

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Strategic Sales."

SUCCESS: WHAT IS IT?

What is a strategic sale? It is a sale that you make to a current customer. This involves most sales, yet many sales people approach the buyer as though this one sale is what matters most. In reality, it is the relationship that matters most.

Most of us are sales people; we just don't realize it. Some sell products and services and all of us sell ideas and opinions. Getting your manager to buy into your idea for the solution can be invigorating and rewarding. So if you think you are not involved in sales, get over it. If you are in business, you are already involved!

At TLC, when we evaluate the people skills of a sales person, we ask that person to role-play a typical selling opportunity. Too often, the first thing we hear is the sales pitch. When asked what their greatest concerns are in the sales process, the top two named are the close and getting interrupted during their pitch.

Let's re-think the process. What if you just moved into a new city and your goal was to make acquaintances with the hope that a few of them would turn into friends. What approach would you use? Would you have all of your wonderful qualities memorized and bombard them within the first few moments of meeting them? Probably not, at least not if you wanted to establish a relationship with them.

As crazy as that approach seems to making friends, it is just as crazy to building business relationships. As the singer, Billy Joel, sings, "Slow down. You move too fast." If you need a process to follow, here is a suggested one for strategic sales:

1. Begin with a few minutes of social speech. This can include talk about the weather, sports, hobbies, an object in the customer's room, etc. If you go to his or her office, take note of what might be important to them besides the business.

2. Bridge the conversation to the business topic by asking an open question to get the customer talking about his or her wants/needs. An example could be, "It sounds like your team has great potential. Speaking of potential, what do you want to accomplish with



the reorganization of your team here at ABC Company?"

3. Listen. Nod your head and occasionally make a neutral sound to encourage the customer to keep talking. Take brief notes. Give eye contact as you listen. Under no circumstances should you interrupt at this point.

4. Ask clarifying questions if there is something you do not understand or want more details about.

5. Continue to ask questions and listen as long as necessary.

6. Prove that you have listened by restating in your own words what you understand the customer has said.

7. Get agreement that you have heard correctly. If you have missed something, repeat from step 4.

8. Take what you know about your product, service, or idea and match it to the need of the customer. Be sure to bring in points that address his or her concerns.

9. Ask how this meets his or her needs.

10. Close this portion of the sales process by asking an open question to ensure the next step in the process. An example may be, "How would you like to proceed?"

In strategic sales, it is likely that you will have several conversations before the sale is finalized. At the beginning of each, make sure that the conditions and needs are current. This can be accomplished by asking, "What changes have occurred since we last talked?"

In-between the conversations, send brief emails, cards, product information or articles of interest that may not even be related to the sale. In other words, stay in contact with the customer during and after the sale, and even if you don't get the sale this time. Establish relationships, and in time, you will know your customer like the back of your hand.

What Our Clients Are Saying

"My favorite parts of the course were the listening tools and how to improve in asking questions and responding to the other person."

Nancy Janosik, Marietta GA



JUNE 2005

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LOOKING AHEAD:

♦ **Building a Team - the focus of the July issue of the Exchange.**

LOOKING BACK:

♦ **For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).**

♦ **Re-read the [07/2004](#) edition: [Selling Yourself](#).**

**Consumers are statistics.
Customers are people.**

Stanley Marcus



Helpful Hints:

- Take notes to improve your memory.
- Use different methods to follow up: phone calls, in-person, email, letters, etc...
- Ask "what" and "how" questions to establish customer needs.

People don't want to be "marketed TO"; they want to be "communicated WITH."

Flint McLaughlin



To learn more about it, click here!

CLOSING THE SALE

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

I still remember my senior year of college as the most challenging for two reasons: my workload tripled compared to the previous three years and that was the year I took a job selling vacuum cleaners.

Those who know me might think I'm a natural salesman. While selling the vacuums, I learned the ABC's of selling: A = Always, B = Be, C = Closing! Regardless of how valuable your product, how likeable and competent the salesperson, or how much in need the potential buyer might be, the one thing every successful salesperson should know is the art of closing the sale!

Following are some guidelines for closing the sale.

Do:

- Ask closed questions ("yes" or "no" questions).
- Keep your face and body language relaxed.
- Adapt to the person's behavioral style and close accordingly.
- Follow up by sending them something in writing that confirms agreements.
- Give them more than they expect.

Don't:

- Be afraid to ask.
- Forget to paraphrase conditions.
- Use vague terms: next week, soon, discount.
- Overstay your welcome after making the sale.
- Assume they understand everything.

Closing on some sales will be easy because the product will sell itself. In some cases, the result of the sale will be dependant on the skill of the salesperson. For many of us, our income and quality of life are dependant on how adept we are at selling.

At TLC, we have our own ABC's of selling: A = All, B = Businesses, C = Communicate.

In addition to teaching the secrets of closing more sales, we also know that selling is an art.

So, contact us if you want to paint your masterpiece!



TIRED OF BEING IGNORED?

If your customers are not calling you back, try some of these practices:

- Leave voicemail messages that raise their curiosity.
- Give them a reason for calling you back.
- Vary your type of contact. Some people respond better to email, phone, face-to-face,

or postal deliveries.

- Determine any item of interest and send them articles or clippings from time to time with a short note from you.
- Send a zany gift that will get their attention.
- Place a mirror on your desk so that you can see your face while you're on the phone. Customers can "hear" your expression in your voice.
- Think through your purpose before you pick up the phone.
- Practice and record yourself.
- Be positive to yourself before each contact.

FEATURED SERVICE: June Season Tickets Seminar

On June 17th, we will present our next seminar, Intuitive Interviewing. Learn how to interview to ensure the best fit for the job. Some people interview well but do not have the ability to work with the team or company culture. Others are a perfect fit if they could just get past being interviewed. Knowing how to discover the true potential of the interviewee increases the likelihood of matching the right candidate with the job.

You will learn to:

- Understand the fundamentals of the interview process.
- Identify what you are really looking for before the selection of candidates.
- Create an interviewing environment that enables each candidate to deliver his/her true self.
- Discover ways to get the best representation of how a candidate would actually react.
- Know what to look for on and off the paper.
- Increase your awareness of both verbal and nonverbal signals and what they mean.

The seminar will be at the Chattanooga, beginning at 9:00 a.m. For more information or to register, call Don Wheeler at (423) 622-8255, or toll-free at 1-888-BECAUSE.

IN THE NEWS



Beverly Inman-Ebel, the CEO of TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, traveled to Minsk, Belarus, May 15-22, to address a women's conference and three universities. She spoke on the importance of effective communication in business. She attended with Charlotte Ponticelli, of the US Department of State, and Mary Terrick, founder of Vital Voices. Beverly was honored with a reception at the home of the American Ambassador to Belarus.

SELLING LIKE HOTCAKES!



Are your products and services "selling like hotcakes"? This idiom originated in the 1600's. At fun events such as carnivals, circuses, and amusement parks, various treats were sold. Hot dogs, candies, drinks, and nuts

were among some of the treats in demand. Consistently, the best selling product was cake that was similar to pancakes and funnel cakes (still a favorite at community fairs). When the other treats were selling as well as these in-demand cakes, it was said that they were "selling like hotcakes." Today, the same expression is still used to label any product or service that sells quickly in large quantities.

For tips on how to improve your interpersonal communication skills and enable you to better serve your clients and sell your products and services like hotcakes, continue to read the Exchange monthly.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OR FIRST IMPERSONATIONS?

If you only get one chance to make a first impression, how long does it take to change that impression? Although the accuracy of initial impressions can be disputed, we can all agree that first impressions are what are seen and remembered, first!

When we are called to represent our company or organization, we should remain who we are in addition to remembering that the first impression you give off is not just of you, it is also who you represent.

I am a frequent guest of hotels. I admit that I am spoiled by the hotels in which I regularly stay. The representatives greet me by name; they know the type of room I want; and they usually have fresh cookies and candy in my room with a welcome note.

About a month ago, my regular hotel was booked and I was redirected to another chain. I was confident the level of customer service would remain. Upon arriving at the new hotel, I was not greeted at all. The attendant at the front desk asked me to "hold on a sec" while she finished a personal call on her cell phone. I had requested a non-smoking room. She said she'd have to look for one and asked if she could put me in a smoking room instead. The fact that she was chewing gum and speaking rapidly made it hard for me to understand her when she ranted, "Chekoutisanoon callifyaneedanything." I said, "I'm sorry, I could not understand you. What

did you say?" She sarcastically, repeated louder and slower, "I – SAID- CHECK – OUT – IS – AT – NOON! CALL – IF – YOU – NEED – ANYTHING!"

Needless to say, she left an impression on me, a negative one. I thanked her and moved on. Before approaching the elevator, I left a small note in the comment box sharing my initial impression of that attendant. I believe that attendant was not a complete representation of that hotel chain. She was not a first impression, she was a first impersonation. She was impersonating a hotel attendee, poorly. I am seasoned enough to know she will not be there long. I do know she could be there long enough to taint the reputation of that hotel chain. Unfortunately even after she is gone, whatever negative impact she left on a customer, the customer will hold it against the hotel, not the attendee.

Whenever we are called to represent, or when we are the recipients of poor representation, remember that we are always communicating. Strive to represent yourself and your organization as if you are being watched by the President/CEO of the company. Approach each person as if they are wearing a huge sign saying, "**Make me feel special today!**"

How you represent yourself and your organization today could dictate how you spend your time tomorrow. Represent well!

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I have been in sales all my life. I am comfortable talking and sometimes I talk too much! I was reading one of your company's books and it stated that 70% of people are sociable instead of no-nonsense. How can I use this knowledge to my advantage to improve my sales?

Money Talks

Dear Money,

Sixty-eight percent of the American population is "people-oriented," meaning they focus on emotions, feelings, and relationships. The other 32% focus on results, task, and the process (they are "task-oriented").

When dealing with those who are "people-oriented":

- Listen more than you talk.
- Remain friendly.
- Be sincere.

When interacting with people who are "task-focused":

- Stick with business.
- Save the charm.
- Follow through on what you say you'll do.



Remember to...

- Get explanations when you are told "no."
- Exceed expectations when you are told "yes."
- Look for additional ways to help during the process.

Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten.

Gucci Family Slogan

Keeping your clothes well-pressed will keep you from looking hard pressed.

Coleman Cox



They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Carl W. Buechner

TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC

842 S. Germantown Road
Chattanooga, TN 37412

Phone: 423-622-8255
Fax: 423-624-4365
1-888-BECAUSE

Email: tlc@talklisten.com
www.talklisten.com

CEO CORNER: "Birthdays Are Special"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

For twenty-four years we, at TLC, have been sending birthday cards to our clients. Birthdays are special. It is a day when we celebrate you.

When I was a child, my mother would let me pick the menu for my birthday. One year I asked for lima beans. I didn't want anything else. My mother added some side dishes to keep the rest of my family happy. I also got to pick my desert. While cakes are traditional, homemade chocolate pie was my usual choice. As I got older and had my own family, mom began to fix two pies: one for me and one for everyone else.

My husband's family did not share in these traditions and he found it quite a bit of a bother at first. That is, until he discovered my mother's apricot cake. Now, even he is willing to be king for a day.

During the month of April, I traveled to two countries and eleven cities across the United States, while we had no Office Manager. Judy became the guardian of her teenage grandson and she needed to be home. The woman we hired to replace her quit the day before she was to begin because her mother suffered a stroke. Since I was in the office only three days in April, we did the best we could. Just when I thought we were pulling this off, I realized that we had not sent any birthday cards to our clients during the month. I was on a plane somewhere when it dawned upon me. I felt awful.

Some would say it was not like we forgot an appointment or failed to honor a contract. Maybe they didn't even notice. I knew better. Every month we receive email, calls, or notes from many of you thanking us for remembering your birthday. I know you missed it. Now you know how badly I felt.

We want to make it up to you. Send us an email and let us know how. Seriously. At TLC, our founding principals focus on the whole person, not just the part of you that we may be working with. Because you are special to us, your birthday is also. Email us at tlc@talklisten.com with the subject line: birthday.

Building relationships is important. It is not



just part of the sale, it is part of the job. Each month the Office Manager gives me a list of people who will celebrate their birthday the next month along with a big box of cards. I enjoy selecting the right card for you. Sometimes, I'll find the perfect card for someone in May who doesn't have a birthday until the fall. I stick their name on the card with a post-it note to reserve it for them until the appropriate month.

On our client information form that we ask you to complete in the beginning of our relationship, we ask for the day and month of your birth. I remember one man who left it blank. Later when I asked, he admitted it was October, yet would not name the date.

I sent him a card every week in October. He got a big laugh over that and eventually gave me the date.

Whatever is the date of your birthday, we hope that you celebrate the anniversary of the day that you entered this world. Think for a moment how you impact other people and you will begin to see the reason for the celebration. Think about you. Celebrate you. Live your dreams!

BIRTHDAYS ARE FOR EVERYONE!

A very happy birthday to our clients whose birthdays are in June.

Karole A. Keith	Donna Bartenfield
Tom Clark	Ravi Krishnaswami
Gilbert Francis	Beverly Clark
Phil Sanford	Erin Fuller
Ronald McKinney	Stephanie Withers
Harold Kelley	James Howell
Rhonda Russell	David Clarke
Jim Bevins	Marj Flemming
Darlene Clott	Julie Van Valkenburg
Mary Duffy	



TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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