

ALESSANDRA
ON...

COLLABORATIVE SELLING

How To Gain The Competitive Advantage In Selling

WORKBOOK

COLLABORATIVE SELLING

HOW TO GAIN THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN SELLING

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1

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a new kind of sales training program. Why a new type of sales training program? Because the world has changed in significant ways. Salespeople today are required to have new skills, new attitudes and a new understanding of how to work with their customers.

Have you found that your competitors are more *aggressive* than they used to be? Do you have *more* competitors than you've had in the past? Does it seem that it's harder to *sell* your product now than just a few years ago? Are you finding it harder to *differentiate* yourself from your competitors? Are *price issues* a constant problem?

If you're answering yes to these questions, it's because your company is participating in a quantum shift in the market that's being felt worldwide but it's particularly acute in the United States. There are three key aspects to this shift:

Three Quantum Shifts in Today's Market Place

1. For most products, technology is no longer a differentiator. Most of your competitors have the same technological capabilities you do, which means your products are bound to have similar features.
2. We're selling in a global marketplace, which means you have more competitors and different competitors than you've had in the past. This influx of new competitors has also created more confusion among consumers in the marketplace.
3. For most products and services, supply exceeds demand. There are more products and services available than the market as a whole wants to buy.

Differentiating yourself, your company and your product enables you to get the buyer's attention and sell effectively against the competition. Providing quality products and services and backing them up with exceptional customer service are key to maintaining those customer relationships.

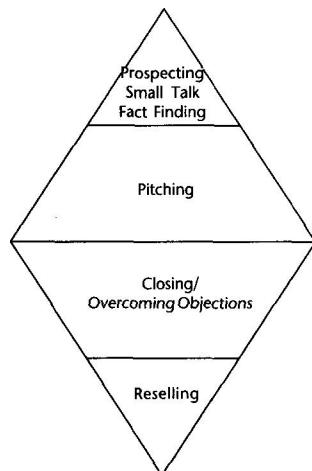
Collaborative Selling

Selling effectively today means handling all the interpersonal aspects of a sale better than you have in the past and that's what this program is designed to help you do. We'll show you how to excel in this tougher, faster, more complex selling arena. When you really understand the tools and information in this workbook, you'll find that you'll win more sales, do it in less time and build a strong base of lifetime customers who will act as both references *and* sources of referrals. We'll show you how to identify your target accounts, how to sell to them without manipulation and how to penetrate each account to maximize its potential.

The Traditional Approach vs. The Collaborative Approach

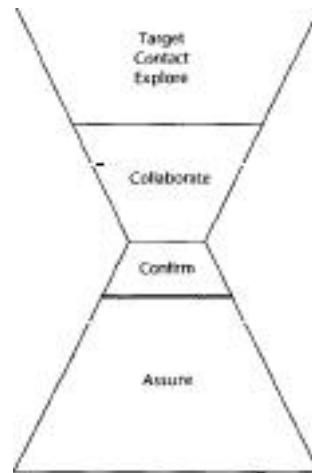
Traditional

This diagram illustrates the emphasis placed on each of the six phases in the traditional sales method.



Collaborative

This diagram illustrates the emphasis placed on each of the six phases in "Collaborative Selling."



Traditional

In the post World War II era, there was a very high demand for consumer goods by many unsophisticated buyers. Usually, a great opening pitch describing the features of the product and a strong close were enough to win the sale.

For most products, a one-shot sales presentation was used, enabling the salesperson to pitch to as many prospects as possible in the shortest amount of time.

Negative tension and an adversarial environment characterize the traditional approach. The salesperson doesn't take the time to understand the prospect and his/ her needs. The prospect is forced to learn about the salesperson's product and then decide whether it fits their needs.

Collaborative

Today's prospects have learned to shop around, and they know they have lots of similar options to choose *from*.

Prospects are looking for more than just a product; they're looking for a long-term relationship with their salesperson and their suppliers to whom they can turn when they have problems and questions or when their needs change.

The salesperson takes the time up front to build a sincere, committed relationship by investing time to learn about the customer's needs. The environment is cooperative, rather than adversarial, because the customer feels as if the salesperson is committed to their long-term well being, not just making a one-time sale.

Understanding the Collaborative Approach to Selling

We've broken down the sales process into six steps: Target, Contact, Explore, Collaborate, Confirm, and Assure. Each step is explained in easy-to-understand language, and accompanied by worksheets, which help you to immediately put the skills to work for you.

Target	As a collaborative salesperson, your first step is to fully understand what you have to offer that's unique and who are your best target markets. You'll always be prepared to convey the advantages of buying your products and services and to working with you and your company.
Contact	You'll develop a system of lead generation and appointment setting which will ensure a consistent flow of prospects that will want to do business with you.
Explore	You'll develop trust on the front end by investing the time to get a complete picture of the prospect's situation, needs and opportunities. You'll begin this exploration with broad, open-ended questions, generating responses from your prospects that reveal their feelings, beliefs and opinions.
Collaborate	Instead of delivering a one-way pitch, you'll create options with your prospects so that you are partnering with them to create the best possible solution to their problem. This ensures that they will be as committed to implementing the solution as you are, because they've invested as much time as you have in creating it.
Confirm	Confirming the sale will be a natural and logical conclusion to the problem solving process. It symbolizes the beginning of the process with your prospect and not the end, because you'll be committed to continuing the conversation with this prospect to ensure his needs, desires, expectations and future goals are being met.

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Assure You'll begin assuring customer satisfaction immediately following the sale by changing hats from salesperson to customer service representative. You'll help your customers track their results and analyze the effectiveness of your solution. Doing so will enable you to build a large, loyal clientele that will guarantee future sales and referrals.

Whether you're a newcomer or a seasoned professional you'll find ideas in this workbook that will take your selling skills and your sales to new levels. As you put these ideas into practice, you'll see your success with customers soar right along with your commissions. As these skills become second nature, you'll soon see yourself as a cutting edge sales professional who knows what it takes to win in the information age. In a short time you'll find that you truly do have the competitive advantage.

2

TARGETING

The first step in successful sales is accurate *targeting* which includes two phases:

- (1) Analysis: Identifying your best prospects
- (2) Prospecting: Using personal marketing techniques to generate leads.

It is important to identify the prospects who will have the highest need for your product or service. These are your best prospects—the ones who are most likely to buy, use, and recommend you and your services.

When you have identified your best prospects and know where to find them, you can use your personal marketing skills to generate leads that will most likely result in sales. These techniques can actually help you create an environment where your prospects call you! Lead generation is the fuel that drives the engine of your sales success. The techniques discussed in this chapter can keep you supplied with highly qualified leads for the remainder of your sales career.

Analysis: Identifying Your Best Prospects

How can you identify those prospects who are most likely to want to hear your message? And, once you've identified the profile of those most likely to buy, where can you find prospects in large numbers who fit your profile?

Your study should begin with an analysis of your sales over the last two to three years manager for help here.

In your analysis, you'll look at three things:

1. Who bought what?

Which customers accounted for your past sales? What products or services did they buy and how much did they buy? Which sales were the most profitable?

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Which ones had the shortest sales cycle? Take a close look at which industry and segment of the market these accounts are in. Your goal is to identify the patterns in your high-volume and high-profit customers — the ones who provided the most valuable business to you and your company. Also be aware of high profile customers who can influence others to want to do business with you as well. Whichever factors you use, determine the profile of your best customers.

2. How did you find and sell those customers?

Look at the sources from which your best customers came. Exactly how was that business acquired? Where did the initial contact come from? Look for *patterns! Find out what you are doing that is working!* This will help you to focus on your highest leverage opportunities for reaching similar customers.

3. Why did they buy what they bought?

What exactly is it about your product or service that makes it attractive to your best customers? Why are they buying from you and not your competitors? They may be buying because others they trust know you and buy from you. Use your call reports, interviews, company memos, notes, testimonial letters, as well as your own knowledge of your accounts, to find out why your customers bought from you.

Prospecting: Using Personal Marketing Techniques to Generate Leads

Prospecting—that essential activity that generates leads and helps ensure a continued source of potential business—has two categories: *Outgoing* Prospecting and *Incoming* Prospecting. Outgoing Prospecting concerns the ways in which you can initiate contact with prospects regardless of whether they have a current need for your product or service. Incoming Prospecting, on the other hand, concerns the methods used to gain visibility with your best potential customers through personal marketing techniques so that prospects will contact you when they’re in the market for your product or service.

There are several reasons for making the distinction between the two categories. First, you have a much higher degree of *control* over your outgoing efforts. You can run ads in a hundred publications, but if no one calls, you have no prospects. On the other hand, the *quality* of incoming leads that can be generated is usually much higher. Since they called you, they are selecting themselves as prospects for you. This usually means that they have an identified need and they want your help in determining whether or not your product or service will fill their need.

Outgoing Prospecting

Let’s first take a look at the ways in which you can initiate contact with prospects regardless of whether they have a current need or not. There are numerous ways to uncover new markets and establish new business contacts. There is no *best* strategy. Find the ones that work best for you, your product or service, your company and your industry.

Satisfied Customers

These are people with whom you have business relationships. They should be systematically contacted to see if additional needs exist. Keep in mind different departments, divisions, parent companies and other spin-offs of your customers.

In addition, when your company introduces new products or services, your entire customer list becomes a prospect list. At least once a year you should go through your customer list and a list of your products and services to see if new opportunities exist.

Company Leads

Often your company will provide leads from ads, direct mail responses, telephone campaigns and other valuable sources. These leads are generally high quality because the prospect has already expressed an interest in your company.

Centers of Influence

Centers of influence are prominent people in your community who can direct you toward new prospects. A center of influence may be a priest, rabbi, minister, congressperson, attorney, banker or influential person. Focus on building a trusting relationship with them before asking for referrals. Be sure they know the benefits you have provided other customers. Let them know your goals so that they can be aware of the kind of prospects you are looking for. Give them a formal presentation describing your product or service. Provide them with an extensive list of testimonials, personal and business references, and a professional resume. Centers of influence are only interested in referring those salespeople who will not undermine their reputations. Be sure to report back to the center of influence after you contact the person they referred to you. And finally, find a professional way to reciprocate or to say, "thank you."

Orphan Accounts

These are former customers who, for some reason, have stopped buying. Often it is because the salesperson that was handling their account has left the company or they may have stopped doing business with the company because of a product or service problem. If you can solve the problem, you have a good chance of winning back the account for yourself. These accounts represent a gold mine!

Directories

There are innumerable directories to the businesses in your industry and geographical location. The local library and chamber of commerce are invaluable resources.

Tip Clubs

This networking organization of local business professionals from **different industries who meet regularly to exchange referrals or "tips."**

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Speeches and Seminars

This is a great way to reach a large number of prospective customers in a short period of time. Offer free or low cost seminars. But remember, as a speaker your goal is to educate, not to sell. You want to make them enlightened buyers, and you want them to recognize and remember you as an expert in this field, so that when they are ready to buy, they come to you.

Trade Shows

Participate in trade shows, as either an attendee or an exhibitor. This is an excellent way to meet people and learn about the latest developments in your area. Which ones do your best customers attend?

Incoming Prospecting

Now let's take a look at ways in which you can gain visibility with your best potential customers. Developing such visibility will also give you name recognition with prospect during cold calls.

To gain high visibility so that prospects will contact you when they're in the market for your product or service and to establish an aura of expertise, there are a number of strategies you can use:

Public Relations

Join organizations to meet people who fit the profile of your best customers, so you can make them aware of your company and your product. You'll find almost all of the local non-profit organizations are run by the movers and shakers in your community. But don't volunteer for just the business contacts. Do it for the personal growth it will provide and the connection with your community that you will feel. The business contacts will take care of themselves. Involvement in your community by your company as well as yourself is the best ways to engage in public relations. Some ideas: sponsor a youth sports team, donate equipment to a local school, etc.

Publicity

This strategy is aimed at generating favorable news coverage for you, your company and your products. You do not pay for publicity, at least not directly. You can write press releases about yourself, (perhaps your recent promotion) or your company (introducing a new product, for example) and send it in to the local newspaper, directed to the business section. You might even write a column in a target trade journal, magazine, newsletter or newspaper, or even letters-to-the-editor, to generate positive visibility.

Industry Participation

Join an association in your best target market industry. This helps you find out about trends and issues important to your best customers. Also, contact other related trade associations for the

membership list. Participate on committees to “rub elbows” with the centers of influence in your key target industries.

Newsletters

Start a newsletter for your customers. The key is to make it ‘newsy’—so it has some value to the reader. Keep it short and be sure to include some cartoons or pictures for variety and interest.

Advertising Specialties

Pens, mugs, caps, etc— there are thousands of ad specialty items available, but the key to using ad specialties is to find a gift your customer will actually use or keep on his desk that will be a powerful reminder of you and what you do. You can also use these in your direct mail packages.

Articles

Publish an article in a trade journal that your best potential customers might read. It immediately establishes you as an expert. Many publications pay an honorarium for each article they publish. What we often do is exchange the honorarium for an ad in the same issue where our article appears. It’s a double whammy that really increases visibility and sales.

Personal Advertising

You regularly see ads for products but rarely see ads by salespeople promoting themselves and their products or service. If you want to have a competitive advantage in your industry or in your market area, think like an independent business person. Depending on your target market and your company policy, you may want to run newspaper or magazine ads, or put your picture in the yellow pages.

Whatever sources you use, the key to good lead generation is *planning*. Remember, generating leads is a long-term activity that must be continuous if you are to be a successful salesperson.

To make sure that your visibility strategies are all working together, you’ll need a plan. The worksheet on the next page will help you plan a strategy for gaining visibility which will, in turn, help you generate a flow of leads in each of your ‘best’ target markets. When implementing this process, you should aim for a minimum of four different exposures to each target group. Evaluate the plan from time to time. You’ll get great results with some activities, less with others. Build on what works and modify what doesn’t.

When you effectively use these personal visibility ideas, you’ll find that little by little, people will start to recognize your name, your company, your product and your face. Pretty soon the phone will start to ring for you, and your image as an established expert will take hold. That’s the power of personal marketing and one more ***competitive advantage*** for you!

PROSPECTING ACTION PLAN

Write the four best prospect sources from the previous worksheet in the blank spaces below. Under each, brainstorm four ways to increase your exposure and generate more prospects.

1. _____

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

2. _____

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

3. _____

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

4. _____

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

Visibility Strategies for Incoming Prospecting

Choose four of the visibility strategies listed on pages 12 and 13 that you liked best. Then, below each strategy selected, write out several techniques to increase your exposure and generate more prospects using that strategy.

1. Visibility Strategy: _____

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

2. Visibility Strategy: _____

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

3. Visibility Strategy: _____

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

4. Visibility Strategy: _____

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

Creative Prospect Source List

One of the most important aspects of prospecting is creatively generating a list of sources for prospects.

List the top ten sources of prospects you have used so far. Then brainstorm for five less obvious sources.

Ten Most-Used Sources of Prospects:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Five Less-Used Sources of Prospects:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

3

CONTACTING

There are really only three ways to contact a prospect — by **mail**, by **phone** and **in-person**. Each makes a different impression and has its advantages and disadvantages. The table below shows how the three methods compare in terms of quality and quantity (a score of three is best).

COMPARISON OF METHODS OF CONTACT

Type of Contact	Quality of Contacts	Quantity of Contacts	Total Score
In-Person	3	1	4
Telephone	2	2	4
Direct Mail/Email	1	3	4

The quality of a contact is its effectiveness based on your ability to receive feedback from the prospect and your ability to reach some degree of resolution. The resolution may not be “the big close” but a commitment to the next step in the sales process. Personal contacts provide the best opportunity for feedback, both verbal and non-verbal. The telephone is a less effective means of contact, and direct mail is the least effective.

The number of contacts possible using a given method is inversely related to the degree of personal contact involved. Obviously, more people can be reached in a given day by direct mail/email than by telephone, and the telephone allows more contact than in-person calls.

What is the best method? There is no *best* way. The most effective approach is to use all three in an organized, on-going effort in which you continually send letters/email follow up with phone calls, and make appointments to meet prospects in person.

1. The Direct Mail System

When we say “direct mail,” we’re not talking about the huge mailings of hundreds or thousands of pieces that your company might send with no follow up. We’re talking about well-thought-out letters, addressed to your best potential prospects, with a phone call following the letters.

When a person hears about *you, your company or your product* several times, they perceive you as credible • Our direct mail system sets you up as an expert so you can make warm calls on hot prospects! Follow this procedure for effective direct mail letters:

- 1. Send three different letters to each prospect one week apart**—The repetitive action makes it more likely that the prospect will remember you.
- 2. Mail to four new prospects every single day**—You must work your system every day! Don’t send more than you can follow up on.
- 3. Make it look personal**—The prospect’s address and your return address should be typed or hand-written. Preferably, the envelope should be hand-stamped.
- 4. Make it lumpy**—This ensures that your letter gets opened first! Enclose a cassette, a video, an advertising specialty or a sample of your product.
- 5. Always include a stand-alone headline and a P.S.**— Most people read a headline or a P.S. first. The messages should enable the reader to scan the letter and quickly determine what the product or service is, and what’s being offered.
- 6. Always include a postage-paid reply card and a toll-free number**—This will enable your customers to easily respond to your letter.
- 7. Follow-up by phone three to five days after your last letter.**
- 8. Computerize the system:**
 - Type in each of the three different prospecting letters.
 - Enter in your 80 new prospects’ names and addresses for each new month.
 - Print out all 240 letters at once, but stagger the dates you put on the letters so that they can be sent out on the appropriate dates.
 - Stuff all the envelopes. Write the date printed on the letter on the outside of the envelope where the stamp goes.
 - Each day pull all the envelopes with that day’s date, stamp and mail them.
 - To make phone follow-up easier, print out a list of prospects with the date they received letter number three so you know when to call.

The worksheet on page 20 will help you compose an effective direct mail piece. To help you get started, look at the samples we’ve included on the next two pages. Notice that they are short, crisp and include both a headline and a P.S. to catch the reader’s interest. The first paragraph expands on the headline. Use the worksheets to prepare several sample letters on your own. Then ask three current customers who match your target audience to read and critique them. Use their feedback to make changes because they’ll be your best predictors of the actual results you’ll get with your direct mail program.

For great tips on putting together a **multi-part email campaign**, check out AWeber at <http://www.aweber.com/?4898>. I use their email autoresponder system with great success.

Here are two examples of good direct mail letters

January 4, 1995

*Julie Larson
XY7. Corporation 123 First
Avenue San Diego, CA 92121*

Are You Tired of Playing Telephone Tag and Feeling Like You Are Always It?

Dear Ms. Larson:

Do you ever get tired of calling people who are not there? Or getting back to your office to find a mountain of pink messages? There is a better way!

Put a phone in your car. Yes—a phone—a cellular phone. For a lot less than you think, you can stop playing telephone tag and get rid of those pink slips forever.

But then, what would you do with all that extra time? Well, I'll bet you could think of something.

If you would like to try a phone in your car for sixty days with no rental fee, call me at 555-1234.

Sincerely,

Judy Lee

P.S. Ask me how you can get a free phone on our executive referral program.

January 4, 1995

*Jim Anderson
Planners International
456 Second Avenue
San Diego, CA 92121*

In New York, you have to go out to go to the theater—in Chicago, we bring the theater to you!

Dear Jim,

As a meeting planner, you know what a hassle it can be when the whole group wants to leave the hotel for an event. It's like a troop movement during wartime—and you are left bringing up the rear!

At the Hotel Ritz, we have made entertaining the troops simple because we bring the theater to you—right in the hotel. A professional theater company dazzles them with footwork while you relax and get the applause.

Try us. We are the sensible alternative.

Sincerely,

Larry Jones

P.S. This week's show is exciting! Give me a call if you would like some complimentary tickets

Direct Mail Letter

Use the sections below to guide you in designing your own direct mail letter:

- *Headline:*

- *Key points for the body of your letter:*

- *P.S.:*

- *Enclosure:*

2. The Phone Call

Once your prospects have received your letters, you'll need to follow-up on the phone. The telephone is potentially your most efficient and profitable marketing tool. When you are selling on the phone, you don't have time to react. You must come across as a polished professional. The best way to accomplish that is by using a *competitive advantage statement*.

A **competitive advantage statement** has four components:

1. Your name
2. Your company
3. A statement about a typical problem experienced by your target market, and
4. An intriguing statement about how you can help solve the problem.

Here's an example:

My name is Mike and I work with Competitive Motors. We've found that there is a lot of confusion in the automotive market today because there have been over 150 new models introduced in just the past three years. I've developed a computer program that profiles everything buyers want in a car and in less than five minutes, identifies the models most likely to fit their needs.

A competitive advantage statement is a 30-second statement that differentiates *you* in the marketplace.

Here's another example:

My name is Marlene and I work with a company called 'The Prescription for Doctors. 'Physicians today are being pressured by insurers, employers, and patients to cut health care costs. Yet their overhead costs are constantly rising. We provide a service that allows the physician to spend more time with patients and cut overhead costs at the same time resulting in better quality care at a lower cost. It's just what the doctor ordered!

Such a statement makes a person sound like a professional right from the very beginning! Use the worksheet on the next page to create your own **competitive advantage statement**.

Your Competitive Advantage Statement

Using the spaces provided below, develop a brief, concise Competitive Advantage Statement for your primary target market.

• Primary Target Market: _____

Your Name: _____

Your Company: _____

• What is a typical problem experienced in this target market?

• What's an intriguing statement about how you and your product solve this problem?

Using the Phone as a Prospecting Tool

There are two key points to remember when using the phone as a prospecting tool. First, prepare beforehand. Research the company and the prospect and plan your strategy as well as some questions to ask. Second, remember that your objective is to get an appointment—not to make a sale. The following guidelines are designed to increase your effectiveness on the phone. Keep these handy until the techniques become automatic.

For Initial Phone Contacts:

- Ask the president's assistant for the name of the executive level person responsible for making decisions about your product.
- Use the assistant's name in your introduction.

To Gain Access To The Prospect:

- Ask for a direct-dial number.
- Leave a voice-mail message if decision-maker is not available. Repeat your name and number at the end of your message.
- Call before or after regular business hours, at lunch, or Saturday morning.
- Get the person who referred you to this prospect to make a call on your behalf.
- Ask for the prospect by his or her first name.
- Build a relationship with gatekeepers (i.e., switchboard operators, secretaries, assistants, etc.).
 - State your name/company clearly
 - Address person by name
 - Give reason for your call; explain that you need just a minute to follow up on correspondence
 - Ask for your prospect to be paged, if necessary
 - Ask their advice if you're having difficulty getting through
 - Ask for names of others within the company who may be interested in your product or service
- Limit your efforts to three calls, then a letter or fax, then three more calls.
- Use an original attention-getting approach if you aren't getting anywhere (one appropriate for you and the customer), such as a singing telegram, a letter of introduction from a mutual acquaintance or sending a box of candy with a note saying you have a *sweet* idea to share with the customer if he'll meet with you in person.
- Keep a telephone log and analyze it to determine good times to call and to identify which areas of your telephone skills most need improvement.

Planning An Initial Phone Contact

Use this worksheet to plan what you will say to one of your prospects. It will also serve you in the future as a planning sheet for your phone calls to set appointments with prospects.

1. Target Market Segment: _____

2. Include your competitive advantage statement from page 22:

3. Purpose (objective) for calling:

4. Key points to cover:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

5. Key information to discover:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

6. What commitment will you ask this prospect to make?

Up-Front “Cold Call” Objections

Now let's discuss those initial objections you receive like. “I'm not interested” or “I'm happy with my current supplier.” Most up-front objections are avoidance tactics. The prospect doesn't want to talk to you because he's afraid you are going to pressure him. His way of avoiding the pressure is to hit you with up-front objections that he hopes are difficult to counter. So you need to get past those up-front objections.

When the prospect says he has **no need**, you have to let him know you won't try to sell him anything unless you can clearly show how you can help him—help him increase profits, decrease costs or increase productivity.

If your prospect is **too busy** to see you now, you can ask to schedule an appointment at a more convenient time, even over the phone. You might also promise not to take up any more time than he'll allow you. The decision on how long you'll stay is totally dependent on him.

What if your prospect has **no time** to see you? You might say that's exactly why he *should make* the time to see you. This statement should be used when you sell a product or service that is more convenient, can save time or make the prospect more efficient, such as a computer system, portable or mobile phone, dictation equipment, certain software, or a service that would free him of something he has to currently do himself, such as financial planning or recruiting new employees.

When you come across a prospect who's **happy with her current supplier**, you might ask, “Of all the things you like about your present supplier, what one thing do you like least?” The objective here is to have the prospect discover for herself some discontent with her existing supplier or product. Make sure this comes across as an honest attempt to discover ways you can help this prospect achieve her goals better than her current supplier.

The worksheet on the next page should help you prepare for common cold call objections.

Common Up-Front Objections

When you make initial prospecting calls, you are frequently faced with up-front objections. Below are some of the most common up-front objections salespeople typically receive:

Using the spaces provided, write the three most common up-front objections you hear. Following each objection, write what you feel is the best response to deal with that objection.

1. Objection: _____

Your Response: _____

2. Objection: _____

Your Response: _____

3. Objection: _____

Your Response: _____

3. In-Person Contacts

The third method for making contact with a prospect is the in-person “cold” call. Many salespeople say that they don’t make “cold calls.” They respond only to company supplied leads, advertising inquiries or referrals. But these salespeople don’t realize that every call they make on a new prospect is, in a sense, a “cold” call. When the salesperson contacts the prospect, that prospect is very likely preoccupied with something else. The salesperson must therefore help that prospect make a mental and physical transition from what they’re doing now to what the salesperson would like them to be doing and thinking. In cold call selling, the salesperson may not only be competing with another company for that prospect’s business, but more importantly, will very likely be competing for that prospect’s time and attention.

Most of the techniques we discussed earlier for phone contacting are as applicable to in-person contacts. Remember these key points in preparing for these contacts:

Preparing for the “In-Person” Call:

1. Research the prospect as much as possible beforehand.
2. Prepare some questions to ask (more on this in Exploring).
3. Anticipate possible answers, problems or opportunities\.
4. Visualize your success.
5. Role-play your cold call with your fellow salespeople or manager.
6. Go over your plan with your sales manager—get feedback.
7. Sleep on it—you may think of something new.

On the “In-Person” Call:

1. Open with your competitive advantage statement in the first 30 seconds.
2. Don’t say, “I was just in the neighborhood.”
3. Acknowledge that you had planned to phone, and then tie your drop-in to an appointment you just concluded in the same area.
4. Remind the prospect of the letter you already sent.
5. Follow up by sending a letter that summarizes your conversation, whether you get the appointment or not.

Remember that each of the three contacting methods—direct mail, telephone and in-person calls—serve different purposes and are appropriate for different impressions. There is no best way. The most effective approach is to use all three in an organized, on-going effort in which you continually send letters, follow up with phone calls and in-person calls.

Be sure to keep in mind that it is the relationship that determines whether two people will want to do business together. The contacting phase, in turn, makes or breaks the relationship. The first few minutes with a prospect can forge the nature of a business relationship and literally determine your degree of success in this business.

4

EXPLORING

The exploring stage is where you get a chance to get deeply involved with the prospect to determine exactly how your product or service can help her. It's where the partnering process really begins.

Exploring refers to both the research you do before you contact the prospect, as well as the information gathering you do with the prospect. The purpose of Exploring is to get enough information from and about the prospect to enable you to recommend appropriate options that will eventually lead to a final solution.

Most salespeople do very little preparation before calling on the client. As a result, they ask poor questions that elicit minimal responses. Based on their incomplete picture of the prospect's situation, they make recommendations that may be totally inappropriate for the prospect and then they can't understand why the prospect is hesitant to buy!

Preparing To Explore

Questioning is one of the skills you'll use to ensure thorough identification of prospect needs and the development of useful solutions.

To prepare effective questions, you need appropriate information. Appropriate sources of information are business libraries, which have many sources including annual reports, *Standard and Poor's Industry Survey for Publicly Held Companies*, *Contacts Influential*, criss-cross directories, and census reports. Other sources include local business journals, brokerage firms, chambers of commerce and trade or professional associations.

People to consult include reference librarians, non-competitive salespeople, people who have used the prospect's product and their competitor's customers.

Next, think through all you'll need to know to understand the prospects situation. Then develop a list of questions to uncover the information you're seeking.

The Questions

After you've researched your prospect, it's time to develop your questioning plan. You'll need to think through everything you'll need to know to fully understand your prospect's situation so that you can make appropriate recommendations. Then develop a list of questions that will get you the information you need. That way, you can concentrate on listening to your prospect's responses instead of trying to think up your next question. Use the following topic categories as a guide:

Question Topic Categories

- **Current Situation**

This includes business conditions, products currently used, problems and opportunities. You also want to find out how your prospect got to this point. What things were considered along the way? What was overlooked? What is the prospect's view of his current situation?

- **Desired Situation**

What are your prospect's goals and vision— both personal and for the company? Where would she like to be in the future? What is keeping her from getting there?

- **Relevant Past Experiences**

What are your prospect's past experiences with this product and with other suppliers? What has and hasn't worked in those relationships? What needs are other suppliers not addressing? Is this the first time she is considering another vendor? How did she select her first (or last) vendor?

- **Decision-Making Process**

How does it work? Are there any deadlines? Who are the **decision-makers**? What role does each one play? (Initiator? Gatekeeper? Influencer? Buyer? User?) Does one vote hold more weight than others? Who needs to be informed? Consulted? What are the **decision-making criteria**? Who on the team is responsible for implementation?

- **Politics**

What loyalties does the prospect have to other suppliers? Who else has projects they are trying to fund and what are the decision makers' postures on each project? Are there hidden agendas?

- **Competitive Exposure**

What other companies are being considered? Is the prospect working with your competitors currently? What does the prospect like or dislike about what the competition offers? What would have to happen to dislodge your competitor?

- **Success Criteria/Expectations**

Six months from implementation, what criteria would your customer use to rate the success of your solution? Will this purchase affect her performance evaluation? Will you need to meet formal quality standards?

- **Time/Budget Constraints**

How urgent is the need? How much money does your customer have to spend on this product or project? Is it currently budgeted? What is the financial health of the company? What other budget areas might be sources for funds? Is it possible to shift dollars away from another allocation? Could your customer buy it if you were willing to accept payment later? What if you were able to break the payments into smaller, more affordable increments?

All of these areas should be examined to create an exploration plan that makes sense for your prospect. Of course, this is a rough guide and your prospect's unique situation may take you down an entirely different path. But by thinking through the situation in advance, you'll be prepared to be flexible. Preparation is a major part of the Exploring stage and it can yield big dividends when done well.

Asking Questions Effectively

Your questioning will usually begin with broad, open-ended, exploring questions. This serves to get the conversation started in a relaxed manner. Use *open-ended, exploring* questions to uncover the customer's priorities, values, goals, ideas, view of the future and feelings.

Examples are:

Could you tell me a little bit about your company?

How would you describe your current personal investment strategy?

Tell me what's most important to you in a home security system.

Open-ended questions that seek out the customers' values, goals, ideas, beliefs, opinions and feelings are exploring questions. They challenge the customer and get him involved. They help build the relationship and paint a complete picture of the customer's situation.

As the discussion progresses, you'll use more and more closed-ended questions to get more specific responses. Use *closed-ended* questions to reveal specific facts. These questions can typically be answered with a "yes" or "no" or a short answer.

Examples are:

How long have you been in business?

How many bedrooms are you looking for in a home?

What software are you running currently?

Collaborative Selling

Once you've asked your open-ended, exploring questions, you'll ask one of the following types of questions to explore further. You'll complete the rest of your exploring in each topic area by alternating among expanding, clarifying and redirecting questions.

- **Clarify** — when you are not sure of what your customer is saying or are unclear about the subject. For example. “Can you give me an example?”
- **Expand** — when you want to know more about something. For example, ‘Tell me more about . . .’
- **Redirect** — when you want to begin a new line of questioning. For example, “Okay, I understand that part. Now let's move on to another area. How do you feel about. . . ?”

Whichever question you use, the purpose of Exploring is to uncover and clarify needs and opportunities.

Preparing to Explore

A. Exploring Problems and Opportunities

- 1- What typical needs, problems or opportunities have to exist for a prospect on your list to be an *ideal customer*?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

2. What key questions should you ask to get the prospect to tell you if the above needs, problems and/or opportunities exist?

(Write 10 different questions. Once they are written, determine how many are open questions and how many are closed questions. You should have at least five open questions. If not, rewrite some of your closed questions to bring your total number of open questions to a minimum of five.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Collaborative Selling

B. Exploring Problems and Opportunities

For each of the topic areas below, draft two different questions to discover relevant information in the specific topic area. Both questions may be open, but be sure that at least one of the two is an open question.

1. Current Situation

- a. _____
b. _____

2. Desired Situation

- a. _____
b. _____

3. Relevant Past Experiences

- a. _____
b. _____

4. Decision-Making Process

- a. _____
b. _____

5. Politics

- a. _____
b. _____

6. Competitive Exposure

- a. _____
b. _____

7. Success Criteria/Expectations

- a. _____
b. _____

8. Time/Budget Constraints

- a. _____
b. _____

To be a successful salesperson, it is imperative that you be an active listener, one who concentrates on the message and tries to see the speaker's point of view. For example:

PROSPECT: *I'm not sure this machine is big enough for my needs.*

SALESPERSON: *Tell me more about what you need.*

Active listeners refrain from evaluating the message and try to see the prospect's point of view. They also listen between the words for what is not being said. Experienced salespeople recognize patterns and, when there is a piece missing, they explore to find those missing pieces, and in the process, uncover important information.

As an active listener, you should clear away distractions whenever possible. Show your prospect that you are really listening with phrases like "Uh huh," "Go on" and "Tell me more." Occasionally, you'll want to paraphrase what your prospect is saying with statements such as, "Let's see if I can summarize what I hear you saying," or "As I understand it, you're saying . . .," or "In other words. . ." When you nod your head in agreement, it lets your prospect know you understand and it also encourages her to continue.

Take notes while you listen to focus your attention completely on what your prospect is saying.

Active listening is hard work, but the resulting benefits for you and your prospect are well worth the work and investment in time. The secret to becoming an *active* listener is CARESS—the six skills of active listening that each of these letters represents:

- C** Concentrate—Maximize the amount and accuracy of the information you receive by committing your attention to the speaker, avoiding/filtering out distractions, avoiding daydreaming, and establishing a receptive listening environment.
- A** Acknowledge—Demonstrate acceptance, understanding and appreciation of the speaker through giving positive, observable and audible signs that you are actively listening to the speaker.
- R** Research and Respond—Gather information about the speaker by responding at the right time and with the right question or statement.
- E** Exercise Emotional Control—Become conscious of emotional blind spots, recognize, redirect and resolve them by controlling gut reactions to loaded words, inflammatory statements, speaker's appearance and style of delivery, and your own internal distractions.
- S** Sense—Sense the nonverbal messages of your speaker by listening to his vocal signals (*how he's saying what he's saying*) and his visual signals (body language, facial expressions, etc.)
- S** Structure—Interpret, organize and record messages by topic/subject, key points and reasons that support key points, and arrange information in a meaningful sequence or priority.

Other People's Listening Habits

One of the easiest ways to reinforce or change your behaviors is to see them reflected in someone else.

1. List the five most important things you like to see another person do when listening to you.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Now, circle the letters of those responses above that others would say *you* do when listening to them.

2. Next, list the five biggest *turn-offs*—things that people do that you especially dislike.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Now, circle the letters of those responses above that *you* are also guilty of.

How Do Your Listening Skills Rate?

Before you begin working to improve your listening skills, let's first look at where you are at this moment in each of the key areas of the CARESS Model. Take a few minutes to respond to the questions below. Your responses will help you determine what specific skills need improvement. Respond *honestly* to each of the items—no one is going to review or use this survey but you.

C—Concentrate

- When I talk with others, my mind is completely absorbed by what they are saying and it seldom wanders.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

- When in a conversation with others, I hold my comments until they are finished talking, even though my comments may have direct relevance to what they are saying at the moment

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

- I do not let distractions like ringing telephones, busy street traffic, or other conversations in a room distract my attention from what someone is saying to me.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

A—Acknowledge

- When talking face to face or on the phone with someone, I acknowledge what is being said with “I understand” and “I see”

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

R—Research and Respond

- Whenever I talk with someone, I encourage the conversation and ensure that it will be a two-way flow of communication by asking open-ended questions, clarifying what I don't completely understand, and giving appropriate feedback.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

- I let others know that I am listening and trying to understand by using phrases like, “Tell me more about that,” or, “Can you give me an example?” or “Then what?”

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

E—Emotional Control

- While talking with others, I don't let myself get distracted with thoughts about their accents, clothing, hairstyles, speech patterns or other idiosyncrasies they may have

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

Collaborative Selling

8. I judge and respond to only the value of what is being said rather than the way and manner in which a person says it.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

9. When I am talking with others, I read their body language, as well as Listen to their words, to fully interpret what they are telling me.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

10. When talking with others, I try to read what's going on behind their spoken words by asking myself what they might be feeling, why they are saying what they are saying, and what is *implied* by what they say.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

11. Whenever I talk with others, I either take mental or written notes of the major idea, the key points, the supporting points and/or reasons.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

12. As I take my mental or written notes, I sequence—I listen for order or priority.

Always	Sometimes	Never
---------------	------------------	--------------

Now that you have responded to the items above, you have a road map for improving of your listening skills. Any item marked as “Sometimes” or “Never” identifies a listening skill that needs improvement. For any item marked as “Always”— *Congratulations!*

Action Plan for Listening

Improving your listening skills requires a *commitment*, and writing responses to the following questions will help you make that important commitment.

1. I listen *most* effectively when:

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

2. I tend to listen least effectively when:

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

3. Of the six CARESS listening skills, my strongest skills are:

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

4. Of those six CARESS listening skills, the two skills which I most need to improve are:

a. _____
b. _____

5. The skill which needs the most immediate improvement is:

In order to improve this skill, I will:

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

6. The next skill which I identified above that needs immediate improvement is:

In order to improve this skill, I will:

a. _____
b. _____

As You Settle in to Explore . . .

The key to successful sales is the relationship and trust that are built between you and the prospect. An excellent way to begin your conversation with your prospect is to make four promises and two requests.

An example of opening dialogue in the first few minutes of a face-to-face sales call after stating your competitive advantage statement:

My approach to doing business is to partner with you. I am an expert in the products, services and processes that my company offers, but they will be no good to you unless they fit with your people in your environment. You're the expert in those areas.

For us to be effective partners, we have to share our expertise in a collaboration. I'll make four promises to you:

1. *I promise you I'll provide you with fast, high-quality information in my area of expertise.*
2. *I'll never pressure you to make a decision or force you to buy anything from me.*
3. *You have no obligation to buy from me, no matter how much time and effort we spend trying to find solutions.*
4. *I promise not to waste your time. If I don't feel that I can help you, I'll tell you so. You will be in total control of the process.*

In return for my promises, I ask two things of you: total honesty, even when it's something I may not want to hear, and your total participation in the process.

*If you'll collaborate with me, you'll get a free consultant and all the credit for the wins. I may **or** may not get an order. The reason I can afford to work with you like this is because you match the profile of my best customers, and I want you as a lifetime customer if it's appropriate.*

Summarizing and Prioritizing

End the Exploring step by **summarizing** and **prioritizing** the prospect's needs you've uncovered. As you summarize the needs, you and the prospect should prioritize them. Identify those which seem most important and should be dealt with immediately, versus those that are less important and may be addressed later.

Also, **clarify** the prospect's priorities within each area to be sure you understand the success criteria. **Success criteria** are defined as those factors by which the prospect will judge whether your product or service is successfully meeting the prospect's needs.

When you have several different decision makers and influencers, it's not uncommon to find that each may have different — and sometimes contradictory — views of the situation. Prepare a chart including each person's rankings. This provides a visual indication of the overall importance of each person's success criteria.

5

COLLABORATING

If you want to be successful in today's market, you need to get the buyer's attention by differentiating yourself, your company and your product. The collaborating phase is where you really differentiate yourself from the rest of your competition. But how do you determine exactly what your competitive advantages are? The best way to determine your competitive advantage is to break down your product or service into two distinct categories:

1. Competitive Advantages

What can I offer my customers that no one else can offer?

2. Competitive Disadvantages

Where does the competition have an advantage over me?

Knowing Your Competitive Advantages

How many times have you been in a selling situation where the prospect's sole focus was on price? Anytime your customers **can't tell the difference** between your product or service and your competitor's, they will buy on price. You must differentiate your company, your product, your quality, your service, **and yourself** if you want the prospect to stop focusing on price. You've got to show her **how** you are different. Take a few moments now to determine your unique competitive advantages on the next page.

Creating Options

Collaborating begins with you and your prospect working together to create a solution to a problem, or to create more opportunities for their business.

If you've done a good job of exploring, you may have gathered more information than you could possibly analyze while you're sitting in front of the prospect. If so, it's then time to head back to your office to begin processing the information you've gathered, formulating several possible options and preparing for your next meeting with the prospect.

Competitive Analysis

Complete the following chart for up to four of your major competitors, based on what you currently know about them.

	Advantages (What can I offer my customers that no one else can offer?)	Disadvantages (Where does the competition have an advantage over me?)
Competitor A		
Competitor B		
Competitor C		
Competitor D		

Before you leave the prospect though, make two follow-up appointments: one for a **telephone conference prior to your next meeting** and one for an **appointment for your next meeting** where the two of you will select the options that will best meet their needs. Most salespeople make the mistake of proposing only one solution. This may be a grave error for two reasons. The first is that you lose the prospect's involvement in creating the solution. If your prospects are involved in creating the solution with you, they'll be far more committed to its implementation than if you create it without them. The second is that only proposing one solution eliminates your flexibility if the solution doesn't exactly meet all of the prospect's needs. More than one option allows the prospect to easily see the trade-offs of selecting different options.

Creating a **menu of more than one option** for your prospects allows you to:

- Involve your prospect in creating the solution to gain commitment.
- Provide perspective on why the ideal solution may not be possible.
- Mix and match options to attain the best solution available.

Follow these key steps in creating options for your customer:

1. Examine the options. Check to see that they:
 - Meet the prospect's success criteria (including budget and time frames).
 - Position you and your company favorably compared to the competition (highlight your competitive advantages).
 - Consider your company's constraints (delivery schedules, credit policy, etc.).
2. Write a **report of findings** which includes:
 - Your understanding of the prospect's situation
 - Success criteria ranked in order of importance
 - Possible courses of action with pros, cons and costs
 - One-page executive summary
3. Call to review your findings and briefly discuss your rationale. (This is what the telephone conference appointment is for.)
 - Cover all critical areas so there are no surprise at your next meeting.
 - Confirm your appointment for your next face-to-face meeting.
4. Adjust your report as necessary and print copies for everyone who will be at your next face-to-face meeting.

Selecting Options

Your next step is to meet with the prospect to collaborate on reaching a solution. Your goal is to discuss with the customer the options you have created, and to collaborate with her to find the best possible solution for her situation. Collaborating to select options:

- Serves as a check on customer priorities.
- Gets feedback on each option and the degree to which each option meets her expectations (success criteria).
- Limits the need for negotiation.
- Ensures that the solution is on target.
- Makes commitment more likely and natural for the customer.

To ensure a successful meeting, follow these three steps:

1. Review the executive summary from the report of findings which includes:
 - The prospect's desired outcome
 - Her decision-making criteria and success criteria
 - An overview of key options and recommendations
 - Key assumptions that were made in creating the options
2. Review the pros, cons and cost of each option.
3. Ask her which option she believes would work best and why.

Price Trade-offs

Discuss the price trade-offs of each option as you go because this method:

- Shows the prospect the “building blocks” of the total price.
- Creates prospect buy-in to the final price.
- Allows the prospect to make changes to lower the price if price is a problem.

Ask the prospect these useful questions to get her feedback on the options presented:

- What other options do you see that I may not have considered?
- What red flags do you see if we were to implement this solution?
- How do you see this option working with your people in your environment?

Encourage the prospect to challenge you. Help her to relate any concerns to the bigger picture by asking:

- Is there anything else that would stand in the way of our successful implementation of this solution?

Proposing Solutions

If the prospect requires a more standard sales presentation, you must create and present the options where the prospect will be reactive, rather than proactive.

1. Address each prospect need one by *one*, presenting solutions as you go.
2. Cover all issues, but don't discuss every feature, only the relevant ones.

Remember:

- **A feature** is any aspect of a product or service that exists whether or not it's ever used and regardless of a prospect's needs.
 - An **advantage** is how a feature can be used to help solve a prospect's problem.
 - **A benefit** is a way a specific feature satisfies a specific prospect's need — a benefit is a feature in action. It answers the question, "What's in it for me?"
 - Any single feature can have more than one benefit; any desired benefit can be achieved by more than one feature.
3. Focus on those features that highlight your competitive advantages.
 4. Follow a natural or logical order of discussion, or the prospect's priorities.
 5. You can involve the prospect by using the *feature/feedback/benefit* method: present the feature, invite feedback, and let the prospect provide the benefit.

Example of the feature/feedback/benefit method:

SALESPERSON: *The house has a small, kidney-shaped pool with a Jacuzzi at one end.*
(Feature) How important is that to you and your family? (Feedback)

PROSPECT: *I have a bad back. I've always wanted a Jacuzzi and my kids love to swim. A pool and a Jacuzzi would be great! (Benefit)*

Effective feedback questions to ask prospects include:

- How do you see this fitting into your situation?
 - What other advantages do you see?
 - This is how it fits into your business. How does it fit into your family life?
 - How well does this address the opportunities we discussed earlier?
 - How well does this look like it will meet your needs?
6. When interrupted, briefly review only the last point you made and continue the presentation. If interruptions are constant, gently address the issue with the prospect, putting the blame on the environment. Offer an alternative environment. As a last resort, offer to reschedule the appointment.
 7. Conclude with a benefit summary where you review all the key benefits you'll be providing to the prospect and relate each to his specific success criteria.

Now we move on to the next phase of Collaborative Selling — the one many salespeople consider the most difficult part of the sales process — confirming the sale.

Features, Advantages and Benefits

It's very important for you to distinguish between the features, advantages, and benefits of your product or service. A feature is built-in—it's any aspect of a product or service that exists whether or not it's ever bought or used and regardless of a prospect's needs. When you make this distinction, and learn which *benefits* a prospect hopes to achieve, then you won't waste time pointing out features that a specific prospect has little interest. Complete this worksheet for some practice with features, advantages and benefits as they relate to a specific prospect need.

Recognized Prospect Need	Features	Advantages	Benefits
	<p><i>List three <u>different</u> features about your product or service.</i></p>	<p><i>Write two possible advantages a prospect or company might gain as a result of each of the features indicated in the boxes to the immediate left.</i></p>	<p><i>What is one possible benefit a prospect or company could gain as a result of each item in the boxes to the immediate left?</i></p>

6

CONFIRMING

We call this phase **confirming**, not closing, the sale because if you've done your job properly up until now, your prospect *should ask to buy from you!* If you've been conscientious throughout the sales process, collaborating closely with your prospect, you should naturally progress to the commitment process *together*. The commitment becomes a *how* and a *when*, not an *if*.

Because collaborative salespeople are always in step with their prospect, the transition from collaborating to confirming is natural. Signing the order is just a formality. If you do get stuck here, you probably missed something in one of the earlier steps. Let's review the steps in the confirming process.

1. Before you confirm, you'll want to be sure your prospect has all the information he needs to increase his perceived value of your product or service. Make sure he understands exactly what he will be getting before, during and after the sale. *Review all of the key benefits* you'll be providing and relate each to his success criteria. This benefit summary at the end of the collaboration stage will make the transition to confirming easy.
2. Look for positive buying signals from the prospect, which include questions like:
 - What credit terms do you offer?
 - Can I try it one more time?
 - How much lead time do you need?
 - How does the installation process work?
3. When you get one of these questions and feel it's appropriate to confirm, answer your prospect's question and ask for his commitment by posing an open question that seeks direction:
 - Where do we go from here?
 - What do you see as our next step?
 - How should we proceed?

Collaborative Selling

Note: You can use these questions to check their commitment level, whenever you think it's appropriate to move to the Confirming step.

4. If you get a “yes”:
 - Review the solution and its benefits.
 - Formalize the agreement (draw up documents and arrange for signing).
 - Set up or confirm the implementation schedule (terms/financing options, payment delivery schedule, installation, training, and so on).
 - Clarify the customer’s expectations and success criteria.
 - Evaluate your performance after leaving your customer by making specific notes concerning:
 - In what areas you beat the competitor (e.g., price, service, delivery, etc.).
 - What your greatest challenges were and what you *specifically* did to meet those challenges.
 - What you *specifically* can do in the future to repeat the successes.
 - Jot down your commitments such as price quotes, delivery dates, terms offered, and so on.
 - Back at the office, enter the follow-up date in your tickler file, write a thank you note and put the customer on your mailing list
 - Visualize to improve your performance by replaying the positives.
5. If you get a “no”:
 - Keep the relationship intact by supporting the prospect’s decision, offering help, and staying in touch.
 - Ask for a post-sale analysis covering what you did right and what you could have done better.
 - Evaluate your performance after leaving your prospect by making specific notes concerning:
 - In what areas you lost to the competitor (e.g., price, service, delivery, etc.).
 - What your *specific* problems were and why they could not be resolved.
 - What you believe you can do in the future to ensure that the problems you encountered either don’t occur or can be overcome.
 - Improve your performance in the future by visualizing what you’ll do differently next time.

Addressing Prospect Concerns

We've talked about what to do if you get a "yes" or a "no" from a prospect. But sometimes you get a "maybe". What do you do if you've asked for a commitment from the prospect and he tells you he wants to think about it before he gives you a commitment? You check the six P's:

1. Price
2. Priority
3. Politics
4. Personality
5. Product
6. Postponement

Price

1. Clarify what the prospect means when she says your price is too high.
 - She may mean she can't afford the price, although the product is worth what you're asking.

Strategy:

- a) Focus on payment options rather than price.
- b) Try creative financing.
- c) Switch to a more affordable product, if available.
 - She may be trying to tell you that her current understanding of the product's features/benefits isn't worth what you're asking.

Strategy:

- a) Review special features and upgrades that make product worth the price.
- b) Check benefits by asking for feedback.
 - She may mean that from her point of view, the product doesn't offer as much as someone else's.

Strategy:

- a) Make sure comparative factors the prospect is using are of equal weight.
- b) Focus on important uniquenesses and advantages.
 - She may mean that she feels that her money would be better spent on something else (see *Priority* below).
 - She may be trying to tell you that the product is a good value, but not to her, for X reason(s).

Strategy:

- Create new selection criteria and come up with a new option.

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2. Differentiate between price and total cost.
 - *Price* is what you initially pay — a one-time charge.
 - *Total cost* is what you pay over the term of ownership, including recurring expenses.
3. Ask the prospect for help in solving the problem. Say something like:
 - “I sense that you have a concern about money. In an ideal world, how could we structure the financial package to best meet your needs?”

Priority

Find out how the prospect sorts alternatives.

- Does the prospect move toward or away from particular outcomes?
- Is the prospect’s primary need for prestige, practicality, convenience or something else?
- How will he compare this purchase against other possible investments?

What’s most important is that you align your project with your prospect’s most important business goals. If it’s a high enough priority, he’ll find the money.

Politics

You’ll typically be faced with one of two scenarios:

1. Your prospect or his project is a political issue.

Strategy:

- a) Act as an advisor; help the customer create options for gaining internal support.
- b) Have him check the rationale others are using to put their projects ahead of his.

2. You or your product is a political issue.

Strategy:

- a) Build support from the start by involving all of the key players.
- b) Be open and honest.
- c) Dig for concerns and reservations.
- d) Work hard to consider their issues as you create and select options.

Personality

Your relationship with your prospect is the foundation upon which everything else is built. Trust is based on your fulfilling the promises you make. Promote *confidence*^ listening more than you talk, monitoring how well you’re doing and doing what you say you will. Correct problems and stay on top of changing needs.

If there's a personality concern, it's due to a breakdown in one or more of the above areas. You'll need all of your communication skills to get the relationship back on track.

Product

There are situations when trust is strong and resistance is due to product problems beyond your control. For example, you may be expected to provide a color or style of an item that is no longer available. Unless the color or style can be changed, the sale may not be confirmed. These problems are difficult but not insurmountable. Help your prospect clearly see her priorities with this four-step process:

1. **Listen** and carefully **observe** both the verbal and the nonverbal message of the prospect. What is really being said?
2. **Clarify** the basis of the resistance so that there is no misunderstanding about what concern you are addressing.
3. **Answer** the concern, using the compensation technique.
4. **Confirm** the prospect's acceptance of your answer to assure that your response was on target and additional resistance is no longer necessary to guide you further.

Using the compensation method, you acknowledge a deficiency in a particular area of your product or service but try to compensate for it by pointing out other features and benefits that outweigh the shortcoming. For example, if you cannot meet a delivery date, suggest other times and stress the *advantages* of another date. This method is effective when the shortcoming is not of paramount importance. Suggested alternatives will often suffice.

Sometimes you can use the classic Ben Franklin Balance Sheet. Take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns with "Reasons For" at the top of the left column and "Reasons Against" at the top of the right column. On this balance sheet, start with the "Reasons For" column and ask your prospect to list all of the reasons why she should make a positive decision to purchase your product. Together, rank them from most important to least important.

Next, go on to the "Reasons Against" column and do the same thing. Rank and discuss each of the items on the "Reasons Against" side. Answer the questions your prospect poses and offer a solution or explanation if one exists. You can then ask your prospect if this item is still a negative or if it is now a neutral. It is the *prospect's choice* to delete it from the list or leave it, but at least you have shed some light on the issue. At the end of this process, ask your prospect how she would like to proceed.

Postponement

The first step in dealing with postponement is to uncover the prospect's actual motive.

Postponement is usually expressed as "I want to think it over." The prospect's actual motives can be:

- A need to go over facts and gather more information. Show her how she can solve her problems by *moving away/from* what she *doesn't want*.
- A need to consult with others. Encourage her to involve others throughout the process. You may need to go back and "start over" with others who will be involved in the decision.

Ask these feedback questions to uncover unstated prospect concerns:

- On which parts of the report are you not clear?
- Which options are confusing?
- Are you still working against a deadline?
- What can I do to help?
- Do you currently have a source for the funds, or will you be looking for one?

When the prospect is unsure about what the problem *is*, usually she is concerned about the *risk* involved. Find out how the prospect perceives the risk of your solution. Have her list the pros and cons as she sees them.

Reduce the prospect's perception of risk by:

- Offering a money-back guarantee.
- Showing the prospect a successful implementation or setting up a conversation with a satisfied customer.
- Offering a pilot. A *pilot* is a test of one stage of the project to see if the solution can be implemented successfully. The prospect commits to the entire project, but the pilot allows for adjustments or cancellation after the initial phase has been completed. Ask your prospect to place the entire order up front and pay for it to cement their commitment.

For Those Who Need to Shop:

- Educate the prospect on how to shop. (Identify key criteria, questions to ask and so on.)
- Offer to help. (Provide information on the competition that highlights your company's competitive advantages; provide names of major competitors.)
- Volunteer to serve as a consultant, answering questions that arise during the shopping process.

- Ask for a commitment to discuss the prospect's findings and help compare/ evaluate the competitive information gathered (before a decision is made).
- If the prospect is uncertain that your option meets her needs, explore the key issues again (expected outcome, budget, timing, decision process, and so on).
- Offer a tentative confirmation to the prospect who likes your solution but wants to check out what else is out there. The prospect commits to buy but reserves the right to cancel under specified conditions.

Dealing with a prospect's concerns is a major part of the sales process. Although it's a challenge, it's a workable one. The worksheet on the next page should help you in meeting this challenge. The next challenge is making sure you give the prospect excellent service and we'll deal with that in the next and final lesson.

Addressing Prospect Concerns

The most common concerns salespeople confront when trying to confirm a sale involves (1) *Price*, (2) *Product*, and (3) *Postponement*. In the spaces below, write out the most common concerns you hear in each of these categories. Then, write your planned response.

1. PRICE: _____

RESPONSE: _____

1. PRODUCT: _____

(Note: These concerns may revolve around your competitive disadvantages.)

RESPONSE: _____

1. POSTPONEMENT: _____

RESPONSE: _____

7

ASSURING

Step six in the collaborative selling process is Assuring, which is the real secret to long-term, extraordinary success in sales. Many salespeople today believe that their job ends when they get the sale. They disappear from the customer's life, leaving service, installation, training and follow-up to someone else. Unfortunately, they also leave their repeat and referral business to someone else.

Follow-Up: Servicing the Customer

It's essential that you make your customer feel as important after the sale as they felt before the sale. You'll want to continue to build the relationship and ensure that you are meeting your commitments by using the 1-5-15-30 follow-up activities that take place one day, five days, fifteen days and thirty days *after* the customer has received your product or service.

- *Day 1* — Send a handwritten thank you note.
- *Day 5* — Check-up call to determine that the product has arrived and works. Are there any initial problems?
- *Day 15* — Second check-up call that will produce referrals if the customer is still happy with the product.
- *Day 30* — Send a small gift with high perceived value that's related to the purchase.

Follow-Up Guidelines

Using a system to follow up after the sale will ensure better results with your customers. As you develop your follow-up plan, keep in mind the following techniques:

- Let your customer know about any delays in delivery or *any* other problems.
- Confirm that your customer received the product if it is being delivered.
- Check with your customer to ensure that your product meets her success criteria.
- Prevent buyer's remorse by appropriately following through after the sale.

1. Draft a general thank you note that you will be able to easily adapt for each sale you make:

Dear (Customer's name) _____ ,

2. Brainstorm below for an appropriate gift for your customers that will fit the following criteria: (1) inexpensive; (2) pertinent to the sale; and (3) high perceived value.

Possible Gifts:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Once you have a list of several possibilities, circle the one that *best* meets the three criteria.

Monitoring/Measuring Success Criteria

The secret to long-term, extraordinary success in sales lies in measuring your customer's results. This requires three simple, but important, steps:

1. Ask the customer how she would know a year from now whether this has been a good decision or a bad decision.
2. Ask for specific, measurable criteria, such as a specific percentage increase in sales or employee productivity or a definite percentage decrease in specific costs.
3. Monitor and measure the degree to which those criteria are being met.

Measurement solidifies your relationship and automatically sets up your next sale with this customer. It also quantifies your successes so you have data to use to sell other similar potential customers.

As you manage customer expectations and assumptions, you may find that problems will arise. During implementation, there are two main possibilities.

1. Success criteria are met or exceeded. In this case, you can proceed to the next two steps of assuring (Enhancing the Customer Relationship and Expanding Business Opportunities).
2. The solution falls short of expectations. In this case, you need to take immediate action to handle the problem or complaint.

A solution may fall short of expectations for the following reasons:

- **Product failure** — a mechanical breakdown of the product. Take corrective action immediately to resolve the problem to the customer's satisfaction.
- **Implementation error** — the customer isn't using your product correctly, in many cases because of a lack of training. Find out who is using your product incorrectly and train that person to effectively use the product.
- **Buyers remorse** — the customer has misgivings about his purchase because of guilt about spending money, or uncertainty about the decision to buy. By reviewing benefits, then following up to make sure the customer receives them, you can prevent buyer's remorse.
- **Selective perception** — the customer focuses on a minor problem or small negative aspect of the product and ignores other benefits. Review the benefits and success criteria to help the customer put the small negative in the proper perspective.

Problems give you a chance to show how much you care about the customer. To handle them, you need to immediately acknowledge the problem and take responsibility for your part in the problem. Then you have to do whatever possible to resolve the problem. This could be anything from a letter of apology to a partial or total refund. Confirm with the customer that your

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solution was a satisfactory one for him. And whatever you're going to do, do it quickly. Speed is essential when a customer has a problem. Too many companies say no, no, no and then, after they have lost all customer goodwill, they say yes. Saying yes up front will go a long way toward building customer loyalty.

The very worst possibility is that the solution was just a poor solution to the customer's problem. You can't hide if you ever want to do business with this customer again. None of us likes to face problems, but studies show that when a customer problem is addressed and fixed promptly, the customer is actually more loyal than if the problem had never happened. They've tested your reliability and found a supplier they can count on.

If the solution was a poor one, you need to:

- Take responsibility for the problem and offer to take action to correct it.
- Respond and recover:
 - a) Respond immediately to the situation. Return to the Exploring and Collaborating steps to find a solution that will be more effective.
 - b) Recover from the problem, resolving it quickly to preserve the relationship. Repeat the Confirming and Assuring steps once needs have been correctly defined.

Keep in mind that it generally costs five to seven times as much to win a *new* customer than to retain an old one — and remember the value of just one lifetime customer. There is more at stake here than the profit on one sale — all future sales and all future referrals from this customer depend on your ability to reaffirm your commitment to quality and service. As a professional salesperson, your customers aren't just part of your career, your customers *are* your career.

Enhancing The Customer Relationship

Formal **annual reviews** are a major part of enhancing customer relationships. To plan a formal annual review, you should:

- Arrange a quiet environment for the meeting.
- Take notes and send a clean, typed copy to the customer within 24 hours.
- Bring records of the previous year's transactions with the customer.
- Determine how well you've met or exceeded the customer's expectations.
- Then, discuss the overall relationship between your company and this customer.
- Ascertain what your strengths and weaknesses are in relationship to this customer.
- Brainstorm with the customer how you can minimize your weaknesses and maximize your strengths.
- Listen for new needs, concerns and opportunities.
- Conclude with a statement of commitment to serve the customer in the future.
- Offer a new idea, product or promotion, if possible.

Signs that the relationship might be in trouble include:

- Rising complaints related to you or your product/service.

- Decrease in the rapport between you and the customer.
- New management or owner in your customer's company.
- Downward purchase volume changes.
- Positive references about your competitors.

Maintain personal visibility by following up on customer interests. You might:

- Keep a record of your customer's interests, likes and dislikes.
- Send helpful ideas, articles, items of interest and holiday cards.
- Introduce your customers to others with similar interests.
- Drop by to show customers new products and brochures and offer additional services. Show respect by always making an appointment.
- Provide free training in the use of your product for all new hires.
- Encourage customers to call you with ideas or complaints.
- Have successful customers contribute articles to your company newsletter.
- Keep the lines of communication open at all times, and establish several linkages between your company and your customer's company.
- Include your customers in focus groups or on a quality control board to help design your next generation of products/services.
- Develop links to others in your organization who have contact with the customer, and schedule regular meetings to review your customer's situation and identify problems and opportunities.

Expand Business Opportunities

Expanding business opportunities means using your relationship with the customer to expand your customer base both inside and outside your customer's company.

Inside Opportunities

Inside the company, you'll want to achieve *total account penetration*. You can do this with the same person you've been working with (the original buyer) or with a different person (from another department, location, division, branch, subsidiary or sister company). Try:

- **Selling more of the same product** — For example, you may notice that the customer is ordering more frequently. This indicates the possible need for larger quantities. Consider offering quantity discounts.
- **Selling additional or related products/services** — For example, if you sold the customer business cards, you may want to offer letterhead stationery and memo pads to go with the cards.
- **Selling an upgraded product** — For example, if you sold a customer a copy machine and, due to growth, the customer needs a machine with more features, you might offer an upgrade to a more sophisticated machine.

Outside Opportunities

To get leads *outside* the customer company:

- Ask for referrals.
- Leverage your relationship with your current customer to help you with your new customers.

Asking for Referrals

Ask for referrals any time a customer offers positive feedback about you or your produce. Often, the best time to do so is right after you've resolved a customer problem related to your product and proven that you can and will follow through.

Any time you ask for referrals, follow these guidelines:

- ***Ask for specific referrals to narrow the customer's focus.*** Word your questions so that the customer thinks about a specific environment and situation. For example, "Do you know of any colleagues *in your business club* whose needs are similar to yours?"
- ***Gather as much information about the new customer as possible.*** In an informal, casual manner, ask about the referred customer's business, needs and personality style. For example, "What did he say to you that indicated he has such a need?"
- ***Ask your customer for permission to use his or her name.*** This should be no problem if you have built a solid relationship with the customer.
- ***Ask your customer for help in obtaining an appointment with the referral***
- ***Contact the referral as soon as possible.***
- ***Inform our customer about the outcome of the contact.*** If the customer decides to buy, send your customer a thank you gift. If the customer doesn't buy, send your customer a thank you note for trying.

Leverage this customer's relationship to help you find new customers. Use what you've learned in working with this customer to start the selling process over again by:

- Returning to the Targeting step. Ask yourself who else in the marketplace resembles this customer? Analyze your customer's profile. Consider wide-ranging criteria such as type of business entity, contact level, new applications for your product, etc., and use this information to develop a profile of prospective customers who may have similar needs.
- Asking your customer for testimonial letters that answer these three questions:
 - What factors influenced your decision to buy from me?
 - How has my product helped you?
 - Would you recommend me to others?
- Asking your customer to serve as a reference.

8

SUMMARY

I hope you feel that we've lived up to our commitment to you to deliver a new kind of sales training program that is based on collaboration and partnering with your customers to create a long-term relationship. And we hope you've understood that what we've been talking about is not simply some new technique or a new set of sales words. What we're describing is a fundamental shift in the way you perceive your customer and in the way your customer perceives you. And it all begins with how you perceive yourself. You're changing jobs. You're changing from a person who "sells" things to a person who "consults" and "solves problems" with people to enhance their businesses or their lives. You'll need to develop a plan for how you're going to incorporate these changes into your daily sales routine. Change your habits gradually. If many of the ideas you've heard here are new to you, begin using some of the simpler ones with your existing customers.

Let's review the principles of **Collaborative Selling**. We began with **Targeting** and composing your **Competitive Advantage Statement** which includes your name, your company, a statement about a problem in your market and an intriguing statement about how you and your product or service solve that problem. Can you state it in thirty seconds or less? If you can't, that's where you'll need to start.

Next, you identify your best current customers. You look for three things: who bought what? . . . how exactly did you find and sell to those customers? . . . and why did they buy what they bought? Having the answers to those questions points the way to where you'll find prospects that fit your "best customer" profile. You'll reach these new prospective customers in a variety of ways: personal advertising, sales promotions, public relations, publishing a newsletter, becoming a guest speaker, or generating excellent publicity for yourself.

After Targeting comes **Contacting** through direct mail. You'll send one letter, then another, then a third. You'll call three to five days after you know the third letter should have arrived. Our guidelines here were: Mail to 4 new prospects everyday. Make it look personal and lumpy. Always include a headline, a P.S., reply card and toll free number. Computerize your system and *use it every day*.

You'll also use the telephone everyday to contact prospects and customers and make in-person cold calls when they're appropriate. The most important thing to remember about using any of these contacting approaches is to be prepared. Do your homework.

The next stage—**Exploring**—is where the partnering process really begins. The key to exploring is simple—ask open-ended, values driven, exploring questions which involve the

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customer in the whole process. You'll be looking for information on his current situation, desired situation, relevant past experiences, decision-makers and success criteria. And you'll use the success criteria in the Assuring stage when you're checking back to see if the solution is really working.

After the exploring stage you'll write a report of findings, offering a menu of solutions with various options. When you're **Collaborating** with your customer to select options and create a solution, you'll keep the client as involved in the process *as you are* by regularly asking for feedback on the options presented.

You'll then **Confirm** the sale. Getting a 'Yes' for a purchase means you'll move into implementing the solution for your customer. If you get a 'No' or a 'Maybe', you would discover any customer concerns regarding Price, Priorities, Politics, Personality or Postponement.

How will you create a lifelong customer? Through the final step — **Assuring**. You'll need to make sure her success criteria are being met. Remember to use our 1-5-15-30 system for recontacting the customer. And then you'll have an annual review, more often if necessary, to make sure everything is meeting or exceeding the customer's expectations.

Your customer has now become a source for possible referrals and the cycle begins again for you. **Targeting, Contacting, Exploring, Collaborating, Confirming and Assuring** That cycle is one of the major benefits we're offering you in this program. Our approach will not only change your style of selling, it will change your life. Before long, you'll find that the collaborative approach will seem natural to you and you'll begin to for get the way you used to sell. As you work the system, the system will work for you. Your constant attention to your customer's needs will help you to build your sales career and your **competitive advantage**.

We wish you the best of luck and success in your career. Actually, you won't need luck; you'll just need persistence. By working the collaborative selling system we've presented in this program, *you'll* create all the success you'll ever need, because you'll have **The Competitive Advantage**.

9

Action Plan

Congratulations! You have completed the *Collaborative Selling* program and have fully participated in its activities • Now it's time for you to focus on which skills need improvement and how you plan to put what you've learned about collaborative selling to work for you. Your answers to the questions below will create your action plan—your blueprint—for implementing collaborative selling into your sales career.

Assess the strength of your skills in the six areas of Collaborative Selling by rating your skills from 1 to 10 with 1 meaning “no skill at all” and 10 meaning “highly skilled—no improvement needed.” Circle the # of your assessments.

(<input type="checkbox"/>) TARGETING	1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10		
	No	Average	Highly
	Skill	Skill	Skilled
(<input type="checkbox"/>) CONTACTING	1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10		
	No	Average	Highly
	Skill	Skill	Skilled
(<input type="checkbox"/>) EXPORING	1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10		
	No	Average	Highly
	Skill	Skill	Skilled
(<input type="checkbox"/>) COLLABORATING	1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10		
	No	Average	Highly
	Skill	Skill	Skilled
(<input type="checkbox"/>) CONFIRMING	1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10		
	No	Average	Highly
	Skill	Skill	Skilled
(<input type="checkbox"/>) ASSURING	1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10		
	No	Average	Highly
	Skill	Skill	Skilled

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2. Review your responses above. Then, using the blanks in parentheses to the left of each area, prioritize the areas from 1 to 6, according to the greatest urgency in improvement and attention—1 being the most urgent, 6 being the least urgent.
3. Skim through the chapter in the guide on the area you identified above as your weakest—your priority #1: _____ . Then:
 - Identify the skills that need the greatest improvement.
 - Below each skill, write the *actions you will take* to ensure their improvement.

(1) Skill: _____

(a) _____

(b) _____

(2) Skill: _____

(a) _____

(b) _____

(3) Skill: _____

(a) _____

(b) _____

• *By what date* will you begin taking action? _____

d. How will you determine that improvement has been/is being made in this area?

(1) _____

(2) _____

4. Now, do the same for the area you identified as Priority #2: _____
Skim through the chapter in the guide on this area and:

• Identify the skills that need the greatest improvement
• Below each skill, write the *actions you will take* to ensure their improvement

(1) Skill: _____

(a) _____

(b) _____

(2) Skill: _____

(a) _____

(b) _____

(3) Skill: _____

(a) _____

(b) _____

c. *By what date will you begin taking action?*

d. How will you determine that improvement has been/is being made in this area?

(1) _____

(2) _____

5. While working through this material on Collaborative Selling, what ideas did you discover (or re-discover) that you want to put into practice?

(____) _____

(____) _____

(____) _____

(____) _____

Review your list above and number each one in order of priority from 1 to 4.

6. What specifically will you do to put your #1 priority above into practice?

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

NOTE: A written Action Plan can have dramatic influence on your achievement in professional sales and your level of success. Without written plans, your intentions will remain just that—good intentions. To see real progress, improvement, and full implementation of your intentions, written plans and their frequent reviewers a must

Good Luck!

“To Do” Checklist

Now that you have completed this program, there are a few things you will want to remember to do:

Complete the draft of your Direct Mail letter on page 20. Complete the Action Plan for Listening on page 39.

Identify skills needing improvement within the four remaining areas of *Collaborative Selling* that you prioritized as 3, 4, 5, and 6 in your Action Plan on pages 63-65. Then, as you did for your first and second priorities, identify the *action you will take* to ensure improvement, and pinpoint a date to begin the process for each.

Below, use the space to write additional “to do” items concerning this program that you want to be sure to accomplish.

Suggestion-- You may want to prepare a more complete telephone script based on the exercise you completed, “Planning An Initial Phone Contact/” on page 24.

Tony Alessandra's Audio and Video Learning Resources

Audio Tapesets

New Relationship STRATEGIES

<http://www.alessandra.com/relationshipaudio.html>

Dynamics of Effective Listening

<http://www.alessandra.com/effectlistenaudio.html>

10 Qualities of Charismatic People

<http://www.alessandra.com/10charismaticaudio.html>

Video Tapes

The Platinum Rule

<http://www.alessandra.com/platrullevideo.html>

Charisma

<http://www.alessandra.com/charismavideo.html>

Customer-Driven Service

<http://www.alessandra.com/custdrivenvideo.html>

Collaborative Selling

<http://www.alessandra.com/collabsellvideo.html>

The Power of Listening

<http://www.alessandra.com/powerlistenvideo.html>

Video Training Programs

The Platinum Rule Video Training

<http://www.alessandra.com/platruletrain.html>

Power of Listening Video Training

<http://www.alessandra.com/powerlistentrain.html>

Web Specials

<http://www.alessandra.com/specials.html>

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Either read from your computer screen or print out and read.

Tony Alessandra's eLearning* Resources

Platinum Rule email series:

<http://www.alessandra.com/eplatruleseries.html>

Sales Skills email series:

<http://www.alessandra.com/esaleseries.html>

Platinum Rule eBook

<http://www.alessandra.com/eplatrulebook.html>

PeopleSmart eBook

<http://www.alessandra.com/epeoplesmart.html>

Street Smarts eBook

<http://www.alessandra.com/streetsmarts>

Non-Manipulative Selling eBook

<http://www.alessandra.com/enonmanipsell.html>

Platinum Rule eWorkbook

<http://www.alessandra.com/eplatruleworkbook.html>

Customer Driven Service eWorkbook

<http://www.alessandra.com/ecustdriveworkbook.html>

Power of Listening eWorkbook

<http://www.alessandra.com/epowerlistenworkbook.html>

Charisma eWorkbook

<http://www.alessandra.com/echarismaworkbook.html>

Goal Setting eWorkbook

<http://www.alessandra.com/goalsetting.html>

Interpersonal Communications eReport

<http://www.alessandra.com/interpersonal.html>

Nonverbal Communications eReport

<http://www.alessandra.com/nonverbal.html>

Resolving Conflict eReport

<http://www.alessandra.com/resolveconflict.html>

Presentation Skills eReport

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Tony Alessandra, PhD, CSP, CPAE

Building Customers, Relationships, and the Bottom-Line

Dr. Tony Alessandra helps companies build customers, relationships, and the bottom-line. Audiences learn how to outmarket, outsell, and outservice the competition by applying Dr. Alessandra's marketing, sales, service, and relationship-building skills.

Tony has a street-wise, college-smart perspective on business, achieving success as a graduate professor of marketing, entrepreneur, author, and consultant. He earned his PhD in marketing from Georgia State University and was inducted into the Speakers Hall of Fame in 1985.

Dr. Alessandra is the co-founder of MentorU.com, an online e-learning company providing training and coaching utilizing the latest Internet technologies.

Dr. Alessandra is a widely published author with 14 books translated into 14 foreign languages including The Platinum Rule and The Art of Managing People. He is featured in over 50 audio/video programs and films, including The Dynamics of Effective Listening and Non-Manipulative Selling.

Tony Alessandra reaches people - from the Board of Directors to the front-line employees. He delivers practical ideas and profitable bottom-line results "with a lot of snap" - so people can grasp it, remember it, and use it. Recognized by Meetings & Conventions Magazine as "one of America's most electrifying speakers," Tony's polished style, powerful message, and proven ability as a consummate business strategist consistently earns rave reviews.

Topics

Customer Loyalty

How to Get and Keep Customers...For Life

Turn your customers into business apostles, long-term profitable customers who "preach the gospel" for your company. Dr. Alessandra focuses on how everyone in your organization can become more customer-driven and less operations-driven; how to turn moments of misery into moments of magic; and how to create customer satisfaction, intimacy, and retention. It all starts by finding loyalty-prone prospects, turning them into a first time sale, consistently exceeding their expectations so they become ongoing customers, and ultimately converting them into apostles.

The Platinum Rule

Relationship Strategies for Building Lasting Rapport

Everyone knows the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as you would have done unto you.' But this habit can turn off those who have different needs, wants and hopes than we do. Instead, the real key is to apply the Platinum Rule: 'Do unto others as THEY would like done unto them!' The Platinum Rule is Dr. Tony Alessandra's most requested topic— often described as "a college lecture delivered in the Comedy Store."

Collaborative Selling

How to Gain the Competitive Advantage in Selling

Selling today requires creating long-term customers rather than one-shot sales. It has evolved from a transaction mentality to building relationships; from persuading and telling to problem solving and helping; from low-price selling to value-added selling. In this dynamic program, Tony shows your employees how to use the six-step collaborative selling model to dominate their market.

Rave Reviews

3M – You were wonderful! You surpassed our highest expectations. And a standing ovation – the audience was unanimous in its raves!

AT & T – It is always a pleasure to work with topnotch professionals – simple to arrange, powerful talk and very thorough follow-up.

Bell Atlantic – People were talking about your presentation hours after it was over and all day on Friday. Truly an outstanding presentation.

Bridal Marketing Assn. Of America – Tony was terrific! My staff swears he's the best ever!

Caterpillar – [I've] become an "apostle" of Tony.

Digital Equipment Corp. – Outstanding! We expected you to deliver a sales presentation and to create enthusiasm. You over-achieved in both.

Federal Express – Everyone and when I say everyone, I mean every person who was present had nothing but positive-very positive remarks about your message and for that crowd, that is excellent!

IBM – Your presentation was rated the number "1" session out of 109 electives.

International Foodservice Distrib. Assn. – Your talk was the highlight of the convention.

Johnson & Johnson – The raves over your presentation...went on for the entire week. I cannot count how many times people told me you were the best speaker they'd ever heard.

McGraw-Hill – CIG – Actionable, quick, stimulating and fun. Nobody has combined content and delivery to so excite our folks as you.

Merrill Lynch – We all loved your message and it was perfect for the mission ahead of us all.

Million Dollar Round Table – Outstanding!

Parke-Davis – We needed someone to deliver on a closing motivational speech and Tony exceeded our expectations to a standing ovation.

Snelling & Snelling – You left us with a message that can be immediately translated to added dollars to the bottom line.

Toshiba – Your presentation was a "Home Run." You truly "exceeded expectations."

Union Bank of California – Tony had the audience in the palm of his hand during the entire presentation. He used humor and his engaging personal style to keep them with him, absorbing his message throughout.

USA Today - ...you were a smash!

To check availability or request a video demo, contact:

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