



Book How to Sell Anything to Anyone Anytime

Dave Kahle
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Recommendation

To learn about any subject, turn to the experts. To learn about military strategy, turn to Sun-Tzu's *The Art of War*. To learn about hitting home runs, read *The Art of Hitting* by Ted Williams. To learn about investing, study *The Intelligent Investor* by Benjamin Graham. To learn about sales, read this specialist's guide by sales guru Dave Kahle. He walks you through his "Kahle Way Sales Process," explaining what to do at every stage to advance and close a sale. He promises that if you follow his time-tested method faithfully, you can surpass your sales quotas, no matter what you sell. Kahle also packs his book with valuable inside tips. Although Kahle's volume won't win prizes for innovation, *BooksInShort* recommends his excellent presentation to up-and-coming salespeople and to more experienced sellers who want to do better.

Take-Aways

- Selling is simple and straightforward. Do the right things in the right way and you can successfully sell your products or services.
- For top sales results, follow the six-step "Kahle Way Sales Process":
- First, identify people who want what you sell. Target only legitimate sales prospects.
- Second, establish your credibility, and make your prospects comfortable with you.
- Third, use prepared sales questions to learn what your prospects need and want.
- Fourth, demonstrate how your offering matches their requirements. Focus on benefits instead of features. Engage your prospect as an active participant in your presentation.
- Fifth, make your potential customers want to take each step in the sales process.
- Sixth, stay in touch with your customers to sell to them again and to garner referrals.
- Develop a spreadsheet to track your activities with each prospect.
- Remember: The sales process never ends. Constantly connect with your top prospects.

Summary

Dos and Don'ts of the Sales Process

Selling is not a mysterious or magical process. It is wonderfully straightforward – as long as you know what to do. First, forget these misconceptions about sales and salespeople:

- **"Salespeople are glad-handing, outgoing people, and...you must fit into that mold"** – Your personality does not determine your sales effectiveness. The determinants are your understanding and application of classic sales principles.
- **"Salespeople are good talkers"** – You need to listen to what your prospects want and need. Constant talkers get nowhere.

- **“I must thoroughly know the product if I am going to sell it”** – Product knowledge matters, particularly if you represent a technical product or service. Knowing your prospects matters more.
- **“I must believe in a product or service before I could sell it”** – Selling depends on getting your prospect to believe in what you sell. To accomplish that, demonstrate how your offering meets your customer’s wants and needs.
- **“If I offer a quality product or service, people will come to me and I don’t need to sell effectively”** – “If you do it better, people will buy it.” Wrong. With any successful product or service, selling remains the critical factor.

“Selling is not manipulating people so they take something they don’t want. Instead, it is finding out what they already want and appealing to that interest.”

Now that you know what selling does not require, here’s what’s important:

- **“Selling is the science of helping people get what they want”** – Focus on what your prospect wants and needs. Not you, not your product, not your service – your customer’s wants and needs.
- **“Selling is the process of helping people make decisions that often lead them to purchase from you”** – Even the simplest sale involves multiple decisions, from whether to contact a company and meet with a salesperson to considering making a purchase.
- **“Selling is both simple and incredibly challenging”** – Anyone can bounce a basketball up and down and throw it through a hoop. But not many play like LeBron James. To become as effective a salesperson as James is a basketball player, learn and apply the following system.

Your Proven Program for Sales Success

No matter what you sell, you can succeed if you follow the six steps of the “Kahle Way Sales Process”:

1. “Engage with the Right People”

Reach out to prospects who need what you’re selling. Targeting anyone else is like trying to plant corn on the sidewalk. Even if you have a lousy product, you can make a sale if you find someone who truly needs it. Identify your ideal prospects with “precision and clarity.” Ask yourself who needs, wants and is willing to pay for your offering. Consider whether the market is big enough to make selling your product worth your while. Contemplate how you will “identify” and “access” your target market. To differentiate your offering from your competitors’, ask yourself why a prospect should buy the product you have to sell.

“Engaging the right people trumps every other piece of the sales process.”

Consider these issues carefully: Filter through the broad categories of prospects to find your ideal audience. Target precisely; for example, you could focus on executive directors of nonprofit organizations with yearly budgets of around \$5 million that are located within 25 miles of your office. When you know who your ideal prospects are, engage them.

2. “Make Them Comfortable with You”

Prospects buy from salespeople who make them feel at ease. To develop a comfort level with customers, establish your credibility. Show that you are capable of handling their business and meeting their needs. Remember that first impressions count the most. Everything depends on what the customer thinks of you – and the risk that you introduce. Find ways to lessen the “financial, social, emotional and time” risks. Remember: As the cost of your product or service goes up, so does its accompanying risk – and so must the degree of comfort the prospect feels toward you. Get an outsider to help you evaluate your offering from a “credible and comfortable” viewpoint.

“Good salespeople are good listeners, and the best salespeople listen more effectively than the rest of the world.”

Big-ticket (high-risk) items demand “one-on-one selling situations” whose success depends on a strong comfort level with the prospect. Always show sincere interest. Be personal. Make sure your prospect benefits from time spent with you. Do what you promise. “Entertain strategically.” Other ways to establish rapport include showing politeness, being disarmingly honest, trying a little humor (if you’re funny), complimenting the prospect, asking smart questions, referring to any “personal connection” you have and sharing personal tales that create rapport.

3. “Find Out What They Want”

This is the “heart of selling.” You can’t sell to people if you don’t know their desires. Don’t project your own enthusiasm for your product or service onto your customer. Do not assume that just because you’re excited about your offering your prospect feels the same. Use surveys or focus groups to find out what your prospects want. Once you know what motivates your potential customers, write it down in 75 words or less. That kind of clarity and focus brings results.

“The skill of finding out what the customer wants is the highest and best of all the sales competencies.”

Develop good questions to find out what a prospect wants. Help your prospects focus their thinking. Smart questions provide valuable information and help nurture relationships. Most important, they let you dig deep to find out what matters to your potential customer. Follow these five steps to develop your best questions:

1. **“Frame the situation”** – To uncover what’s on the prospect’s mind, create a relationship of trust and provide enough information so the prospect will want to see you again.
2. **“Brainstorm all the possibilities”** – Write down all possible questions that pertain to each situation.
3. **“Edit and refine”** – Choose the most effective, specific and revealing questions. Ask only those.
4. **“Develop an effective sequence”** – Order your questions for maximum rapport.
5. **“Practice”** – Run through your questions aloud until you know you can ask them in the best way to persuade your prospect during a sale.

4. “Show Them How What You Have Gives Them What They Want”

Anyone can tout the advantages and features of a service or product from a sales sheet. Professional selling involves demonstrating how your offering provides your prospect with a solution he or she needs. Discuss your product or service, and clarify how the customer would benefit from purchasing it. This stage should go smoothly if you did your work during the previous steps. Always stress benefits – the product’s value to the prospect – rather than features – what your product does. If you mention a feature, then say: “This means that you can...”, and explain the potential significance of that feature to your customers. Make sure they understand how each feature provides a benefit in their specific situation.

“You must work on the assumption that your opinion is secondary to the customer’s opinion.”

Prospects don’t want a laundry list of features. Focus your presentation on the most pertinent few. Match the product’s features to your potential customer’s wants and needs. Transform these “features into benefit statements.” Start your presentation by focusing on those specific benefits. Never cite another company or customer and how that other firm or person gained from your product. Keep your presentation – and the benefits of your product – personal.

“The more you can involve the customer in the presentation, the more powerful your presentation.”

Decide which marketing medium is best to showcase your product or service – for instance, a website, a sales banner or an ad. Consider which channel your prospect relates to best and showcase what you’re selling so your prospect will be sure to see it.

To build your one-on-one presentation, create your planned content and determine the specific media you will use to present the material: supporting literature, a DVD, a laptop display, a PowerPoint presentation, and so on. If you can, include third-party endorsements. Then practice, practice, practice. Involve your prospect as much as possible in the actual presentation – cultivate a back-and-forth so that you are not doing all the talking. Make sure your prospect feels like part of the show. Do your best to control the macroenvironment – where you make the presentation – and the microenvironment – what your prospect will focus on during the presentation. Keep distractions to a minimum and allow no interruptions. Speak in terms that are most relevant to your prospect.

5. “Gain an Agreement on the Next Step”

Selling involves many steps which culminate – if you’ve followed these instructions with care – in an agreement to buy something. Your task is to get the prospect to agree to each step, one after another. When you finish your presentation, apply this important principle: “Make it easy to buy.” Provide a reason for your prospect to purchase right now; for instance, use “limited time only” deals. When your customer has decided on a product, do your best to sell him or her something else as part of the deal. Fast-food restaurants understand this technique. To optimize every sale, chains train their attendants to ask “Would you like fries with that?”

“The returning customer is where you make your money.”

In one-on-one selling, make some form of action – for example, signing the contract – a natural imperative. High-ticket purchases – such as complex technical systems – may involve many steps. The salesperson must “ask the buyer...to take the next step” at each point in the process. Imagine that you are the prospect. Consider what your next step would be. Once you identify that step, “ask the customer to agree to it.”

“You are never as good as you can be, either individually or systematically. You can always do everything better.”

The essential sales strategy remains: “Always ask for action” at every phase of the sales process. Fail to do so and you will never get agreement from the prospect. Moving through your action plan step-by-step requires advance planning. Try to keep your prospect comfortable during the all-important action stage. Minimize the concerns the potential customer refers to that might interfere with the sale. Do what you can to limit the outside agreements he or she must make with other parties – such as a corporate superior.

6. “Follow Up and Leverage the Transaction to Other Opportunities”

Congratulations – you’ve successfully concluded the crucial agreement stage; your prospect is now your customer. Some salespeople think they are now done, but the real answer is: hardly. Your first sale is only an intermediate step. Professional salespeople know that their real money comes from return customers. It is so much easier to sell to someone who has already purchased from you. Work ceaselessly to maintain relationships with existing customers. Make sure your new customers are happy with their purchases and provide them with good reasons to buy from you again. Leverage their satisfaction to secure vital referrals.

“There are enough bad examples of irritating salespeople in this world to populate all of our bad dreams for quite some time.”

Business-to-business salespeople should use “relationship building, opportunity identifying” and “follow up” tactics with customers shortly after they begin to use their new products or services. Such calls promote “top of mind awareness.” Use “light, nonintensive communications” to remain close to your new customers.

Next Steps

Selling is a never-ending process. Expert salespeople constantly engage with their top prospects, making them feel comfortable, learning what they need and want, demonstrating that their products meet those requirements, securing agreement for the next steps in the sales process and following up with customers to leverage the good feelings they have about their purchase. Remember that this continuing process is a system. Develop a spreadsheet to track each of your specific activities with each of your prospects. This “flowchart” approach enhances your sales by enabling you to work efficiently and productively, and to use your time wisely. Your flowchart will remind you that every customer or prospect is an individual and requires specific individual care and attention.

About the Author

