

FREE DOWNLOAD

HOW TO MASTER THE SALES CALL

5 PROBLEMS EVERY SALESPERSON
ENCOUNTERS & HOW TO OVERCOME THEM



INTRODUCTION

Top sellers know the sales meeting is a make-or-break situation. If things go well, you gain a sale, a client, and ideally, an advocate. But when it doesn't go well... it's impressive how quickly a prospect can give you the boot.

Setting and executing a successful sales meeting requires an incredible amount of skill and persistence. There's more to scheduling meetings than making a quick phone call, and there's much more to negotiations than the price of your product.

In this e-book, we'll talk about the problems salespeople face before and during a sales meeting, and the strategies to overcome them. Use these strategies to schedule and run your sales meetings, and you can consistently turn appointments into meetings and meetings into sales.

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PROBLEM #1

GETTING PAST THE GATEKEEPER

You've driven across town for a sales meeting, only to find the receptionist catching up on the latest issue of US Weekly while Dr. Jones is tied up. Now what? We've all been there – suddenly in a battle to get past the gatekeeper.

In many cases, gatekeepers are low-waged employees who don't really understand the business. They don't care about how awesome your product or service is. It could be the perfect solution to solve all their company's woes, but it doesn't matter.

Your purpose is never to sell the gatekeeper. Your purpose is for the gatekeeper to send you to the decision maker, and these strategies will help get you to the person in charge.

1. DRESS THE PART

We've all seen the caricatures of salesmen: baggy shirts with sweat stains, un-tailored pants, and the general look that they just climbed an uncountable number of stairs.

This look doesn't help your case. If you dress like a salesperson, you are the salesperson.

But if you look like a hotshot, you're going to get past the gatekeeper much faster.

In fact, the more you can blend into the office environment, the better. In pharmaceutical sales, some of the smarter reps wear scrubs.

If you're wearing scrubs and you ask to speak to Dr. So-and-so, no one even asks you why you're there.

Don't stand out, but if in doubt, err on the side of being overdressed, not underdressed.

2. USE BODY LANGUAGE

You're trying to blend in with your clothes. Now, act casually. Don't look like you're about to pounce into a 5 minute monologue. You can even act confused: "Oh my! You've changed so much in here," or, "It took me forever to find a parking spot. Are you guys always this busy?"

Body language works hand in hand with clothing choice: get in the door without being pegged as a salesperson.

3. LET GO OF THE LITERATURE

People often make the mistake of holding literature in their hand when they walk in. This is an immediate turn-off. A gatekeeper's first mission is to discover friend or foe. They have several roles: answering the phones, receiving packages, and trying to keep out the riff-raff (aka: you).

If you come in holding a brochure, you're sending a clear sign that you're a salesperson. The sooner the receptionist discovers you're in sales, the harder you'll have to fight an uphill battle to get any information.

4. LEARN TO TALK TO STRANGERS

You've been trained not to talk to strangers your entire life. Well, it's time to start. Nobody likes talking to strangers, but it's no reason to ruin your chances at sales.

Remember, it's just another person. Practice talking to people in everyday situations without the pressure. The more comfortable you are, the more comfortable you'll make the gatekeeper.

5. CAPTURE INFORMATION

I love to walk in when a receptionist answers the phone because I have the chance to capture information. Listen to what she's talking about, take note of names, look for clues about what she's eating, drinking, or reading, and try to find some kind of commonality.

If she's drinking a Red Bull I can later say, "I can't stop drinking those things. How many of those do you drink a day?" Those little pieces of information pay off in the conversation to come.

6. START A CONVERSATION – BUT NOT ABOUT THE SALE

Gatekeepers' jobs may be to keep out people like you, but they're still human beings, right? Warm them up through casual conversation. Use the information you were able to observe to ask about their drink, talk about the parking situation, or note how busy they are.

For example, you may say, "Hey, listen. How big is this office? I didn't think you guys had this much space." You want to have a conversation without giving the reason you're there. The better you can connect with the gatekeeper, the better your chances are to move on to the person in charge.

7. USE FIRST NAMES

First names are critical. Give them yours, use theirs, and speak about the person you want to see on a first name basis. Exchange names early on or casually use the gatekeeper's name in conversation if you've read it from their desk.

If you've been able to find out the first name of the decision-maker via a phone call or LinkedIn, use it with the receptionist. If you say, "I'm here to see George," it sounds like you know him and you're more likely to get through. (The exception: doctors. They usually don't want to be on a first name basis.)

There's no need for the gatekeeper to stand in your way. Be proactive in your approach so one person won't stop you from making your pitch and gaining a client.

PROBLEM #2

NO-SHOWS

Do your sales appointments often turn into phone meetings, re-schedules or even cancellations? It may be time to make how and when you confirm appointments a sales tool instead of a sales hurdle.

1. TIMING REALLY IS EVERYTHING.

This is especially true when it comes to confirming appointments. All too often, a confirmation call turns into a quick phone meeting or a cancellation instead of an effective face-to-face appointment. The trick is to make sure your prospect is ready for you, without creating an opportunity to avoid the meeting. Confirm as close to the appointment time as possible.

- **For morning meetings:** confirm the evening before with an email or voice message just after business hours.
- **For afternoon meetings:** a morning email serves as a confirmation — a call is a chance to cancel.

2. CREATE A CONFIRMATION TEMPLATE.

This isn't some kind of email format, although email is part of it. Instead, it's a system that serves to keep your sale on track. Begin by putting another person between you and the prospect: your assistant.

When the confirmation is handled by a third party, it's harder for your prospect to say no. After all, you've developed a relationship with this person. It would be rude to cancel without speaking directly to you. There are three parts of this template:

- **Control the conversation.** Avoid any kind of language that makes canceling a possibility. Don't ask if the time is still good; assume that it is. If there's a conflict, make your prospect bring it up.
- **Set the terms.** Whether your assistant makes contact by phone or email, always include the date, time and purpose of the appointment. This puts you in control from the start.

Establish that your time is valuable. Your assistant is confirming the appointment because you are busy taking care of business. Your time is worth just as much as your prospect's.

3. USE THE RIGHT TOOLS.

Selling is an art and every artist needs tools. In addition to your contact software, use tools that help you find appointment times and make confirmations. Here are two great tools that work online and with mobile devices:

Calendly integrates with your Google calendar. You can choose who sees your schedule and when you are available. Prospects can easily match their schedule to yours, or your assistant can take care of the details. Calendly saves time by eliminating email and telephone tag.

Assistant.to also monitors your availability and works with contacts to set the appointment from within an email. It uses SSL data encryption and secure servers to protect your information. The system automatically sends emails to you and your prospect when a meeting is scheduled or changed. Assistant.to currently works in Google apps, although a version for Outlook is in the works.

PROBLEM #3

THE ELEVATOR PITCH

The elevator pitch has been around for ages, and it's here to stay. Businesses use it in person, in print and on the web to convey their value proposition to customers.

But it's gotta be good to be convincing—and to catch busy consumers' ears.

Today's salesperson has to compete with a lot of noise: information overload, never-ending emails, pop-up ads. There's no shortage of elements competing for your audience's attention. You can use new technologies to your advantage, however, if you learn how to fix your elevator pitch.

IT'S A NEW DAY

The smartphone is the average salesperson's worst nightmare. It's like competing every minute of every day with a cute puppy video, the latest ice bucket challenge, or celebrity hacking scandal. If you adapt your pitch, however, you'll gain a competitive edge. Instead of fighting with the smartphone, use it as one of your tools.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

- The next time you're pitching your product to a new prospect, grab your smartphone. Open up a photo folder to show off your product's features and address a customer's pain point.

- Take screenshots so you can showcase your product even when you don't have access to the internet—such as when you're in an actual elevator or brick building.

SHOW AND TELL

Sometimes, it's not enough to simply “tell” someone about your product; you need to offer proof, too. Your smartphone will come in handy for proving that your product works or meets a pain point. You can hit multiple senses with your phone in hand; your audience will “hear” your well-crafted pitch and “see” pictures.

For example, you've connected with a potential investor and you have five minutes of her time. Instead of an isolated, verbal elevator pitch, you use screenshots and onboarding slides to “show” the investor the product's potential. This is a much more convincing elevator pitch that will improve your chances of getting funding.

SLOW IT DOWN

One of the biggest mistakes newbies (and seasoned salespeople) can make is talking too fast.

There's a fine line between giving a speech and giving a pitch. You don't want people to have the impression that you're giving a canned speech and simply notching points off of a checklist.

You DO want people to get the impression that you're giving them a personalized preview of the product and that you care. A too-quick pitch is a surefire way to obliterate your chances of getting a meeting or scheduling an appointment.

READING THE SITUATION

Often, the most important part of an elevator pitch is to know when to give it. There's nothing worse (or more awkward) than plugging through an elevator pitch when everyone around you is feeling the uncomfortable tension of an unwilling audience.

Increase your chances of success: give a pre-elevator pitch that assesses the person's interest level and gives her a way out—before you ever start. Gauge this right –and prime the pump, so to speak– and you'll end up giving your elevator pitch to people who are ready and willing to hear it.

When it comes to crafting the perfect elevator pitch, the bottom line is to continually evaluate the culture, adopt tools like the smartphone that help you improve it, engage multiple senses, and slow it down. Combine all of these tips with a keen pre-screening step, and you'll hit the mark more often, and score more sales.

PROBLEM #4

(NOT USING) SALES PITCH STORIES

When it comes to pitching a product or program, salespeople can work with more than just product features and benefit. A clever story that hits prospects on an emotional level can be a valuable sales tool.

But is there a right and wrong way to use personal stories? Which kind of stories work best? Use this handy guide the next time you consider sharing a real-life scenario during your sales pitch.

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SALES PITCH STORY I'VE EVER USED

One of my most successful sales pitches included a story about a concrete truck. At the time, I was selling a GPS tracking tool for truck companies, and this story resonated with the owners:

I have a customer who previously didn't have a tracking tool on their trucks, and saw no need for one. They had a driver who had been with the company for 21 years. He had a stellar record and their complete trust.

However, they eventually discovered that the employee was using the company's concrete truck for his own side jobs. In between stops for the company, he would find quick jobs and pocket the cash.

The business wasn't making any money, but they were unknowingly forking over overhead and wear and tear expenses.

If this company had GPS tracking on their trucks, and let their employees know about it, they could have saved themselves from the headache, breach of trust and expenses.

WHY DOES STORYTELLING WORK?

Using stories in your sales pitch is a great way to showcase the “what-ifs” of not having your product or service.

Highlighting the features of your product with, “Hey, if you bought GPS tracking you'd always know what your employees were up to” is not nearly as effective as using a story. Putting those features in the context of a story, “This guy lost X dollars because he didn't know where his employees were at all times” creates a much more relatable “what-if” scenario.

In addition to featuring the what-ifs, stories connect with customers at an emotional level. Peer-based selling capitalizes on this aspect of sales well.

To sell life insurance, for example, salespeople often focus on the person who didn't have life insurance, and the effects on loved ones left behind.

THE DO'S AND DON'TS

Before you start working stories into your sales pitch, there are some important do's and don'ts you should know:

- **Do** get permission to use a story from another salesperson or customer.
- **Do** use stories to help prospects see what could happen if they do/don't buy.
- **Do** use stories that target people's emotions, such as fear, scarcity, security, trust, guilt, love, belonging, etc.

- **Don't** try to pass off a story that isn't true; prospects will see right through it.
- **Don't** use names in your story. Maintain the anonymity of the parties involved.
- **Don't** forget to include features and benefits of your program, product or solution.

Telling stories in your sales pitch is a great way to target prospects with real-life scenarios, showcase how your service helps people solve day-to-day problems, and get people to buy.

Just keep these steps in mind to guide the formulation of your story: Tell the problem. Introduce the solution. Show the outcome.

PROBLEM #5

NEGOTIATION SKILLS

When it comes to selling, negotiation is king. It's an essential part of being a good salesperson. However, negotiating is a craft that's difficult to master. You need to be mentally prepared to get a victory.

As a salesperson, you automatically start out on the losing end of the negotiation. The prospect has the upper hand because he's the one with the money and you have to convince him to fork it over to you. One would think that, in such a scenario, the salesperson would have to meet the prospect's requirements and grant his every wish in order to close the deal.

Not necessarily. With powerful negotiation skills, a salesperson can get a prospect to sign the dotted line without much resistance. Do you want that kind of superpower? Read on to find out how to negotiate with a prospect and come out on top with our negotiating tactics and strategies.

BUILD RAPPORT BEFORE NEGOTIATING.

The very first thing you need to do is to build rapport. Get to know the prospect. Make him comfortable. Introduce yourself. Drum up small talk. Use his name in the conversation. Do your best to avoid the topic of price until it's absolutely necessary. You don't want to jump into the conversation talking about pricing.

It shows the prospect that you don't care about him and that you're just after his money. You want the prospect to understand that you welcome his company and care about him as a person. Money's just an afterthought.

PLAY THE GOOD COP, BAD COP GAME.

Once the prospect is comfortable with you, he will start to show a little bit of trust in you. If he tries to negotiate down the price of the product or service he's interested in purchasing, offer to call the manager and see if there's anything that can be done about it.

Never let him know that you have the power to change the price. If you make the manager the bad guy and "team up" with the prospect to try and drive the price down, the prospect will appreciate your efforts. He'll be likely to accept the best price you can offer him, which is usually higher than the price he originally wanted. A few prospects might stubbornly stick by their desired prices, in which case you should...

EMPHASIZE ON THE QUALITY OF YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE.

If a prospect complains about a hefty setup fee or your high prices compared to a competitor's, always be prepared to answer with a reason behind every dollar. Explain that your product is highly-priced because it's great quality and it comes with an experience, which can hardly be said about your competitors' products.

NEVER ARGUE WITH A PROSPECT.

You'll never win. Instead, just agree with the prospect before justifying your case. For example, if a prospect tells you that your competitor is selling the same product for a lower price, just nod and say, "I've had others tell me the same thing, but people tend to buy from us because they understand that we take good care of them." You're agreeing with the customer that the other deal exists, but you're justifying why you're the better solution.

Doing this allows you to use the prospect's power against them. You're letting him think

that he's the stronger negotiator, while the truth is that you have the upper hand. At this point, he can't talk down the price anymore. He's going to have to choose between a low price that comes with subpar service or a higher price that comes with quality service and all the bells and whistles.

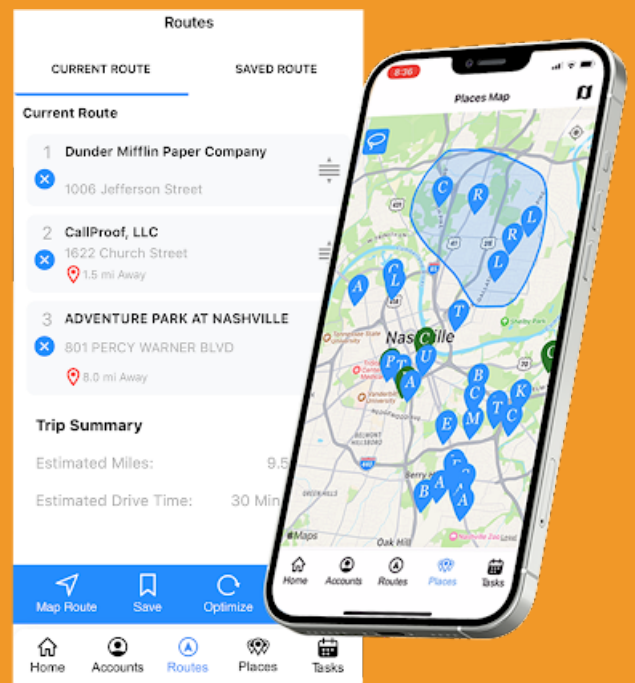
The bottom line? Be nice, be patient, and always come prepared.



CallProof is a simple tool for field sales people.

Automate the tracking and management of sales activities.

- Find Targeted Leads
Over 26 million businesses
- Lasso tool for adding leads
- Smart Routing
30% more prospects
- Checking in & out of appointments
Data collection
- Auto reports for Scorecards
- Easy Activity Tracking
Email and calendar sync
- Integrated Sales Funnel



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