

THE PROCESS IN SALES

Marketing is the ways and means by which we generate leads where as Sales is the ways and means by which we close those leads. Basically all of us are into selling in some way or the other. We sell our product, service or idea. Suppose, we share information that the food we had from a restaurant was awesome, we are selling on the idea that, it is a good restaurant to dine. We can sell anything by sharing great information with care. Selling is transfer of enthusiasm, it is a win-win game, and it is always people to people. Remember, sale is not about pressurising people, but is about sharing ideas, information etc to help someone. Success in selling is a convincing ability. Every time, everywhere sales is on.



Sale is all about 80% of developing a positive mind set and 20% of process and skills

The sales process includes

1. Research and Analysis.

Explore the total available market (TAM) for the product or service and determine your targeted market based on market research and analysis. Also identify the niche market, if any. Try and quantify the projected population for your sales in your geographical domain and the projected revenue that can be derived through them. Analyse if the market has got the potentials as you desire. Enter the market after a very clear understanding regarding the ROI (the Return on Investment)



2.Planning and Preparation

Planning and preparation involves the strategies and options which one would be utilising along the varied segment of the population to sell the service/product. This shall also involve the listing out of possible clients or customer, the adoption of strategies like B2B (Business to Business), B2C (Business to Customers) or hybrid. This may involve developing a process or methodology for sales, relationship building and gaining referrals. Planning and preparation also involves setting targets for sales and deadlines for achieving the same.

3.Updating knowledge and Information

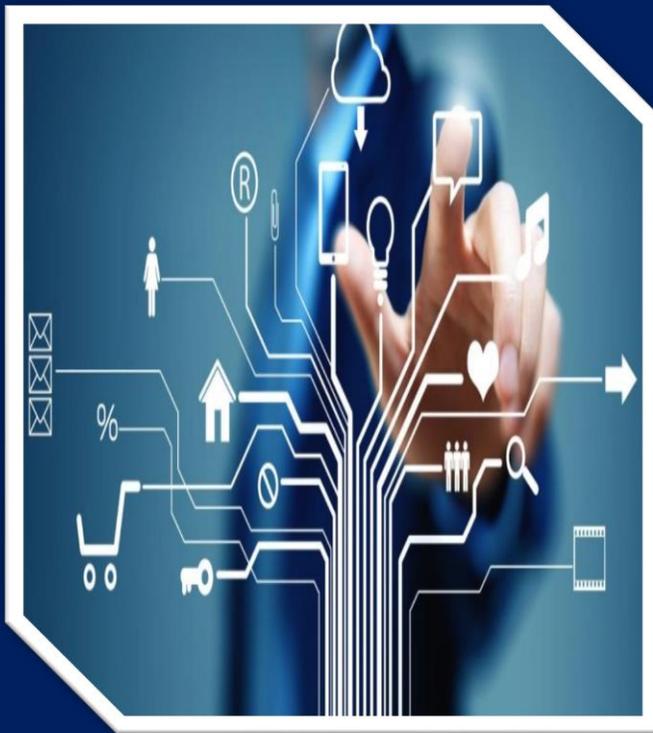
A sales professional for sure should have in depth knowledge regarding the feature, benefit and advantage related to his product or service. For example, a company “Z “launches a mobile App. The App has software enabling mobile phone recharges (feature) which allows you to recharge your mobiles online (benefit) and that means you will be able to save time, money and effort (advantage).

Similarly for any product or service offered by a company, the corresponding sales professional of the company needs to have an in depth knowledge regarding the features, benefits and advantages.

The sales professional is also expected to have updated knowledge regarding his industry, the existing competitors and intelligence about the new entrants into the industry and so on.

The sales person also needs to be updated about the feature, benefit, advantages of the products/services provided by his competitors in the industry, so that on due analysis, he can mark out and record the strategic advantage that his product/service is having over the product/service offered by his competitors, which may turn out to be handy during the process of a sale.

4. Filtering prospects



From the market available, study, learn and separate the prospects from the suspects. Prospects are the list of people who may buy. The suspects are people who may not show interest in buying, due to insufficiency of fund, lack of need or is indecisive. This filtering process is done at a superficial level before actually meeting the people for sale of service or product.

The filtering factors would include aspects like users of similar products, loyal customers of competitors, non- users of similar products, the data of which are collected from surveys, market research, local opinions and from the social media in the internet.

5.Pre- Approach

Once the sales professional has gone through the filtering process and identified the favourites for sale, the sales person needs to make the approach strategy, ie whether to directly go and meet the prospect or whether he should initiate the conversation over the phone (cold call). If the cold call has positive indications, what is the next step? When should the sales person go and meet him? How should he begin and how should he close and so on. This kind of strategies which a sales person envisages before approaching a prospect is called the pre-approach. This helps in formulating a sales process.



6. Approaching the prospects

The prospects can be approached either personally or directly but it is always better to initiate a phone call to them before proceeding further. The first phone call which you make to a prospect is called as the cold call.



7. Grasping the attention

When you make a cold call or even if you go to meet a prospect, the first aspect you need to carry out is to grasp the attention of the Prospect by indicating the advantage or benefit he is going to derive.

Ask questions with respect and politeness to figure out their needs and wants and add on a few more benefits and advantages for the customer and say that you want to meet and talk to them regarding the product or service which gives them these advantages. Make sure that you don't confuse the customer by talking more.

8. Qualifying prospects

All prospects to whom you have made the calls would not have responded with the same affinity or enthusiasm. Based on the cues derived from the prospects, the sales professional can classify the prospects as hot, warm and cold customers. Preference and time should be devoted heavily for hot prospects and then for the warm ones.

9. Building Rapport

When a sales professional goes and meets a prospect, the first thing he should try and achieve is rapport building. Building rapport is all about matching, mirroring or pacing. Rapport can be defined as a sense of mutual understanding, respect and friendliness. Building rapport is about building a level of mutual comfort for further conversation and proceedings. Pacing is a technique unconsciously used by people in order to get positive attention from others. People will like you if you act like them- it is an effective way to build rapport. People look forward for common experience and common denominator. The concept of language pacing shows that people are more receptive, if we speak their language, listen to the words of the customer and reciprocate accordingly. Have a smile, create a good attitude and make eye contact to build rapport. Be friendly and flexible and remain caring.

10. Trust

People will buy from you only if they trust you. In fact, people buy you, before they buy from you. So, your task now is to build trust from the foundation of rapport. But how do you develop trust? The way to trust from rapport is via the bridge of belief.



The more your customer develops positive belief system about you, he will trust you. But then, how to make the customer believe you? In fact, at the outset the customer believes what you say and tries to find out, whether you walk the talk.

A sale is not about telling to the customers, but it is all about caring for the customers, trying to understand their problems and listening to them. Better your empathetic listening skills and beef up their positive believe and trust. In your conversation, introduce yourself properly and answer to all queries posed by the customer, give him time to talk and replying with an attitude of compassion.

Give proper feedback to the customers and also let the customers know that you have understood their feelings and your feelings on the issue is also the same. Showing testimonials of clients and photographs of events, teams and services also enables building trust. The more the customer gets clarity about you, the more he will trust you. Now, if you have built trust, then 40% of your selling is over. People buy trust first and products later.

11. Uncovering needs and wants

People buy for two reasons – to avoid pain or to gain. When there is shortage of onions at home, a person goes to market and purchases the same to relieve him of the pain. Here the need was visible before the person. In the case of invisible needs, the sales professional will have to uncover the need and the prospect will have to be made aware about the gain in owning it as well as the pain in not having it. Customer may also walk into the showroom with a want, but we should try and understand their actual needs by asking, probing and rephrasing.



The customer may want a shoe. Here the customer knows what he wants, but the sales person asks for what reason he needs the shoes? The customer tells he needs the shoes for trekking. Now, once the need for the shoe is known, the sales person can very well look into specifics and offer him a shoe befitting the trekking requirements. Sometimes the customer may not seem to have a want or need, but by interaction and asking questions we can let the customer himself know about his wants or needs or problems, apart from us being able to decipher the same.

Now once the customer identifies his problems or needs or wants, he would definitely like to fill the gaps. Then, is the opportunity for the sales professionals to offer solutions to the problems through the product or service. The customer looks for benefits and solutions for his needs and wants. Another 30 % of your sales is over if you have uncovered the needs and wants.

12. The Art of Presentation

After identifying the wants and needs of the customer, the sales professional should go ahead with the demonstration or presentation. The presentation should be done in such a way that it resolves the issues pertaining to the wants and needs of the customer. The presentation should arouse interest in the customer.



The presentation should be all about leading the customer from a problem to a solution. While doing the presentation, care should be taken to understand the customer to a great extent. Try and find out about the customer's knowledge regarding the product or service, competitor, industry etc. After that tailor make your presentation in accordance with the customer behaviour and knowledge. You can also have different styles like educative presentation in order to increase the awareness amongst the customers and consultative presentation as part of problem resolution. Come prepared with brochures, lap top, products and props for presentation. Ensure that the customers understands you while are proceeding with your presentation. Once you are done with your presentation, another 20 % of your sales is over.

13. Blocking Objections

As a sales professional, you would certainly know what were the common and relevant objections, questions and clarifications raised by your previous prospects. Your current presentation should cover up all the common objections, questions and clarifications usually sought by the prospects, anticipating that your new clients would also have same or similar objections. By doing so, you are not only blocking the future objections, but also creating a feeling amongst the prospect that you are open and convincing and that they can clarify and clear anything about the product or service.

14. Reinforcement

Even though you have done an elaborate presentation or demo, it is always better to summarise the whole focussing on the benefits, the advantages or the value proposition or USP of your product or service, nudging them for a sale. The recent reinforcement from your side on matters of relevance for the customer is intended for bringing about clarity and focus in the mind of the customer for purchase. After the process of pacing, now we try to lead the customer towards sale. The presentation as well reinforcement should create a desire in the prospect for purchase.

15. Handling objections

After the presentation, the prospects may come up with certain objections. These objections may be treated as the responses towards a sales presentation. The objection also indicates the curiosity of the prospect in the product or service. Hence, by knowing the point of objection of the prospect, there is more clarity on the motive of the prospect and by overcoming that objection, we can definitely lead him towards closure. In fact objections help close the sale easier. Most often objections come in the form of questions. Objections generally come up with respect to the following



- Too expensive for purchase
- Does not feel a need for product/service
- Does not have an urgency for the product/service
- Happy with the existing product/service
- Lack of trust in person/product/company.
- Indecisiveness

These objections raised by the qualified prospects give us an opportunity to address their concerns. The sales person can further probe or funnel to find out or bring out the core or hidden objections based on the inputs given by the prospect. If you are not able to handle the objection, then the prospect is left with incomplete information and he is not going to help you close the sale.

Try and isolate these objections after confirming the same from the prospect. Then empathise with the prospect and with care overcome the objections in a convincing manner. There are several ways in which we can handle objections and overcome them.

16. Closure

The end result of the entire sales process is to get the confirmation from the qualified prospect for sales. Before going for closure, repeat your USP and few benefits that the product or service can ensure for the buyer. Ask the opinion of the qualified prospect or attempt a trial closure. Trial closure is done to find the state and his nearness to purchase. If the qualified prospect is convinced, always ask for the order. Get his decision and put a final close to the sale. With this you completed the remaining 10 % of your sales process. However, closing may not be treated that easy. We need to have several strategies in hand to bring the sale to an effective close.



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