

How to Adapt Your Sales Style for that Difficult Customer

For a Random to sell to a Sequential

Organize your presentation carefully in advance.

Tell them what your agenda is, and let them modify it.

Pick one key point and stick to it! Your tendency to jump around from idea to idea drives them crazy.

Give them time to organize each thing you say.

Ask them what they want to do, when, in what order. Their plan will determine what you can sell to them when.

Close by listening carefully to what they want to do, then trying to repeat their plan back to them, along with your suggestions for what to buy when.

For a Sequential to sell to a Random

Scrap your scripted presentation and prep by picking three or four “key points” instead.

Explain what you want to focus on and then let them take control of the topic.

Slip your key points in whenever they seem relevant.

Postpone organization until the close. Then try to wrap up by saying, “It sounds like you want to do a, b and c. Is that right?”

If they agree, you’re set! If not, let them digress a little longer, then try again.

For a Divergent to sell to a Convergent

Find out exactly what their agenda is, and try to stick to it!

If you see a real need to change approach or direction, explain it and seek their permission first.

Recognize that closure is important to them, and try to wrap up and summarize more than you usually do.

Prepare and present the one best option you can, instead of offering multiple options.

Try closing earlier than your instincts tell you to. They may be ready before you.

For a Convergent to sell to a Divergent

You probably know what you think they should do. But force yourself to consider and suggest other good alternatives too. They won't be comfortable until they've looked at many options.

Let them dominate the early stages while you take over at the end. They will want to explore many viewpoints and ask a diversity of questions.

Wait until they begin to run out of energy, and you think they have looked at enough alternatives. Then present your "best option."

Don't hurry the close. And when you do try to close, give them plenty of information and choices.

For a Private to sell to a Public

Make an effort to share your thoughts and feelings so they don't think you are unfriendly.

Don't bring up the "business" until they do. They may want to talk about themselves for a while before they are ready to work.

Give yourself some quiet time before you visit with them so you are rested and ready for their high energy approach.

Turn your presentation around so that you seem to be asking them what they think instead of telling them. Lead them to the brink of answers, then let them provide the answers.

Use numerous low-key test closes. They may keep you talking even if they aren't serious about buying, so you have to decide whether to stick

with it or try again later. If you get three nos, retreat graciously even if they don't seem to want you to.

For a Public to sell to a Private

Run through your presentation or mental scripts and figure out how to lose half or two thirds of them. You need to plan to talk a lot less than usual!

Make sure you give them plenty of personal space. Don't sit or stand too near them.

Don't ask too many personal questions.

Speak quietly.

Don't worry about silences. They probably like longer gaps for thinking than you do.

Try to close politely early on in the meeting. If they reject the close clearly, then ask if they'd like you to give them time to think it over.

Expect to have to postpone the majority of closes until the customer has had time to think it over on their own.

Try closing with "cool," impersonal channels like e-mail, phone or fax.

For a Receptive to sell to an Expressive

Your ability to listen and sense what they want allows you to be the ultimate consultative salesperson! Plan to ask lots of questions instead of giving a formal presentation.

Use your listening skills to draw out their ideas and concerns.

When you need to take control of the conversation, summarize what you think they have been saying and suggest solutions for their problems.

Frame your closes in terms of what they said. "You said that... It seems clear that you value ___ above ___. Therefore it might make sense for you to... What do you think?"

Always let them have the last word and don't rush them when they are talking. Eventually your willingness to listen and show concern will lead them to value their relationship with you and they will want to give you

more business.

For an Expressive to sell to a Receptive

Prepare your most fascinating and polished presentation. This customer will be impressed by it.

Remember to ask and listen, not just talk. It is too easy to dominate your interactions and never find out what they think or want.

Slow down. Ask easy questions, and wait for them to elaborate upon the answers.

They may seem interested in your personal life, but everyone shares personal details with them and they are getting sick of it. Try to focus on their business.

Ask them open-ended questions to draw them out.

Don't be afraid to take the initiative in proposing business . They are not likely to signal that they want to close. But if you test the water, you may find they are receptive to closing.