



# Target Selling Insights Approaching and Involving

# Approaching and Involving

These skills relate to how effectively you approach prospective customers and how well you establish rapport with them.

## Why is this skill important?

A sales position that requires cold calling and prospecting requires a higher level of skill in approaching than a position that involves following up on leads. It is easy to alienate customers by a too-aggressive approach, or to lose their trust and attention by a too-soft approach. Experienced salespeople understand that cold calling and prospecting are not simple tasks, but complex processes that involve multiple factors.

The best salespeople realize that their initial objective when interacting with a prospective customer should be to:

1. Establish rapport with the individual prospect.
2. Get the prospect to like and trust them.

A prospect thinks about four things when a salesperson approaches: Who are you? Whom do you represent? What do you want? And what's in it for me? First impressions make huge impacts in sales. Most people form detailed and lasting impressions of you in the first four minutes they interact with you. This first, four-minute impression will influence peoples' receptivity to everything you say, and it is difficult to change or overcome.

Most people love to buy, but few people like to be sold to. And there are a number of reasons a prospect is motivated to consider and make a purchase. If you can key in on this motivation, you can involve and sell the prospect by showing specifically how your product or service will meet their needs. In this way, your customer will feel that you are actively interested in providing goods or services that will truly benefit them, and they will be more receptive to you.

You must believe that you are selling a product or service that will improve the prospect's life in some way. And it is critical that you are truly in the process of trying to determine the prospect's needs and fill those needs. You can't do this by being overbearing, hasty, or lazy. In fact, you must take the appropriate time to ask the appropriate questions of your prospects—you will better qualify them and you will learn more about their requirements, which means that you will better understand how you can help them.

The key to approaching and involving is partnership. You need to effectively partner with your prospect or customer by:

1. Asking questions that get him or her involved.
2. Being quiet, allowing him or her to speak.
3. Being non-threatening.

If you have appropriately approached and involved your prospect in this way, you will be infinitely more likely to have gained their trust and much more likely to get their business.

## **What are skills associated with Approaching and Involving?**

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Approaching and Involving:

- Has the self-confidence to approach prospects and customers politely but assertively.
- Has the product or service knowledge to support strong value statements and demonstrations.
- Is able to manage wardrobe and non-verbal communication, ensuring that both are in harmony with the verbal messages you need to communicate.
- Is sincerely interested in prospects as human beings, and willing to engage with them on an interpersonal level.

## **How do you develop your own skills in Approaching and Involving?**

- Always, always, always keep your focus on your prospect as you approach and involve.
- Be willing to go the extra mile for your prospects or customers.
- Get your customers physically involved with your product or service presentation. People learn from experience, not from what they hear.
- Pay attention to your dress, body gestures, hand gestures, and eye movements. Only 30-35% of what is communicated is verbal.
- Go to a full-length mirror in your business suit or outfit of the day and do a critical analysis of the impression being conveyed as it relates to the people you'll be communicating with that day.
- Video tape and role play situations common to your sales environment—this will help you become more aware of what you do with your body once you've got the right clothes on.
- Focus on and build your existing strengths.
- Prepare yourself to be great at approaching and involving others—practice!

- Let unjustified criticism roll off you, but accept constructive criticism gracefully.
- Be open to your prospects, ideas, and questions.
- Ask questions that get at your prospects' important thoughts—help them express what they want and need so you can meet their requirements better.
- Get the prospect involved at the right time in the sales process—at the beginning. Help them feel that they are part of an equal partnership working toward solving their problems.
- Believe in yourself and what you are selling. The more belief you have, the more others will develop in you and your product.
- Make an excellent first impression—be on time, be organized and efficient, and be friendly.
- Work on your self-confidence. Remember that rejection by a prospect is a rejection of your product or service, not of you personally.
- Be quick and accurate with any follow-up activities you agree to or propose.
- Don't alienate your prospect by being too aggressive. Stay calm and work to establish genuine respect and rapport.

# Approaching and Involving

## Activities

### Activity 1: Buying Motivators

People buy things for their own reasons, not yours. They are not always logical, and you don't have to agree with them. But you DO have to UNDERSTAND them. Try to make a list of things that you think motivate your customers to buy your products or services.

Think carefully about internal motivations, not features or benefits of your products or services. Then, list at least two features or benefits of your product or services for each of the motivators you listed. We've started a list for you.

| Motivation        | Features or Benefits                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sense of security | a. Our product is guaranteed for five years, no exceptions.<br>b. We dedicate support staff to the services we offer you.                                 |
| Source of pride   | a. Our products are used by top corporations nationwide.<br>b. Our services will help you look better because they will enable you to do your job better. |
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## Activity 2: Dressing for Success

For the next two weeks, ask a family member or friend to take your picture each morning after you get dressed for work. Make note of what activities are on your calendar for each day.

At the end of the two weeks, have the photos developed or printed. Keep them in order, so you can relate what you were wearing to what you were doing each day.

- Does your dress seem appropriate for each day's activities?
- What messages do you think your clothing sends?
- How did people respond to you each day? Did anything notable happen on any day?
- What do you think you could change about your wardrobe's appearance to make a better impression?

## Activity 3: Observation

Most of us deal with salespeople regularly—both in retail settings and in corporate settings. For a few weeks, be careful to observe other salespeople when you interact with them—whether they are employees of retail stores, wholesalers, or dealers. Keep notes to yourself on what you liked and didn't like about how these salespeople approached and involved you (if they did!).

- Was the person successful in approaching and involving you? How about other customers?
- What behaviors does each person do well? What did you like about how you were approached?
- What behaviors are each person missing? What didn't you like?
- Did the person get your business? Why or why not?

## Activity 4: Working on Your Presentation

As we described before, the goal of approaching and involving prospects or customers is to establish rapport with them and gain their trust. Ask your mentor or a trusted friend to accompany you on a sales call. See what kinds of observations they make about how you present yourself, your company, and information about your products or services.

See if you can get a list of about five things that you need to do better, then make a concrete plan for improving those five things. Is it your body language? Your manner of speaking? The content of your presentation? Try to target your behaviors better and practice, practice, practice!

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