page.](#))

Secret Instructions for Round One:

Pair #1: One person is told to win as much of the \$2 as possible; the second person is told to get at least 50 cents -- more if they can.

Pair #2: One person is told to win as much of the \$2 as possible; the second person is told to get at least 80 cents -- more if they can.

Pair #3: One person is told to win as much of the \$2 as possible; the second person is told to get at least \$1 -- more if they can.

Pair #4: One person is told to win as much of the \$2 as possible; the second person is told to get at least \$1.30 -- more if they can.

Pair #5: One person is told to win as much of the \$2 as possible; the second person is told to get at least \$1.60 -- more if they can.

Give the pairs 10 minutes to negotiate.

Organize them into new pairs and have them run through the exercise

again. Give each partner a piece of paper with new secret instructions.

(You can find a printable version of each participant's instructions on [this](#)

[page.](#))

Secret Instructions for Round Two:

Pair #1: One person is told they can say whatever they'd like to win as much as they can from their colleague, while the other is told it's fine if they don't reach a settlement this round -- they'll have a chance to negotiate further with this partner.

Pair #2: One person is told they have a reputation as a ruthless negotiator, while the other is told they'll never see their negotiation partner again, but everyone else they know is waiting to see how effectively they can negotiate. They should say anything they can think of to get as much of the \$2 as they can.

Pair #3: One person is told their negotiation partner is untrustworthy, while the other is told reaching any agreement is more desirable than getting a majority or even half of the money.

Pair #4: One person is told to say as little as possible, while the other is told their negotiation partner responds well to questions.

Pair #5: One person is told to be tough and create tension, while the other is told their public reputation depends on their actions during this negotiation and the outcome.

The participants will be expecting to switch partners again. To demonstrate the importance of mutually beneficial agreements and preserving healthy business relationships, ask them to run through the exercise for the third time with their current partner.

There are no secret instructions for this round: Participants can use any strategies and styles they'd like. Some negotiators will reward their partner's kindness in the last round with kindness in this round, while others will use this round to take revenge on a hostile or difficult partner. Ask each person to share their secret instructions with the partner they had in the second and third rounds. Ask them to review their individual

performance (either in a group or on paper), along with the approaches they found effective versus ineffective.

9. Varied tactics scenario: practice using different negotiation models.

From [the considered response](#) to [always making the first offer](#), there are hundreds of negotiation strategies out there. Identify the top negotiation tactics your company uses, and run through each until reps are comfortable.

Players:

The salesperson

The prospect(s)

Guidelines:

Write the negotiation tactics your company uses on several slips of paper, and hand them to reps playing “salesperson.”

Pair each salesperson with a “prospect.” Write your company’s price on one slip of paper and the prospect’s corresponding budget on another.

Try to use real numbers your reps have encountered, to give this exercise a realistic feel. Then, give the salesperson and prospect their price/budget.

Have each salesperson use their designated tactic to negotiate the price. Encourage some prospects to ask for discounts, and have your reps role play how they would respond in real time.

Once negotiations are complete, review what worked and what didn't. Did the salesperson cave to the prospect's request for a discount too quickly? Did the prospect feel the salesperson was too pushy? Discuss concrete improvements each rep can make next time, and run through these exercises as many times as you wish.

Sales Role Play Script

This negotiation role play scenario is using the [negotiation tactic](#) of letting the prospect initiate the negotiation. You can adapt the script to meet your business needs.

The Salesperson: "So, those are the terms of our deal. Our price point is [insert relevant numbers]."

The Prospect: "Thank you for that rundown! I have a good understanding of how your service will meet my goals. However, my budget is around [insert relevant numbers]."

The Salesperson: "That's good to know. Is your target number set in stone?"

The Prospect: "Yes, our budget is very strict."

The Salesperson: "Do you have a range, or is [insert prospects numbers] your set number?"

The Prospect: “It’s our set number. After your presentation, I’m really feeling that you have the best option to meet my needs and I’d prefer not to go elsewhere. Would you be willing to negotiate?”

10. Competitor aware scenario: practice negotiating with customers deciding between you and competitor.

Sometimes customers are close to making a decision, but they get stuck between two options. They may approach a rep at one business looking to get more information to make a final decision. Some of the questions they have may be directly related to how your product measures up to a competitor, so it’s important to be aware of your value proposition.

Players:

The salesperson

The prospect

Guidelines:

The prospect approaches the salesperson and lets them know they’re in between choosing you or your competitor. Then, they ask questions that are meant to have you convince them you’re the right decision.

Salespeople should ensure they’re aware of the business’ value proposition and understand what sets you apart from competitors in the same market.

The salesperson should note their tone to ensure they aren't combative or throw the competitor under the bus as this can drive the customer away.

Sales Role Play Script

Please note that you can adapt the scenario to more closely fit the products and services offered by your business.

The Prospect: "Hi! I'm going to buy a [insert product your business has], and I'm close to a decision, but I'm also considering [insert competitors product]. So I'm hoping you can help me come to a decision?"

The Salesperson: "Sure! What are the specific factors you're hesitant about?"

The Prospect: "Well, what I really need is a tool that [insert product-related features here], and I know yours has that, but I'm a bit hesitant about the price point compared to [insert competitor name]."

The Salesperson: "Understandable! So, what we offer is [insert product specifications]. The goal of doing that is to be able to [insert product specifications]. I know there are similar products on the market, but what sets ours apart is that [insert value proposition]. Does that help at all?"