

Features Versus Benefits

Coaching Questions

“What are you saying today?”

Topic Introduction

Any sales pitch has room for improvement. Start with what you are using today, and it can be improved.

Discussion Questions

1. What are you saying today?
2. Is it effective?
3. Why do you think this is effective?
4. What is the most effective phrase that you use?
5. Why do you think that is?

Key Learning

There are parts of every pitch that are better than others. The trick is to improve the weaker parts, but turning them into benefits rather than features.

“What hasn’t worked on you in the past?”

Topic Introduction

Finding the areas of your sales pitch that are the least compelling to remove or improve them will help your entire selling process. When in doubt, K.I.S.S. (keep it simple sweetheart)

Discussion Questions

1. What terminology loses your customers?
 - a. Is it an acronym?
 - b. Is it an industry term?
 - c. Could it simply be made simpler?

Key Learning

When in doubt, over simplify. If you over complicate your sales pitch, your customer is unlikely to tell you that you’ve lost them. Instead, they feel less intelligent and don’t feel as good about themselves. This feeling of inferiority decreases the chances significantly that they are likely to buy from you.

“What makes your customers excited?”

Topic Introduction

Knowing or understanding your customers is the most important part of selling. This ensure that you are only talking about relevant details. It is easy to talk your way out of a sale.

Discussion Questions

- What phrases are losing your customers?
 - o Are you speaking about too much detail?
 - o Are you speaking about things that your customer doesn’t care about?
 - o Are you speaking instead of listening?
- Is what you’re saying compelling to them? Does it impact them?

Key Learning

They care about themselves first, so how do you make it personal? Read the body language to see if your prospect is bored. And ask questions regarding if this would be of advantage or where their pain points are.

Examples

Real Life Example: What is going right?

A small business lawyer was actively focusing on her marketing and getting the word about all of the small business services that she was able to provide. Part of her marketing was to join some local networking groups where she was able twice a year to give a 20 minutes presentation to the rest of the members. Her last time presenting she had spent the entire 20 minutes speaking about the ins and outs of incorporation. She felt as though it had been a great presentation, but she hadn't earned any incremental business from it. She worked with a coach to figure out that her presentation was features based and detail oriented.

What her small business clients really cared about was using their legal dollars better (a benefit!). Her next presentation she talked about the best use of your legal budget as a small business owner, highlighting the top 7 legal risks. She also told the crowd that her first face to face meeting always included a plan, prioritizing the legal concerns for the client. So they never spent more money than they need to, and they could use this money elsewhere. Another benefit!

She ended up getting 5 of them as clients immediately after the presentation.

Real Life Example: Signs that it isn't going well.

An HR consultant was really excited about his sales presentation. He told his coach how well it had gone. He had gotten through the entire 45 minute presentation, everyone laughed at his jokes, and he didn't have any interruptions. The coach was concerned that potentially the presentation didn't go well. He asked some probing questions:

1. "Did the audience move forward when they were listening?"
2. "Did anyone try to interrupt you? Or write down a question during the presentation that seemed urgent?"
3. "Did anyone ask any questions of how it would be implemented after your presentation?"

Unfortunately, all of these questions were answered with a 'no'. These are key signs of interest and that you are hitting the right points. If you haven't been interrupted in the first 10 minutes of a presentation, than you haven't shown them something that is of interest. If this happens, you need to stop and ask questions to better understand the customer.

Mini Case Study

Samantha was starting a new premium cookie company and was trying to develop her pitch for the local grocery stores.

SAMANTHA: "I'm ready! The recipe is perfect, my samples just arrived, and my best friend just booked an appointment with the manager of the local grocery store for me. But I have no idea what to say!"

COACH: "Tell me about your cookies. Oh pardon me! Your deluxe cookies!"

SAMANTHA: "Well...they are deluxe. My cookies have premium butter, not the margarine that other companies use. I hand delivery them and the packaging is a lot thicker than my competition."

COACH: "Hold on there! Everything you are saying is a feature. A feature is boring to a customer, it is not important to them. You need to ask yourself for each of these features - so what? So what if it is real butter! So what if they are hand delivered! So what that the packaging is thicker! You know that that is important as you are the cookie chef extraordinary. But you have to make this important to the grocery store manager. So try to answer the question - so what?"

SAMANTHA: "That's easy! If the packaging is thicker, then there will be fewer damages. For a premium cookie that is important as people are paying a lot more per cookie. And less damages means customers are going to be happier."

COACH: "Great! That is the benefit. Your cookie will have higher customer satisfaction levels & fewer returns based on fewer damages. That means a lot more to a grocery store manager than thicker packaging. Try another one."

SAMANTHA: "Hmmm...hand delivery. I guess the benefit to the store manager is that there would be fewer damages, but it really means that when they want them they get them!"

COACH: "Bingo! When you order them, you have the confidence that they'll be there. And since you are a local business and are delivering it yourself, they will believe this statement. How can you turn real butter into a benefit for the store owner?"

SAMANTHA: "I saved this for last as it was the trickiest, but I think I got it. You can taste the 'melt in your mouth' difference of real butter."

COACH: "I think you've got it Sam. Nice work."