

Sales and Sales Management Blog



November 13, 2008

Guest Article: "Use Psychology to Create Sales-Winning Relationships," by Gregory Stebbins

Filed under: Client Relationships, sales, sales psychology, selling, success — Paul McCord @ 6:39 am
Tags: Client Relationships, sales, sales psychology, selling

Use Psychology to Create Sales-Winning Relationships
by Gregory Stebbins

A participant in one of my recent seminars asked me, "Can I rearrange my client's office during a sales presentation?"

The sales person had gone to an initial meeting where the chairs in the office were about eight feet from the customer's desk. He wanted to know if it was OK to just pick up one of the chairs and move it next to the desk and start his presentation.

How would you have answered this question? Believe it or not, your answer could have huge implications on this meeting's success.

Everything in a customer's office tells you a story about him or her-from the way the space is arranged to the items that have been collected and displayed.

Archaeologists can dig up ancient cities and create a pretty accurate description of the inhabitants' lifestyle just from the arrangement of the ruins and pottery fragments. As sales professionals we must do the same thing with the artifacts surrounding our customers, so we can communicate better and develop longer lasting relationships with them.

Here's how you can promote a desirable impression and create sales-winning relationships by understanding space and the hidden message in things.

How to Promote a Desirable Impression By Understanding Space

In 1966, when anthropologist Edward T. Hall described set measurable distances between people as they interact he defined four distances:

- Intimate distance – 6" to 18", for embracing, touching or whispering
- Personal distance – 1.5 feet to 4 feet, for interactions among good friends
- Social Distance – 5 feet to 12 feet, for interactions among acquaintances
- Public Distance – more than 12 feet, for public speaking

How does this relate to your sales process?

Think about one of your customers. Divide her office into concentric circles, starting from where she sits. The distance between the circles is about the width of her desk. Anything close to the person-usually within arms reach-is the most important part of her office. This space generally contains her most precious, most valuable items. It is filled with clues that reveal to the trained sales professional a wealth of information about the customer and her needs and motivations.

As for the office the salesperson asked about rearranging, the chairs were set at the "social distance," which the customer was communicating as appropriate for interactions among acquaintances (or in this case, sales people). For the sales person to pick up his chair and move into the next circle-personal distance-would have meant that he was declaring that the two of them were friends.

From the customer's point of view this may or may not have been true. The customer could have reacted positively and allowed it. Or she could have reacted negatively and asked the sales person to leave. In any case, changing to another distance is likely to cause tension and would not promote a desirable impression.

A better strategy would be to ask permission to move the chair closer to the desk. Or, he could say that he had difficulty hearing the prospective customer clearly and then asked permission to move the chair.

How to Create Sales-Winning Relationships by Understanding the Hidden Message in "Things"

Analyzing your clients or prospects' rooms will tell you their motivations and behavioral styles. By paying close attention and analyzing the hidden message in things, you will know how to best serve your customer.

If his desk is meticulous, it indicates a high degree of close tolerance, sometimes called analytical. Or his desk could be very messy indicating an engaging personal or social trait, sometimes called influencing. These are all clues to guide you in making a presentation that will have the greatest appeal and impact on your customer.

The books on the bookcase will tell you what is currently or has been important to him. Trophies, plaques and diplomas all tell you that he is motivated by recognition. While pictures of tropical isles indicate an idealistic approach to life and business. All of this information will guide you in presenting your case so the customer really "grasps" it.

Knowing how to analyze and use keys to the customer's psyche is what separates the ordinary sales representatives from the sales professionals.

Here's the point: By understanding sales psychology and enhancing your interpersonal skills you will make more sales. I guarantee it-and this is not just an idle claim. With more than 30 years of in-the-trenches sales experience and a Doctorate in Psychology, I've applied a wealth of knowledge, know how, and high impact techniques (like those described here) to help over 20,000 sales professionals improve their sales careers.

So, please take my advice. Take a moment to scope out your prospective customer's office. It's vital to developing longer lasting client relationships. The information about the person's motivations and behavior is always available to you. Are you available to the information?

Sales Psychology Expert Gregory Stebbins has helped over 20,000 sales professionals become the point of differentiation while their competitors struggle with how to differentiate their product and service. In his book PeopleSavvy for Sales Professionals, he unveils for the first time his simple but groundbreaking plan to win your customers' trust and business forever. Get your free sneak preview at <http://www.peoplesavvy.com/book.htm>

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June 13, 2008

Guest Article: "How to Use Sales Psychology to Create More Lifetime Clients Now," by Gregory Stebbins

Filed under: sales, sales psychology, selling, trust — Paul McCord @ 7:02 am
Tags: Client Relationships, gregory stebbins, sales, sales psychology, selling

How to Use Sales Psychology to Create More Lifetime Clients Now
by Gregory Stebbins

My Customer is Ticking Me Off!

That was the recent comment I heard from a seasoned sales professional. He then described the customer's controlling nature including how he would often interrupt, and want answers in Cliffs Notes version.

The sales person had a style mismatch. He was choosing to be upset by the customer's actions.

After letting him unload, I asked him how he's adapting to the customer.

"Adapt?" he asked, puzzled.

I said, "You could just live in your hurt feelings, like you've been doing. Or you could choose to pay closer attention to your customer and work with him the way he wants to be worked with. Specifically, allow this customer to have control over the sales call, give him the information he needs in the timing he needs it, and allow him to cut you off."

Ultimately when you allow your customer to win, you'll end up winning too. Your customers don't necessarily want to be your friends. They want to be your customers because they need your products and services, don't they?"

How to Make Sales, Not War

War metaphors such as "It was a hard fought battle" or "We had to punch the proposal through their defenses" are often used to describe the sales process. However, a more elegant and effective sales close approach is to give the customer what he or she wants in the way they want it with a nice ribbon around the package.

When the customer perceives you as the expert who really understands what he or she needs and when you give it to them in the way they recognize as serving their needs, you automatically turn an adversary into an ally. This will turn your customers into lifetime customers.

The Ultimate Secret to Turning Customers Into Lifetime Customers

Many companies struggle when differentiating their products or services. When you know how to adapt your personal selling style to align with that of the customer, you become the point of differentiation.

This requires you to be very aware of your approach to selling and the customer's approach to buying.

For example, high-steadiness behavior types hate change. When a sales person shows up, he or she represents change, and that alone is enough to cause the customer to freeze. High-conscientious types often want detailed facts and figures, delivered with precision.

We're most successful when our approach is identical to the customers. So you may find it beneficial to adapt your approach to theirs, even if it's not your natural style.

Salespeople who have learned the secret to adapting profoundly increase their sales because they possess the ability to sell to different kinds of people.

How to Identify Your Style and the Style of Your Customers

I gave the person I was coaching the following explanation so he could identify his style and the styles of his customers:

- "D" Behavior – Demanding, directing and domineering. Individuals with this behavior style are usually ambitious, bold and impatient. They can also be argumentative and stubborn.
- "T" Behavior – Interacting, inspiring, and influencing. Individuals with this behavior style are often expressive, charming, optimistic, cheerful and enthusiastic.
- "S" Behavior – Supporting, stabilizing and steadying. These individuals are usually loyal, calm, patient, cooperative and humble.
- "C" Behavior – Conscientious, cautious and correcting. These individuals are often diplomatic, meticulous, private, incisive and exact.

How to Put This Knowledge Into Action During Two Key Stages of the Sales Process

Opening the call:

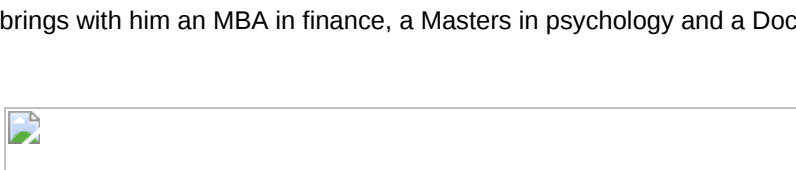
- Customer behavior type D - Be clear, specific, brief, and to the point.
- Customer behavior type I - Be friendly. Listen for both facts and feelings. Make time for relating and socializing.
- Customer behavior type S - Be genuinely sincere. Create a non-threatening environment for them.
- Customer behavior type C - Ask lots of questions and be patient while they answer in minute detail.

Obtaining commitment:

- Customer behavior type D – Briefly highlight their key options and ask for the order assertively.
- Customer behavior type I – Inspire them to action. Keep the close relaxed and friendly.
- Customer behavior type S – Detail how they can take practical action and confirm without pushing or rushing them.
- Customer behavior type C – Create a scheduled approach to implementing action with step-by-step timetables. Point out guarantees.

You can double or even triple your sales by getting a grasp on your customer's behavioral style. It will make a difference in your sales figures and will turn one-time customers into lifetime customers.

Greg Stebbins is a master at improving the greatest asset of any business—its people. With more than 30 years of business experience, he applies a wealth of knowledge, know how, and high impact ideas to the challenges his clients bring to him. Greg has developed his dynamic approach through real-life experience and dedicated research. A published author, he brings with him an MBA in finance, a Masters in psychology and a Doctorate from Pepperdine's School of Education and Psychology. Visit his website at www.peoplesavvy.com.



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May 8, 2008

Book Review: PeopleSavvy for Sales Professionals by Gregory Stebbins, Ed.D.

Filed under: Book Reviews, Client Relationships, marketing, Personal Marketing, sales, sales psychology, selling — Paul McCord @ 7:00 am
Tags: Book Reviews, client psychology, gregory stebbins, marketing, personaal marketing, sales, sales book reviews, sales psychology, selling, understanding client behavior

Seldom do I read a book that I consider to be dangerous. Certainly, there are books that once read, you think, "Wow! I hope a new salesperson doesn't get hold of this and think this is what sales is all about." We've all read the books, the ones that advocate heavy doses of manipulation, browbeating the customers, twisting their arm, hog tying them until they give in.

Nevertheless, PeopleSavvy For Sales Professionals (Savvy Books, 2007) by Gregory Stebbins, Ed.D. is a dangerous book of a different kind, a danger that Stebbins immediately acknowledges in his introduction. PeopleSavvy deals with the psychological strategies and techniques of selling and developing trust—strategies and techniques that can be used to help create a bond—or to manipulate and deceive.

In the right hands, the book can open new ways to build relationships quickly. In the wrong hands, it can reveal ways to out fox, out maneuver, and out and out manipulate. The responsibility for the information's use lies with the reader. Dr. Stebbins has simply shown how understanding your prospect's behavior and thinking can help you connect—and an unfortunate byproduct is to show others how they can manipulate.

Stebbins' thesis is that if your prospects don't trust you, you cannot sell effectively. That thesis springboards Stebbins in a discussion of how you can read your prospect's movements, her words, how he dresses, what she has on the walls of her office—even the position of the items in his office, and use that information to build a deeper connection more quickly with the prospect, gaining their confidence and trust at the same time.

Although the book is quite detailed on the "how" to read your prospects behavior and the other telltale signs to help build trust, Stebbins breaks trust into two parts and feeds them to us in bite sized morsels.

Trust is comprised of 'Rapport', which itself is made up of compassion, connection and credibility, and 'Deep Trust', which is comprised of competence, commitment and consistency. Stebbins takes the reader through each of these individual components of Rapport and Deep Trust and how each must play a role in developing a relationship of trust with your prospect.

He then journeys through how motivation, communication and behavior can reveal the avenues to developing the rapport and trust you must have to develop a lasting relationship with your prospect.

From mirroring behavior to matching speech patterns and words to understanding personality types to how the prospect thinks and operates, PeopleSavvy covers the gamut from not only understanding your prospect's behavior, to how they think and why they think the way they do.

Filled with stories and examples, PeopleSavvy is an easy to read—harder to apply—book whose insights, strategies and techniques are grounded in the works of those, including Stebbins, who have spent years studying sales, marketing, and industrial psychology.

If you want to understand how to get inside the head of your prospects and clients, PeopleSavvy will help open the door to their minds. Whether what you learn is dangerous or not depends on your intent and use.

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March 6, 2008

Guest Article: "Interpersonal Skills: How to Use Sales Psychology to Create Longer, Lasting Sales-Winning Relationships," by Gregory Stebbins

Filed under: Client Relationships, Communication, sales, selling, trust — Paul McCord @ 6:30 am
Tags: Client Relationships, gregory stebbins, sales, sales psychology, selling, understanding clients

Interpersonal Skills: How to Use Sales Psychology to Create Longer, Lasting Sales-Winning Relationships
by Gregory Stebbins

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Paul McCord of the Sales and Sales Management Blog may be reached at pmccord@mccordandassociates.com

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