



# 20 STEPS TO SALES SUCCESS

## Karl Hartey offers some guidance on how to boost performance in a vital part of any commercial operation

Let's start with some definitions. Selling is delivering five-star services or products and helping your clients to purchase them. Selling isn't profiteering, brow-beating or gladiatorial contest. Marketing is the process by which you accumulate a reservoir of people who may, one day, be interested in buying. Selling is the process by which you help a person in the reservoir make an informed and well-timed decision to buy.

### 1. BE PREPARED:

Be mentally prepared before you begin to sell. Self-confidence is crucial. "You cannot achieve anything personally or professionally from a starting position of low self-esteem" (Dan Sullivan).

### 2. GET THE RIGHT ATTITUDE:

People don't ask clients to buy because of fear of rejection. To sell effectively it is essential to adopt the right attitude to rejection. If someone says: "No. I don't want to buy your product or service", all you have to do is follow these simple steps. You ask: "Is that no never, or is it no, not now?" If they say: "No, never", walk away and delete them from your reservoir. If it's: "No, not now" then say: "That's fine - tell me when it would be OK for me to contact you again."

### 3. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE:

Practice on others, *NOT* your clients. Take time out for selling-skills training. Schedule periods of time to train yourself and your team on selling skills, either in-house or at another location.

### 4. MANAGE TIME:

Make time to learn to sell and in which to sell. You can't sell in a rush - be sure you create ample space in which to sell properly.

### 5. CREATE A MENU:

List all the services you offer. Do your customers understand everything you can do for them? Do they understand how it can benefit them? Is your menu written to focus on *OUTCOME* first and *METHOD* second? Make a list of the top 10 products/services you offer. Now rewrite this list in terms of how each item benefits the client. Be sure to write clearly - no jargon - in language the client can understand.

### 6. DEVELOP TRUST:

If you sell products and services without trust, you have 'customers' (who buy and leave). If you sell products and services with trust, you have 'clients' (who develop a relationship with you).

There are three types of trust:

*Long-term:* Built through fulfilling promises.

*Instinctive:* Knowing intuitively that someone you meet for the first time is someone you can trust.

*Third Party:* A person who is recommended by

someone you know who knows and trusts the other person.

### 7. IMPROVE YOUR TEAMWORK:

Selling is a team event. As your clients move through your business premises, each step of the way is part of the selling process, i.e. 'The Client Journey'. Do you have a system for this? Are your staff trained for the roles they play in the selling process? Make a list of every opportunity that could exist in your business for a selling conversation.

### 8. LISTEN AND LEARN:

In a sales conversation: The *BUYER* = the one who should *TALK* the most; The *SELLER* = the one who should *LISTEN* the most. Key skills: Eye contact; Body language; The most important listening skill = *SILENCE!*

### 9. DEVELOP EMPATHY:

Listen carefully to the client. Use silence. Mirror their body language. Make sure you understand: *a)* the background to the client's desire for a conversation; *b)* the context in which the client is asking for the conversation; *c)* what exactly the client's needs are.

### 10. DIRECT AND RESPOND:

Direct the sales conversation, not by talking, but by listening. Ask one of three questions:

*The first:* "How can I help?"

Stop talking and *LISTEN*.

*The second:* "If I could make one wish come true, what would that wish be?"

Stop talking and *LISTEN*.

*The third:* "If I could wave a magic wand, and you could have the perfect outcome of our professional relationship, what would it be?"

Stop talking and *LISTEN*.

### 11. FIND THE FACTS YOU NEED:

Hard facts: Name, address, contact/bank details, etc. Soft facts: How do you feel about -----? How would it feel if -----? What's really important to you about -----? Write down 2-3 'soft-fact' questions that you would feel comfortable using and start incorporating them into your sales conversations.

### 12. PRESS THE HOT BUTTONS:

What's the hook that will help to make the client take action? Is there an approaching event in the client's life that could create a deadline or focus for the sale? What do they really need and want? You find this through asking soft fact-finding questions such as the ones above.

### 13. CHALLENGE AND CONTROL:

A sales conversation is similar to tennis. Imagine that you are playing at the net. You have control while the person on the other side of the net is running back and forth on the baseline chasing the shots. How do you stay at the net in a sales conversation? *DON'T* jump into answering questions. Instead, insist the client determines the answer him/herself. For example, when a client says: "That seems very expensive," don't come up with reasons why your service is such

good value for money. *STAY AT THE NET* and ask a question, such as: "What is it about the price that concerns you?" or "Could you clarify something for me - are you concerned about the value of the investment or the timing?" or "If we could find a way of fitting the investment into your budgets, would that be acceptable?" or "If you could wave a magic wand, how would you want to pay for this service?"

### 14. RECOGNISE AND REACT:

Spot the moment of truth: the point that the customer says 'yes'. If they say 'yes' - stop your presentation and sign them up. Even if you haven't finished what *YOU* want to say - you have finished what *THEY* want to hear.

### 15. GIVE PEOPLE OPTIONS:

People like choices, so let them have different service choices and payment options. (If you give people three choices, they are most likely to choose the middle one - for example, with a Gold, Silver or Bronze menu, you need to make Silver work for you.

### 16. DEAL WITH OBJECTIONS:

There are two key tactics:

*1. Anticipation Research* (role-play all possible objections - why people would say no - and rehearse an appropriate response. Build the answers to those objections into the way you present your products and services);

*2. Feel - Felt - Found*

When a client raises an objection, simply say: "I understand how you *FEEL*. You're not the first person who's said that they *FELT* this was a problem. But what I've *FOUND* in practice is that people who have proceeded to the next level have been happy with the outcome."

### 17. CLOSE THE SALE:

When do you do this? When the customer is ready, not when you are. Just ask: "Is there any reason why we can't get started?" If the response is *YES* - ask what the reason is, and deal with the concerns. If the response is *NO* - get the paperwork out and sign the deal. If they want to *THINK ABOUT IT*, that's fine but don't let them off the hook. Stay in control by asking: "When would you like me to ring you for a decision?"

### 18. CEMENT THE SALE:

Send written confirmation and/or a thank-you card: "I enjoyed meeting you, looking forward to working with you, etc."

### 19. GET REFERRALS

Post-sale is a good place to ask for referrals. "I'm delighted you decided to proceed. Is there anyone you'd like to receive a copy of our Welcome Pack?"

### 20. DEVELOP YOUR REPUTATION

Next month we will talk about ways to add value and get people talking about your service.

Karl Hartey is MD of Dream Team Coaching. Contact him on 01691 671903 or visit [www.dreamteamcoaching.co.uk](http://www.dreamteamcoaching.co.uk)