



L B MARKETING SERVICES

Are Your Presentations Losing You Sales?

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You know you have a great product. Surely, if you give a presentation and convey all the many and wonderful things your product does, your prospect will "see the light" and want to buy it.

But even after your brilliant presentation, your prospect still does not "see the light" and buy your product. Now, why is that?

Your presentations could be the reason you are losing sales. How? Simply by doing them at the wrong time or doing presentations that are about your product. (How could doing a presentation about your product lose you sales? Read on.)

But let's look first at the timing of your presentation.

Imagine for a moment that you go to see a doctor and, as you walk in the door, the doctor hands you a prescription. He doesn't ask you any questions or even give you the chance to sit down in his chair. Before you ever walked through the door, he had decided what was best for you. In this situation, what do you think of the prescription? What do you think of the doctor?

Now imagine how it feels to your prospect when you present your product, your solution, to him or her and you haven't taken the time to ask questions or understand the specific problem. You just go full steam ahead with your presentation, saying how great your product is and that it will solve their problem, when you don't even know what the problem is. So what do you think they are going to think about your "prescription"? What are they going to think of your ability to help them? What is going to happen to your sale? This is sales malpractice! Presenting - or prescribing - before you fully understand your prospect's specific problem will often lose you the sale.

Just like bad timing can lose your prospect, so can making presentations that are about your product.

So let's go back to the doctor's office. You walk in and the doctor now asks you questions about your problem. The doctor then tells you he can give you a prescription that will solve your specific problem and then - heaven forbids - he starts to tell you all the details about the medication he is prescribing. He tells you in detail exactly what it contains and what each chemical component does. He then tells you all the many other things the medication will cure at the same time - even though you don't have any of these other problems. The doctor is intent on telling you all about the medication as he thinks it is so great. Do you care about what he is saying? How do you feel now? Overwhelmed, confused, bored, and annoyed? What do you think of the doctor? What are you thinking about the medication?

You've probably put a lot of time into preparing a one-size-fits-all type of presentation. Sure, you tweak it a little bit for each prospect - you put the prospect's name on the first slide and maybe change your reference customers so they are more relevant - but you don't make any major changes for each prospect because you want them to understand completely everything your product can do. You have put a lot of work into this presentation and it really shows off your product or service in all its detail. Sound familiar?

You give this presentation and you think it's great, but you look over at your prospects and their eyes are glazed over . . . and they don't buy.

Giving a one-size-fits-all presentation that dumps everything about your product on your prospects will often result in their being overwhelmed, confused, bored and annoyed. Overwhelmed, confused, bored, and annoyed prospects don't rush to buy from you.

They will be overwhelmed because you've told them so much stuff. They'll be confused because they will be trying to work out what is relevant to them and to solving their problem. They'll be bored because you'll be telling them things they don't care about and because product/feature dumps are boring. They'll be annoyed because, even if you have taken the time beforehand to ask them questions and understand their problem, you have not shown that you understand or care about it by tailoring your presentation accordingly.

In short, the presentation should not be about your product: it should be about your prospect- his needs, his problem-and his solution. If you're doing that, you'll talk only about the parts of your product that are specifically relevant to him and leave out the rest. Your prospect does not care about the rest.

Where to from here?

Make it a golden rule, never to be broken, that you will never tell a prospect you have a solution for her before you understand her problem and that, when you do present a solution, you will present it in the context of her problem and present only the parts of your product that are relevant to solving it.

By following this golden rule, your presentations will be winning you sales. Try it and see!

Tessa Stowe teaches small business owners and recovering salespeople simple steps to turn conversations into clients without being sales-y or pushy.