



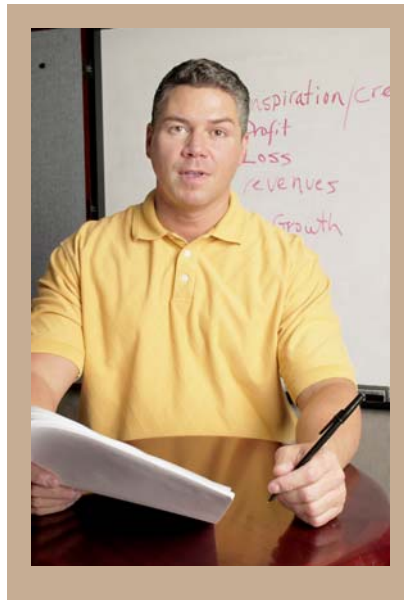
The Leadership Institute

Lighting the Way

OPENING A SALES DIALOGUE

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Participant Module



The Leadership Institute

Lighting the Way

“Inspiring Dreams, Realizing Potential”

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OPENING AN EFFECTIVE SALES DIALOGUE

WELCOME

OVERVIEW

1. WELCOME

2. OVERVIEW

Yikes! You've secured an appointment with a potential customer, now what do you do?

From this point forward, you will be interacting directly with the client, and within about 3-10 seconds, the potential advertiser will decide whether or not he or she wants to do business with you.

Today's Topics Include:

- Opening Basics
- Engaging Conversation
- Setting Agenda/ Establishing Buy-In

3. WHAT YOU BRING TO THE CALL

How do you look? Remember, you can only make a first impression once—there is no going back. And, that first impression is formed within a few seconds. Studies show that your smile, bounce and enthusiasm give people the impression of both you and the company for whom you work. Your image is composed of more than just an expensive outfit; your entire demeanor, attitude and physical movements (are you standing up straight and moving with confidence or slouching and walking slowly) will lend themselves to creating a positive reaction.

Don't forget to...

- ...treat every employee as if he or she is the owner—they might be!*
- ...pay special attention to the receptionist—a valuable friend.*
- ...get to know the gatekeeper.*
- ...find anyone else involved in the decision-making process.*
- ...watch non-verbal signs.*
- ...organize your presentation materials.*



PRE-CALL PREPARATION

BUILD AN AGENDA



4. PRE-CALL PREPARATION

Oftentimes, the planning for the opening starts with a review of the customer information that you may already have. It is always helpful to understand the general needs of customers in a particular industry. A review of the customer's buying history with either your company (remember that you also need openings for sales calls with existing clientele) or other media sources (and their competitors running with you) will contribute to a successful opening.

As you prepare your opening, remember to put yourself in your customer's situation for a moment.

- *What would you want as an outcome if you were the customer?*
- *What service expectations would you have as the customer?*

Once you have answered these questions, prepare all the elements of your opening with the answers in mind.

Build an Agenda

Never walk into a sales call without a purpose—you will only succeed in wasting both the customer's and your time. Be aware, however, that your agenda may be overridden when you arrive at your customer's doorstep. Be flexible and adaptable with your agenda.

In addition to a written agenda, you will also want to organize the following materials:

- Business Cards
- Pen & Notepad for taking notes
- Marketing surveys & Audits
- Sell Sheets/ Promotional Flyers
- CLEAN copies of Newspapers (Your Products)

OPENING AN EFFECTIVE SALES DIALOGUE

ENGAGE THE
CUSTOMER

IDENTIFY
YOURSELF &
YOUR
COMPANY



Remember—your level of organization can help or hurt your first impression. The more organized your materials, the more likely you will make a GREAT first impression!



5. ENGAGING THE CUSTOMER IN CONVERSATION

One of your primary goals in a sales call is to open the call in such a way that it encourages the customer to talk about their current business situation. Ultimately, you'd like them to be so comfortable talking to you that they express emotion and allow you to read their HOT BUTTONS. Throughout the sales call, you will be looking for clues and information that will help you solve the customer's problem.

As we mentioned above, the opening will set the tone for the rest of the call. In addition to encouraging conversation, the purpose of the opening is to:

- ✓ *Review the agenda you've set for the meeting*
- ✓ *Discuss the objective of the meeting*
- ✓ *Ask for any additions the customer may have to the agenda*
- ✓ *Obtain the customer's permission to move forward*

Identify yourself to the customer

Always open by introducing yourself accompanied by a feature attributed to your product or company. Additionally, using the customer's name will make the conversation much more personal. And finally, thank the customer for taking the time to see you.

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ESTABLISH COMMON GROUND



Example:

“Good morning, Mr. Jones, thank you so much for taking the time to see me today. As you know, I’m John Smith, from the advertising department of The Weekly News, which, as you may already know, has been publishing newspapers in your county for over 50 years.”

Don’t overdo your introduction and be sincere about your enthusiasm to meet your client.

Common Ground

During your introductory conversation, you should also try to find some common ground with your customer. During your pre-planning, you’ll want to note any industry-specifics or items you share in common with the customer’s business.

For example, you may have something you’d like to talk about from a prior conversation.

“I’m here today, Mr. Jones, because I’d like to discuss the Grand Re-Opening Sale you mentioned during our last conversation. It sounded as really exciting and I know you want to make a big splash, so I’m glad you took the time to meet me today.”

If this is the first time you’ve met with the customer, you may want to mention something specific that drew you to his or her business.

“I’m here today Mr. Jones because I recently read that you received the distinguished Service Award from Ford; congratulations—you must be really proud!”

Or perhaps you want to help the customer sell a new product or service they’ve recently introduced.

“I’m here today because I’ve been reading the articles about the new Mustang—what a great car. You must be excited to start selling it!”



OPENING AN EFFECTIVE SALES DIALOGUE

**TELL THEM
WHY YOU'RE
CALLING**



No matter the reason, be genuine in your approach. Customers can sense false interest.



6. TELL THEM WHY YOU'RE CALLING

Tell the customer why you are calling. (What would you expect as an outcome of the call?)

When you tell the customer the reason for your call, you put them at ease and take them off of the defensive. Propose an agenda for the meeting. Extend the customer the courtesy of asking if there is anything that they would like to add to the agenda.

Examples:

"I would like to ask you a few questions today about your upcoming Ford promotion to see if we might be able to help with the advertising. Is there anything you would like to cover today?"

"Today, I would like to preview the new auto section we are launching in September and see how this may fit into your media plans. Do you have anything you would like to add to our agenda today?"



MOVE AHEAD- WITH APPROVAL

POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS



7. MOVE AHEAD—WITH APPROVAL

A lot can happen between the time you originally scheduled the appointment and the appointment itself. Be certain to ask for permission before moving forward with the sales call.

“Given the agenda we have covered do you have any questions or is it ok if I move ahead?”

“How does it sound so far?”

“May I move ahead and ask you a few questions about your upcoming event?”

Don’t forget to take notes as you begin the next stage of the process—the questioning phase.

8. POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

At this point during the conversation, the customer may introduce some general objections. While these objections may seem a bit silly or illogical, do not force the customer into the next portion of the call by ignoring the objection. If you attempt to do so, you may potentially lose the customer for the rest of the call.

Also keep in mind that an objection is not the end of the call. An objection is an opportunity for you to continue talking to the customer. Remember that if the customer truly did not like your product or felt that it could do nothing for his or her needs, you never would have gotten the appointment in the first place!

Again, as we mentioned previously, you do need to address the objection—but that does not mean you have to answer it at this point. The sales process is a cycle and each step builds on the other. To truly answer an objection thoroughly, you need to ask questions about what the customer’s business needs. At this point in the conversation, you may not know enough about the customer’s business to answer the objection correctly.

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POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

Example:

Customer: *"You know I don't like weekly newspapers—yours is a weekly. There is no way you can help me."*

Customer: *"You know I don't like print advertising."*

Customer: *"I tried your paper once and it did not work."*

You: *"Well, Mr. Jones, I suppose I can understand that concern. Can you tell me more about what it is that you don't like about weekly newspapers?"*

Your goal at this point is to understand what happened to the customer to bring them to this point. Keep in mind, however, that you will need more information about the customer's needs to overcome this objection. To do this, you need to assure the customer that you understand their concern and are sorry about their bad experience, but you'd like to ask a few more questions about their business before you address the situation completely.

You: *"I can certainly understand why that situation would have upset you and why you feel weeklies won't suit your needs. Would you mind, though, if I asked you a few more questions about your business before I address the situation completely?"*

If the customer agrees (more than likely he or she will), continue to the questioning portion of the call.

If you can address the objection because it is a misunderstanding about your paper, feel free to do so at this point. Bear in mind, that if you cannot address the objection because you don't know enough about what is important to the customer's needs, address the objection at a later point during the sales process.



FEATURES & BENEFITS

SUMMARY



9. RESPONDING WITH FEATURES & BENEFITS

The sales process is a give & take and should be a conversation. Remember that the goal of your opening is to outline your agenda and to build rapport with the client. This rapport is crucial for you—you need to understand what the customer needs. Although you want to focus the conversation on the customer’s needs, you may, at times, want to interject a feature and a benefit about your product to remind the customer that your product can help the customer solve their needs.

Features are the “whats” of a product—for example, the circulation number and geographic coverage.

Benefits are the “whys” of the feature—for example, a large circulation will help you reach many sets of eyes—and presumably, the more eyes that see the ad, the more likely the ad will reach a customer in need of your product.

Want more info on Features & Benefits? Sign up for TLI’s, “Making Recommendations using Features, Benefits & Value.”

10. SUMMARY

- ✓ **Remember the following key points when building a great opening:**
 - *You have 3-10 seconds to make a great impression.*
 - *Establish an agenda, ask for buy-in and permission.*
 - *Engage the customer in the process.*
 - *Use features and benefits to remind the customer why your product will help them.*
 - *Manage objections thoroughly.*

OPENING AN EFFECTIVE SALES DIALOGUE

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

On behalf of The Leadership Institute, thank you for attending this class. We believe that the continued growth of the free paper industry begins with a well-trained, energized sales force.

For more information on TLI's course offerings, check out the afcpconference.org website.

*"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen."
—Frank Lloyd Wright*

