



The Builder of **SALES CHAMPIONS!**

August 2008 Newsletter **Buying is Not a Spectator Sport** **by Tom Hopkins**

Operating their mouths at high speed, some salespeople put on amazing demonstrations. They flip levers, punch buttons, zip stuff around. And out of the machines they're demonstrating come a flood of perfect parts, data, copies, or whatever. But they don't sell much with these superb performances.

Why not? Because apathy rushes in where involvement fails to tread.

Buying is action. It can't take place unless there are decisions, and decisions require a switched-on mind. Watching instead of doing is a switch-off. If you're not sure about that, consider how you find yourself zoning out by watching television.

The longer your prospects are switched off, the harder it'll be to switch them back on again when you want the paperwork approved at the end of your demonstration.

The Champion avoids the long switch-off's low sales, and demonstrates by encouraging clients to enter the data, thread the needle, or feed the parts. Of course, clients won't do these things as well or as fast as a practiced salesperson can, but if they're doing them instead of watching, they're thinking about your product instead of letting their minds wander over a million other topics. In fact, they're doing more than merely thinking about your product—they're experiencing it. That means they're emotionally involved with what you're selling.

Owning is a very intimate form of involvement, don't you agree? Then doesn't it follow that the buying necessary for owning won't take place unless there's involvement?

If you accept that, you'll want to find as many reasonable and positive ways as you can to involve your prospects in your product. If you've been switching your prospects off with I'm-the-star performances, you'll need to completely overhaul your demonstration to successfully convert it—and yourself—to the client-participation method.

And you'll find that giving up the I'm-the-star technique is like giving up smoking: You can't do it unless you really want to. Understand yourself here. Many of us—and I'm in this group—place a high value on applause, on appreciation, on being in the limelight. That's good—unless it leads you into making bad strategy decisions.

The truth is that you're the star twice when you master the client-participation demonstration: first when you have your prospects happily involved in your demonstration and product, and second when you walk out with the endorsed file copies of an order.

The difference is vital. You win your ohs and ahs by showing your prospects how to do amazing things on your model, not by doing amazing things on it yourself. To fan their interest into a fire hot enough to melt their built-in sales resistance, you get them to chip rust, solve challenges, or boil water with your device.



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And fun sells better than frustration. Remember that your prospects aren't used to your machine's peculiarities; keep your steps simple and your attitude encouraging.

Here's how to develop the client-participation demonstration technique into a powerful selling tool:

1. List all the steps the uninitiated must go through to understand how badly they need your device's capabilities. Then figure out as simple an exercise as you can to demonstrate each capability. Make each exercise distinctive, and give it a name that's easy to remember.
2. List every question and objection that you typically encounter during a demonstration.
3. Arrange the capability demonstration and the question/objection answering into a smooth-flowing sequence.
4. Practice your new technique. Check and recheck your lines: discard those that don't work well, and add new ones that do. The successful client-participation demonstration is organized so that each step is simple and leads smoothly to the next, yet the prospect feels a constant challenge and a growing sense of excitement. Keep the pace fast. Brush over minor details. And encourage, encourage, encourage:

"Terrific. You're catching on unusually fast."

"You're a quick learner, Miss Ellison—it must have taken me nine tries before I got that move down as well as you already have it."

"No—really—you're doing great. Everybody has a bit of a challenge here at first."

"Okay now—before you switch it on—I want you to promise to make lots of mistakes. If you don't, I'm going to feel very dumb because I sure goofed up a lot the first time I sat down with this machine."

Take the frustration and pressure out, put the fun and relaxation in, and you'll be successful with client-participation demonstration.

TIMELY TIP **Putting Your Best Foot Forward**

A perfect ending needs a perfect beginning.

If you truly believe that it is in the best interests of your clients that they own the benefits of your product or service, then you have an obligation to close that sale.



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However, closing the sale starts at the beginning of the transaction. We've all had bad experiences where no matter how good our product, service, or presentation is, we know we won't close a certain person because we got off to a bad start with him or her.

Closing begins when you first make contact with your clients. If you are weak on original contact, qualifying, handling objections, giving presentations, or if you are generally weak in asking pertinent questions, you are costing the client, yourself, and your company a lot of money, time, and aggravation. No one closes every sale, but just think of how much better you can become when you put your best foot forward right from the start.

CLOSE OF THE MONTH

The "Make it Better" Close

The "make it better" close can be used when customers tell you that they've done business with salespeople in the past who didn't call back and didn't give them good service, and they're afraid the same thing will happen with you. An important thing to remember is that you never knock the competition — knocking others makes you look small and petty.

Phraseology: "First of all, even though it wasn't my company, I apologize for times other companies have sold you products and then let you down with the follow-up and service. Let me assure you, our company will always be available to you and will contact you on a scheduled basis to make sure of your satisfaction. In fact, that's one of the reasons I chose to work with this company. We are always here for our customers. Your ongoing business is important to us, and I won't do anything to jeopardize the relationship we're establishing here today."