
TEN
TECHNIQUES
TO SUCCESSFUL
SELLING



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INDEX

Introduction to Selling	2
Create Enthusiasm	3
Probe	5
Listen	7
Control	9
"You Appeal"	12
Benefits	14
Reasons Why	16
Objections and Indifference	18
Images and Stories	21
Closing	23

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INTRODUCTION TO SELLING

Show me a successful person, and I'll show you a salesperson. We are all selling continuously, whether we are working with products, services, education or just trying to make a point in casual conversation. Our final objective is always some kind of "sale."

Selling is *the art of successful communication*. The salesperson who can communicate ideas or product benefits in a manner that will make the prospect accept them is a successful salesperson. Contrary to popular opinion, there is no such thing as a "born salesperson" or a "natural salesperson." Selling is a science based on proven formulas, techniques and controls. A top-notch salesperson is a superb technician with words and demonstrations, not a high-pressure glamour boy or girl.

All good selling should be *geared to answering the prospect's needs, interests and desires*. There are ten specific techniques that are an integral part of every good sales presentation. A successful salesperson *always uses all ten*, organized in a manner that meets the specific requirements of the situation.

As the course progresses, you will be asked to memorize verbatim many product and sales presentations. The structure and content of these "canned pitches" have been developed by some of the most successful salespeople in our Company. All extraneous words have been eliminated, leaving only the essential information that you want to provide for your customers, organized in an effective manner. Once you have memorized these presentations, you can begin to concentrate on the art of selling without having to flounder for technical words or descriptive phrases. After the presentations have been committed to memory, we will study each of the ten sales techniques in depth. You will learn how to integrate these selling tools into all of your sales presentations. Collectively, these techniques, used in conjunction with your product knowledge, will become your tool chest of success.

During the course, you will have many opportunities to practice your selling skills. Our main vehicle will be role plays involving real life sales situations. Some of these will be videotaped; all of them will be audiotaped. You will see and hear yourself as others do, providing an ideal opportunity for constructive analysis of your skills by both you and your peers. As in any training program, you will get out of it only what you put into it.

One of the principal objectives of this program is to prepare you for any situation that you may encounter in the "real world." Therefore, throughout this course, take to heart the story told by an Englishman who recently visited New York City. He became lost on his way to a concert and, seeing a young man standing on the sidewalk playing a violin, he stopped and asked, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" The young man answered, "Practice, practice, practice."

TECHNIQUE 1

CREATE ENTHUSIASM

Emotion dictates a person's initial reaction to almost every situation. In this respect, a surgeon is no different from a salesperson, a clerical worker, or a purchasing agent. Everyone responds first to their own feelings, their own emotions. Therefore, always start a conversation by creating a favorable climate, a feeling of enthusiasm.

Think about it for a minute. If you are in a bad mood you snap at everyone. If you are in a good mood, things that otherwise would annoy you "bounce off." Keep this in mind when making sales presentations. It is important that the person you are speaking to be receptive emotionally at the beginning of a sales presentation; otherwise, you have two strikes against you before you begin. Put your prospect in a good mood—you want your prospect smiling, or at least comfortable, before you discuss anything of substance.

It is far easier to create a favorable emotional mood in a prospect than first meets the eye. There are three specific approaches that almost always work. Use all three of them, and you'll find you can even warm up an ice cube.

1. **Smile!** That's right—look someone straight in the face and smile from ear to ear. Watch what happens. The person will smile back. It is almost impossible to smile and feel bad at the same time. (Try it.) What you are really doing is creating a climate that can generate a warm feeling in the person you are talking to. When you meet someone, do it with a big smile. When you say hello, say it with enthusiasm and a smile. You can thaw out almost any "stone face" by presenting yourself and what you have to say with enthusiasm and animation. . . with a smile.
2. When you meet someone, shake hands. . . and do it firmly, it shows you mean it!

Think about what happens when people shake hands. Shaking hands is a physical joining of two human beings symbolically. It says they are reaching for each other. You have been taught, for as long as you can remember, that when you are introduced to a stranger or meet someone that you like or respect, you start with a handshake. Why? Because it is the world's accepted way of saying subtly let's get together. When your prospect sits with arms folded, the person is in a defensive posture. . . body language is saying, "keep away." If you put out your hand, only the most rude will not abandon this posture and reach across the table to meet you halfway. That's a good beginning. Combine the handshake with a big smile and you will have an irresistible combination.

3. **Be cheery.** Some circumstances require a conservative, proper salutation, but in most instances a cheery "Hi, Mrs. or Mr. Jones, I'm Jim Green" combined with a handshake and a smile is far more effective than a serious, "How do you do, Mrs. or Mr. Jones; my name is Jim Green."

Use animation and a smile throughout your presentation and you'll see how contagious enthusiasm is. But make sure your smile and your enthusiasm are genuine. There is no greater turnoff than an insincere smile or a limp handshake.

Practice this technique on a friend, your spouse, or a clerk the next time you go to the supermarket. You will be rewarded by reciprocal warmth and a genuine smile.

TECHNIQUE 2

PROBE

Begin every presentation with a probe; find out where you stand before you start. Identify the prospect's needs and interests.

Probes give you control! They tell you what your prospects are thinking, who they are, what their predisposition is and many other essential factors. Therefore, never start any presentation without a probe. Probes unlock the door. Properly used, they tell you everything you have to know about your prospect's needs and interests before you start your sales presentation. Good probes elicit responses, creating a two-way dialogue.

Probes take many forms, but their underlying purpose is always the same—to get as much information as possible before you start to sell. Always remember, the purpose of a probe is to get an answer, *not just to ask a question!* Therefore, if you don't immediately get an answer that provides the information you need, don't quit, keep probing; continue asking questions until you do get a useful answer.

There are various forms of probes: some are more general, others more specific. Frequently, a series of probes will be used in succession to build an information base before you start your presentation. For example, "Doctor, do you use staplers?" gives you some very important information. If the answer is "yes," this leads to a second probe, "Do you use surgical staplers internally and for skin closure?" Answer: "I use staplers on both." Continue with a third probe, "When you staple, do you use AUTO SUTURE® instruments, Doctor?" Answer: "I use AUTO SUTURE® staplers internally, but I also use Ethicon skin staplers." Do you see how this series of probes has given you the base of information you need to start your sales presentation?

Additional probes will be needed to find out why the doctor uses Ethicon for skin closure. In the next probe, you must discover what the surgeon's current level of devotion is to Ethicon instruments. This is accomplished through a direct probe. "Doctor, is there any particular reason why you use the Ethicon instrument?" Phrased in this manner, you haven't put words in the prospect's mouth and, therefore, you'll get a meaningful answer. Don't say, "Is it that you like the simplicity of the Ethicon instrument?" That type of question "leads" the surgeon and distorts the prospect's true feelings. Once you have established your information base, concentrate on providing benefits and answering needs in the specific area of interest that the surgeon has just divulged to you.

Here's another example of an important probe: "What is your surgical specialty, Doctor?" The answer to this simple question tells you what the surgeon's area of interests are, and eliminates your making a sales presentation on a product or procedure in which the surgeon has no interest. A brilliant presentation and demonstration of the latest stapling techniques for intestinal surgery will be a total waste of time if you find out *after the presentation* that the doctor is an eye surgeon.

At the beginning of a presentation probes are usually more general, such as, "Do you staple, Doctor?" "What is your surgical specialty?" These are broad questions. As you start to zero in on the customer's specific interest, your probes become more specific, "When is your next case?"; "Have you ever used the TA PREMIUM™ instruments?"

Some probes are very specific and are used when you want a specific answer. Example: "Have you used the GIA™ instrument, Doctor?" "Have you ever seen a more beautiful anastomosis?" "When is your next case?"

The probe also helps control the direction of the prospect's thoughts. When the purchasing agent, operating room supervisor or doctor is answering your question, he or she is directing his or her thoughts to where you want them. This is a very important form of control. If you find you are talking too much and your prospect is losing interest or wandering, stop and ask a question—recreate a two-way dialogue by probing. This technique immediately brings the focus of your customer's attention back to where you want it—on you and what you're saying.

A sale is made when all of the customer's objections have been overcome and the customer has been convinced that your product answers an important need. This happens only when you have understood the customer's needs and objections. Adroit use of the probe gives you this vital information. Using the probe must become second nature throughout all of your presentations.

If sales tools were rare gems, probes would be valued as diamonds.

TECHNIQUE 3

LISTEN . . . LISTEN ACTIVELY

Selling is considered by many to be a verbal skill. Paradoxically, successful salespeople know one of the most important components of good selling is non-verbal; it is listening . . . listening actively.

No matter how well you probe, if you don't listen actively, the prospect's answer won't register. You will miss the subtlety of an objection or an important nuance.

A misconception about listening is that it is a passive skill, but this is not true. Listening is only **effective** when pursued actively.

One of the principal reasons salespeople have trouble listening is that they begin mentally to rehearse a rebuttal while the prospect is still talking. Unfortunately, it is impossible to listen to yourself and the prospect at the same time.

Active involvement with your own thoughts is the principal enemy of listening. The technique of listening requires concentration and discipline. To listen actively, first clear your mind. Instead of thinking about what you want to say, hang on every word your prospect utters. Don't let your mind wander. Listen with intensity. Never interrupt. As you listen carefully to your prospect's words, watch their eyes, their face; notice their body language. Train yourself to focus on your prospect. In this way you will allow the prospect's words to register, and will develop a sensitivity to the important indicators of voice tone, facial expression and general demeanor. Your response, when it comes, will be more directed and will answer the needs that you have heard expressed because you will really have heard them.

You will find as you listen to the prospect that occasionally he or she will make a statement that you don't understand or couldn't hear. Stop and probe: "Excuse me, could you explain that?" You are always allowed not to understand . . . you are never allowed not to listen.

Like all sales techniques, active listening can be learned and must be practiced.

When you are next in line to give a role-play presentation, fight your instincts. Instead of worrying and thinking about **your** presentation and rehearsing it in **your** mind, work on your listening skills. Clear your mind and concentrate 100% on the person presenting. Focus all of your senses on his or her presentation. Literally hang on every word spoken. Pick up every thought, every nuance, whether it is right or wrong. As you con-

concentrate on the speaker, you will begin to relax and your anxiety will dissipate. You will be learning the very important selling technique of listening actively.

Your next fight with your wife, husband, girlfriend or boyfriend provides another wonderful opportunity to practice active listening. Your instincts say scream, interrupt and you can't wait to jam your point of view down your opponent's throat. This situation presents a great challenge to listening actively. To practice your listening skills, try a new approach. Focus on what he or she is saying and how he or she is saying it; notice facial expressions and color. Listen for the real message that is coming through the emotional outburst. As you concentrate on listening, you will begin to calm down, and because you do, so will your opponent.

When you hear and understand clearly everything your shouting partner says, you have graduated to an active listener.

TECHNIQUE 4

CONTROL

Handwritten scribbles and numbers in the top right corner, including '50-890', '112-0', and '100-258'.

Control is the most important factor in a sales presentation. Unless you are in total control during your presentation, your audience or prospects will miss some of what you say.

Control techniques are powerful tools. When used correctly, they enable you to convert your prospects into active listeners; listeners who will focus on your product demonstration and listen attentively to every word you have to say. It is vital that your prospect hear and understand every nuance in your presentation; therefore, you must channel their attention and hold their interest. There are specific control techniques to accomplish this objective.

Keep in mind that prospects are no different than you are. The reason they don't listen attentively is because they are involved with their own thoughts. One very effective way to clear a prospect's mind of non-relevant matters is to probe. As a prospect answers your question, his or her concentration will be directed from previous or extraneous thinking to the subject matter you are asking about. A good question will always move the prospect's train of thought in the direction you want it to go. You have then begun to assert control.

To maintain this control, it is imperative that the prospect answer your questions spontaneously. If you get a "hmm" or a vague response, this is an indication that the prospect is not listening. Ask the question again, calmly, and then stop and wait for an answer. **Nothing screams louder than silence!** Try it. Ask somebody a question when their mind is somewhere else, look straight at them, say nothing and wait. You will be surprised at how fast the answer comes or they snap back with, "What did you say?" You will have used one of the great tools of control: silence—and you will have re-established control without aggravating your prospect. The technique is simple, just ask the same question again. The second time you will get an instant response.

There are many other subtle ways of using silence. If a prospect is shuffling papers or reading while you are talking, stop, remain silent. The prospect's head will come up sooner than you think and you will get his or her attention. To use this tool correctly, however, requires discipline. You cannot be the one who breaks the silence. You will be uncomfortable, but keep in mind what is taking place is a subconscious struggle between two wills. The one who breaks the silence first gives control to the other party.

As you are giving your presentation, it is you who is doing the talking; therefore, you may not know whether your prospect is listening or daydreaming. There are two simple ways to find out.

First, watch your prospect's eyes. Are they sharp and focused, or are they drifting? In most instances, eye contact will tell you the amount of attention you are getting. If you feel you are losing your prospect, stop and ask a question. A good question is the simple word, "Right?". . .and then, silence on your part. If you get an immediate response, you know the prospect is with you. If you get nothing or a mumbled response, repeat your last statement and then ask the same question, "Right?". The second time you'll always get a response. You have now reasserted control.

Interruptions can break your control. If your prospect answers a telephone call, before continuing, re-summarize your last few statements and then probe with the question, "Right?", or "How does that sound?" or some other question that will tell you if your prospect is with you again. If you get a strong affirmative answer, you'll know you have re-established control.

When another party joins your prospect during a presentation, do not continue without summarizing your previous statements for the newcomer. Otherwise, you have an uninformed participant who may become an adversary. Do not continue until you have both parties within your control.

The same control techniques work well in group presentations. Scan the room and watch your prospects' eyes; some of the people will be more attentive than the others. Focus your attention on those who are paying less attention. If you see somebody particularly unattentive, stop and ask a question. If you wait in silence, you'll see how fast you'll get their attention. . .and then, you will have re-established control.

A product demonstration can often be used to create interest and to focus the prospect's attention, thereby establishing control. The techniques of control used during a demonstration are the same as in a discussion, applied even more graphically. Begin a demonstration by positioning yourself correctly in relation to your prospect. Never demonstrate a product from across the room, or even from across the desk. When necessary, move a chair close by or lean across the desk; if possible, demonstrate from the customer's side of the desk. Always stand during a demonstration. When demonstrating a TA® stapler, let the doctor squeeze the handle. While squeezing, he must focus, and therefore, must pay attention. There may be times when you don't want the prospect to actually handle an instrument because the techniques you are demonstrating may be too complicated. In these instances, you can maintain control by demonstrating so closely to the prospect that he or she can only see what you are demonstrating. Demonstrate right under the prospect's nose. This assures his full attention, and enables you to show your product benefits in total focus.

Probes are great tools in maintaining control, but selecting the proper question is important. Don't ask a question unless you can realistically expect a positive answer, or an answer that will not be distracting or change the subject. A question with potential for an unexpected response can lead to a change of subject and a loss of control.

One effective means of maintaining control and moving your prospect towards a sale is to ask for agreement or acknowledgement all through your presentation. Use a question that forces your prospect to agree that your product is good.

After firing a TA[®] 55 instrument and showing the surgeon the neat staple line, ask the question, "Isn't that a beautiful staple line, Doctor?" You will always get a "yes."

After showing the HRET report to a purchasing agent ask, "Mr. Smith, I am sure you would like to reduce postoperative stay of your patients by an average of 3.2 days, wouldn't you?" This type of question is designed to always elicit a "yes" answer, channelling the customer's thinking in the direction that you want and thereby maintaining control.

After making any benefit statement, always get an acknowledgement to make sure that the prospect accepts the benefit before continuing. If the prospect doesn't give you a positive response, it is an indicator that he or she isn't sold. Keep probing until you find the reason for lack of agreement. Perhaps the benefit is not relevant to this specific prospect, or it is not well understood. Restate or present new benefits until you receive agreement.

A good probe, silence used properly, eye contact, and getting acknowledgement are the major factors in successful control technique. Use all four continuously and even "Dr. Grumpy" will become putty in your hands.

TECHNIQUE 5

"YOU APPEAL"

Use "you" appeal . . . Not "I" or "me" or "we" . . . Always remember people are more interested in themselves and *their* problems than they are in you or *your* products.

If you remember that the principal interest of a human being is himself, you can sell to anybody. The technique that utilizes this knowledge is called "you appeal."

What is the most important thing in the world to you? You and your happiness. Ask anybody that you meet what is most important to them. They will say, their children, or their parents, or some other loved one. Think about it. Why is it that you love your wife or child? It's because they give you happiness; they give you pleasure, they give you a sense of belonging. In essence, what you really are saying is that the most important thing to you is your own gratification because that is what your family gives you. Don't be ashamed of it; it's a fact of life. Every human being has one thing on their subconscious mind all day long, every day of the week, and every month of the year. . . and that's themselves.

This fact is elementary, but it's amazing how many people ignore it in sales. Putting this truism to work provides you with a tremendously effective tool.

How do you use "you appeal"? First, you must probe to uncover what is most important to the prospect. What are the things that he or she has interest in, both personally and professionally. Then direct every statement that you make to cater to the interests of the prospect and to answer their needs or desires.

When you talk about a product, talk about *why the product is good for the user*, not how good the product is—there is a big difference between these two approaches. To say an instrument is the greatest thing we have going will never turn a customer on, but if you say to a doctor, "This instrument will make surgery easier for you," or "This instrument will allow you to see the wound more clearly," or "This instrument means your patients will heal sooner and ensures less risk in your surgery," you are using "you appeal."

So many salespeople talk about "we, our products, and us," but honestly, what customer really cares about someone else's product—nobody! What the customer wants to know is why is this product good for me.

Everybody likes to be flattered and to have their problems understood. Use this facet of human nature as a tool.

"You appeal" is helpful when making a presentation at any level. Here is an example:
"Mr. Purchasing Agent, I understand how important it is for you to obtain the most value for the least dollars. It must be tough in your position to choose between so many available products. I believe you'll like the Auto Suture Company program because it will save your hospital money and provide better patient care; and you can eliminate multi-company purchases, which will make your job easier."

Notice that this brief presentation first placed emphasis on recognizing the difficulties of being a Purchasing Agent. The balance of the presentation stressed benefits to his hospital and to him in particular.

Use "you appeal" in talking to an Operating Room Supervisor. "I know, Mrs. Jones, how concerned you are about outsiders being in your operating room. The Auto Suture Company recognizes how important your concern is, and has geared all of my training to answering the needs of your hospital and alleviating the concerns that you have about operating room protocol. Everything in my training program has been geared to answering your needs and the surgeon's needs. Let me tell you what I mean."

Again, notice: first recognition was given to the prospect's concerns, and then all of the subsequent emphasis was placed on alleviating these concerns.

Probes facilitate control and provide a means of understanding your prospect's needs.

As far as "you appeal" is concerned, remember: "I love you" really means "I love me" because the truth of the matter is that loving *you* makes *me* feel really good!

TECHNIQUE 6

BENEFITS

Sell through product benefits, particularly personal benefits to the individual involved, *not product features*.

Benefits are what provide the satisfaction for a prospect's desires or needs. All products and services have features that make benefits possible. A feature is a physical aspect of a product and should not be confused with a benefit.

Have you ever enjoyed a delicious steak? Of course you have, but exactly what was it that you enjoyed? You relished the sizzle and taste-tempting aroma as the steak cooked. Its juicy, tender, delicious flavor titillated your taste buds. As you licked your chops with satisfaction and pleasure, you were actually enjoying all of the benefits that the steak's features provided for you. To sell such a steak, you wouldn't present it as a piece of red meat an inch and a half thick with a 15% fat content. These are the steak's features. You'd sell instead the taste, the flavor, the aroma, benefits that satisfy the desires of the prospect's senses. This steak story is a classic example of why you should always sell with a product's benefits rather than its features.

Needs and desires are very personal. Probe to discover your prospect's specific interests and then provide benefits that answer them. A benefit is only a benefit if the prospect perceives it to be so; therefore, remember "you appeal." Two front-row Super Bowl seats on the 50 yard line are better than gold to a football fan, but are of absolutely no interest to a sheep herder in Afghanistan.

Identify the needs of your prospect by continuously probing. Once a need is identified, respond immediately with a benefit, but make sure the benefit presented specifically answers the need expressed. An administrator has told you he must reduce costs because of DRGs. The need is cost reduction. To answer this specific need, you respond with, "Mr. Jones, you can save a lot of money under DRGs for your hospital when you use AUTO SUTURE® staplers. Independent studies have proven that the use of AUTO SUTURE® staplers can reduce operating room time and shorten postoperative hospital stay, resulting in an average savings of \$1,000 per patient." In this statement you have described the significant benefits that the use of AUTO SUTURE® staplers can provide for this particular prospect. Keep in mind that needs differ with each individual. If the prospect had been a surgeon, the benefits that answer his needs are quite different. Benefits important to surgeons are the health of their patients, reduced operating time, better wound visualization, etc. Therefore, in talking to a surgeon concentrate on these benefits so that you will answer his personal needs.

Never assume that the prospect instinctively understands what benefits can be derived from a product's features. Use "you appeal" and demonstrate or describe benefits that relate to the prospect personally. Then confirm that the benefit is understood by asking for an acknowledgement.

Benefit selling answers the needs of your customer and provides an important benefit for you too. . . Higher Commissions!

- Answer the customer's need
- make sure that what you say is true.

TECHNIQUE 7

REASONS WHY

Follow benefits with "reasons why." Reasons why make benefits believable and acceptable. The greater the benefit, the greater the necessity for reasons why.

Remember, "reasons why" make benefits believable and acceptable.

The bigger the benefit, the harder it is for the prospect to accept it as authentic; therefore, the greater the need for justifying or proving the benefit with a "reason why."

For example, if you saw an advertisement in a newspaper that said, "Furniture 75% Off," maybe you would believe it—or maybe not. The odds are you would think it was just a con job.

However, if that same furniture ad said, "Furniture 75% Off," followed by, "We had a big fire last week. Half of our warehouse was burned to the ground—50% of our stock is in perfect shape, but we must sell it before the weekend—come in and see for yourself and save a lot of money," you'd believe it and so would everyone else. The benefit was obvious, but unbelievable without a strong "reason why." The "reason why" makes the benefit believable.

If your benefit answers the prospect's needs and is believable, your prospect will buy.

A good tool to use when working with the technique of "reasons why" is a basic product demonstration.

Here's a typical example involving an Auto Suture Company salesperson. You have just told a Purchasing Agent "AUTO SUTURE® staplers can save you an average of \$1,000 per procedure when AUTO SUTURE® instruments are used in place of manual sutures."

You, as a salesperson, now face the same problem as the "75% Off" furniture advertisement. The benefit that you presented is so great that it sounds unbelievable. There are two excellent "reasons why" that will get your Purchasing Agent to accept the benefits statement. First, there is the presentation of the HRET and CPHA reports. These are objective, third party reports proving what you have said is true. However, an even stronger "reason why" is a product demonstration. Walk the surgeon through a Billroth II procedure. Describe how sutures are pushed and pulled through the tissue, tied and cut numerous times in order to close off the stomach. Point out how time consuming suturing is and how traumatic it is to the patient. Next, demonstrate the

same procedure using AUTO SUTURE® staplers. Let the Purchasing Agent fire the instruments. Get an acknowledgement on the time savings and reduction in tissue trauma. There is no more effective "reason why" than one that the prospect can sense himself. With your comparative demonstration, the P.A. will come to his or her own realization that when AUTO SUTURE® staplers are used the hospital will save money.

"The disposable GIA™ 50 and GIA 50 PREMIUM™ instruments are safer than other linear staplers." That is a very strong statement and will never be accepted without a "reason why." However, when you show a surgeon by graphic demonstrations that other linear staplers open at the distal end when placed around thick tissue but the GIA 50 PREMIUM™ instrument has a tissue gap control that assures proper alignment at the distal end, the surgeon will accept the benefit.

Remember that prospects are naturally skeptical. Always use "reasons why" to support strong benefits and you will overcome skepticism and close even your tough prospects.

Make a statement → BACK IT UP!

TECHNIQUE 8

OBJECTIONS AND INDIFFERENCE

Overcome objections or indifference in a positive manner. Always be positive. Never be argumentative. You may win the argument or the point, but you'll lose the sale. Don't argue with an objection. Almost every objection can be turned into a benefit. Acknowledge the objection and go on to answer it.

A sale cannot be made until a prospect's objections are overcome and his needs satisfied.

Objections, like benefits, are very personal so "you appeal" should always be used in answering objections. It frequently helps to acknowledge an objection by repeating it. "Mr. Jones, you're right. The purchase price of a disposable GIA™ instrument is a bit more than the ETHICON* PROXIMATE* LINEAR CUTTER; however, the benefits that the GIA™ stapler provide will actually save the hospital much more money than the small difference in purchase price." By repeating the objection and agreeing with it, you have eliminated an adversarial situation and are using it to begin converting the objection into a benefit that can answer the prospect's needs.

Some objections should not be repeated because they do not achieve this objective. "It costs too much," or "I don't like your stapler." Repeating these statements will not help you. However, these objections can be handled with a probe that leads your prospect into giving an answer that can be converted to a benefit.

"Dr. Smith, what is it you don't like about the stapler?"

Dr. Smith: "It's too big to fit into a narrow pelvis."

"You're right, Dr. Smith, but the ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler will fit very nicely. . . let me show it to you."

Agreeing with an objection or probing until you get an objection you can repeat is a good technique to prevent an argument and lead your prospect to an understanding of your products' benefits.

Some objections are simple to overcome because they are based on lack of information or misinformation.

"I don't want to use AUTO SUTURE® staplers because I prefer to use a steel instrument with a cartridge to save money."

"Dr. Smith, that's a very good point. AUTO SUTURE® staplers are also manufactured as a full set of stainless steel instruments utilizing state-of-the-art, low cost disposable loading units."

If the objection is broad, such as, "Stapling is too expensive," you must probe to find some area where you can agree with the prospect and then let the first agreement lead to further agreements, overcoming the objection. This scenario is a good example.

Dr. Smith: "I quit stapling totally."

Jim Green: "Really, Dr. Smith, Why?"

Dr. Smith: "It costs too much. You see that disposable GIA™ instrument lying there, it costs the hospital \$90.00. I can do a first-class manual anastomosis with under \$15.00 worth of suture material. We just can't afford that kind of money."

Jim Green: "Doctor, is it that you want to cut costs because of the financial restraints caused by the DRG prospective payment program?"

Dr. Smith: "Yes. We have to cut costs under DRGs."

Jim Green: "Dr. Smith, am I correct in my understanding of DRGs that what happens is the hospital gets a flat payment for each patient regardless of the hospital's cost?"

Dr. Smith: "Yes, that is correct."

Jim Green: "Do I understand then that under DRGs if a patient is in the operating room three hours instead of one and a half, the hospital pays for the extra one and a half hours, and if a patient is in the hospital four to five days longer it is the hospital, no longer Medicare, that pays for the extra time?"

Dr. Smith: "Yes, that's right."

Jim Green: "So, in other words, the only thing that really counts in cost containment under DRGs is the patient's *total cost to the hospital from day of entry to discharge?*"

Dr. Smith: "You are absolutely correct."

Jim Green: "Well, Dr. Smith, you used to staple, therefore, you must have thought stapling provided benefits. I think you will agree with me that those benefits are reduced operating time, reduced blood loss, reduced tissue trauma and, therefore, less postoperative morbidity. These patient benefits under DRGs translate directly into cost savings for the hospital."

This is an excellent example of how to take a negative surgeon and, without being argumentative, ask a series of questions in which he has to answer "yes," questions that will lay the foundation for answering his need to save money. This approach eliminates the no-win situation of confrontation or argument with the prospect. ***Always keep in mind*** in handling objections that if you get into an argument with a prospect, you may win the argument but you will lose the sale!

The most difficult type of objection to overcome is indifference. Indifference must be treated as an objection because what it really shows is a total lack of interest in you and your product. It may be caused by a hidden or subconscious objection. To overcome indifference you must identify what this subconscious objection is. If there really is no hidden objection, then probe until you get a feel for the prospect's personal needs, interests and desires. Once you identify needs and provide benefits to answer them, indifference evaporates.

Never ignore an objection. Once an objection develops, consciously or subconsciously, the prospect tunes out on everything else you say until that objection has been answered; therefore, do not proceed until you are satisfied that you have overcome the objection.

Indifference is tough to handle and must be probed until interests, needs or hidden objections are identified. Objections are actually friends of a salesperson. They concentrate the prospect's thoughts on one subject. You then know where you stand. Adroitly handled, almost every objection can be turned into a benefit.

TECHNIQUE 9

IMAGES & STORIES

Use images and stories to get your point across. Use people or situations in images and stories that are relevant to the prospect. If your prospect can relate to what you are talking about, he or she will understand it easily.

You can make an effective sales presentation using straight factual material, but you will get a much stronger reaction if you wrap your presentation in a story that the prospect can relate to personally. Remember the steak story? It carried you right to the table where you can almost hear the steak sizzle, smell its taste-tempting aroma, and even, for a moment, taste its tender, juicy flavor. The images used to tell the story were powerful. Images and stories can be used to create feelings, relive specific situations, and transport your listener to a comfortable, familiar setting.

Let's see how you can use images and stories in a real AUTO SUTURE® product presentation.

You're trying to sell a GYN surgeon a ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler. You could say simply, "The ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler provides better access in a narrow pelvis" (the benefit), and then demonstrate how the instrument head swivels, providing easy access (the reason why). However, an image story that will transport the surgeon's thoughts to a specific hysterectomy is more effective and will help him recognize, in a real life setting, how your product answers his needs.

"Doctor, remember the hysterectomy you did last week on the woman with the very narrow pelvis? Do you recall how the confined anatomy made it difficult to place the straight handled TA® 55 instrument across the cuff? Then the TA® 55 instrument handle became wedged against the retractor while you were placing the instrument around the cervix. Dr. Jones, the ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler would have eliminated that problem totally. Notice how the instrument's head rotates, allowing you to easily place it around the cuff even in a narrow pelvis, and the handles will be out of the way of the retractor." By bringing the surgeon's mind back to the operating room and a very specific situation that he had a personal experience with, you have created a mechanism that will lead the prospect to come to his own realization that the ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler answers his specific needs. Then he's selling himself.

Using images and stories is particularly effective in handling sensitive situations and defensive prospects. Suppose you have an O.R. Supervisor who has a reputation for being difficult. She always gets angry when you show her something "new." You've

heard she's having serious problems with the cleaning and assembly of AUTO SUTURE® stainless steel instruments in her instrument room. You have a solution to her problem, and you need to find a way to present it in a way that she can accept without getting her back up. A simple technique is to use a peer story.

"Ms. Jones, I was over at St. Mary's Hospital yesterday, where the O.R. Supervisor, Mrs. Smith, told me they're having problems teaching their employees how to assemble and disassemble stainless steel instruments. It seems they get a lot of employee turnover in the work room. I was embarrassed when I realized I'd never even shown her our new totally disposable long TA® instruments and disposable GIA™ staplers. Needless to say, Mrs. Smith was thrilled when she saw the disposable instrument, because it immediately solved her work room problems. Her surgeons were delighted too because they now receive a brand new instrument for each patient, properly assembled and already sterile. As I walked out of St. Mary's I realized that I haven't shown you the disposable long TA® instruments either, for which I'd like to apologize. Let me show them to you now, perhaps they can be of help to you, too."

This story allows you to effectively handle a sensitive situation without sounding aggressive.

Images and stories, especially peer related stories, illustrate benefits clearly and provide an excellent means for handling delicate situations.

TECHNIQUE 10

CLOSING

Assume the sale, make the decision easy and always ask for the order.

Some people think "a close" comes only at the end of a sales presentation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

A sale is composed of many segments. Getting the customer in a receptive mood, probing to identify needs and objections and presenting benefits to overcome objections, are just a few of the more obvious segments of a successful sale. During each of these segments, objections, indifference or lack of receptivity must always be overcome before you proceed to the next step. An unanswered objection or a prospect in an unreceptive mood makes a sale almost impossible to close.

If you have closed each segment of the presentation successfully, the final close becomes simple because your prospect has agreed after each step that your product answers his needs.

There are many approaches that can help you with your interim closings or the final close. The most important factor is to make the decision easy for the prospect. You can lead your prospect toward the final close by probing and asking many questions that elicit a "yes" answer, but never ask a question that you can't control the answer to or that can be easily answered by a "no." The more "yes" answers you get during a presentation, the easier it is to close the sale at the end. There are specific questions that can always be relied upon to get you a "yes" answer; use them frequently. "Doctor, isn't that a terrific staple line?" (After demonstrating on foam.)

"Doctor, can't you see how much time you can save doing the procedure with staples compared to manual sutures?" (Again after demonstrating on foam.) "Doctor, can you see how the rotation of the ROTICULATOR® 55 instrument's jaws will facilitate placement?" (After demonstrating the ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler.) "Doctor, would you like to see a new instrument that can facilitate access and reduce tissue trauma?" "Mr. Purchasing Agent, the new MULTIFIRE GIA™ stapler can cut costs by 50%. Would you like to see it?" Each of these questions is almost assuredly going to get a "yes" answer.

Be positive and assume the sale. An assumptive attitude is similar to a smile. It's contagious. Here's an example of a good assumptive close. You have presented the benefits of the ROTICULATOR® 55 to Dr. Jones and he has acknowledged them two or three times.

"Dr. Jones, when is your next case?"

"I have a left hemicolectomy Tuesday morning."

"Great! I'll scrub with you and bring a ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler so that you can see personally how the instrument will facilitate access and reduce tissue trauma. Then you have the ROTICULATOR® 55 stapler put on your preference card so that it will be available to you for all of your procedures. What time should I meet you?" This technique simplifies the close for you and the surgeon. All he has to agree to is the time of day.

At the end of every segment in a presentation, get a strong acknowledgement. Acknowledgement is your best close. When a prospect has acknowledged that your product's benefits answer all of his needs, it is time to close the sale. But don't expect the prospect to close himself. **ASK FOR THE ORDER!** If you have closed successfully all of the segments along the way, your prospect will react favorably to your final close.

When approaching a sale, imagine that between you and success is a wall consisting of ten bricks. Each brick represents one of the ten techniques of successful selling. A brick is removed for each technique used properly or for each segment of a sale that has been closed successfully during your presentation. When nine bricks are gone, it is time to close the sale. However, if you fail to ask for the order, the one brick remaining will trip you short of success.