



VISTAGE™

## Savvy Selling

### Sales Training: 8 Steps to Close Sales Quickly

By Vistage Speaker Sam Manfer

“Start with the end in mind”—American Business Writer, Steven Covey

To get better at closing sales, it helps to view the process in reverse. Starting with the end in mind, we get a better picture of how the selling process begins, builds and ends. Here’s what the process looks like in reverse for big ticket sales:

#### 1) Get the order

Get all the powerful people – especially the most powerful person – to commit to your offering. This is the person with the ability to say yes and it happens. Don’t be distracted by those who can say no. Anyone can get you eliminated.

- If it’s a business sale, there may be lots of people involved. The ultimate decision-maker is usually in the executive suite, and listens to associates and subordinates.
- If it’s a consumer sale (car, house, personal item), determine who has the power – husband, wife? Children can be significant influencers. Emotional buys happen often, but have a high return rate when power and influences are not synchronized.

#### 2) Get powerful people to commit

Ask for the commitment. For example you might say: “Since you’re feeling good about what we’ve just discussed, can I have your commitment that you will support me/my company?”

- If s/he says “Yes,” you’ve won a vote—not the sale—unless it’s the person with the power to say yes and it happens.
- If s/he says “No,” ask “How come?” i.e., “Seems like you have some concerns. Please explain.”

#### 3) Know what your prospect is feeling

Ask the magic question – “How do you feel about what I’ve just presented?”

- If s/he feels good, go for commitment. See 2 above.
- If s/he doesn’t feel good or shows signs of hesitation/objections, ask “What’s the issue?” See 2b above.

#### 4) Present the thing that makes your prospect feel good

Ask questions about what s/he wants/expects. “What would the perfect solution look like to you?” “What will it take to get your vote?” Stop talking and listen. Then base your presentation on what s/he has said.

- Be sure the answer comes from this person. The biggest mistake is to ask others what someone else wants/expects.
- If s/he doesn’t say the things you think s/he should be concerned about, expose and entice, i.e. “Are you aware ...” “Others have used ... and found that...” Don’t push. Sense if there is any interest only. Otherwise let it go.

### **5) Ask questions**

Ask questions before you do any presentations. For example, you might say: "I know you're expecting me to tell you about our stuff, but before I do, can I ask you a few questions about your wants and expectations so I don't bore you with information that is of no interest to you?"

- Ask questions when alone with her/him. People reveal more one-on-one. Remember, you have to appeal to this person to win his/her vote. It's not about the company or other people.
- If you give the presentation before the interview, you lose. They get to know all about you and you learn little.
- Rescue strategy: when you can't resist the urge to present, ask each person the magic "feeling" question (See 3 above).

### **6) Find the right people to question**

All the people who touch or who are impacted by your product—especially those in high places—are the people you should interview. Win each of these individual's votes. Ask to meet their boss so you can ask questions and win his/her vote. The powerful will make the final decision. Don't argue. It is what it is. Besides, what would happen if your competition gets to the bosses?

### **7) Know when to go after decision makers and senior execs**

After you qualify that this is a good company and a good opportunity for you to pursue. Use history to determine the types of companies/opportunities that have gone well for you and those that haven't. Seek only those who fit this profile. These are the plumbs and should close at a 70% rate if you do 1 through 6 above. Leave the rhubarbs for your competitors. They will die slowly while you use the time to find more plumbs.

### **8) Find enough prospects to be choosy**

Have a systematic prospecting program. Fortunately there are many levels and types of prospecting. Your easiest prospects are those with whom you currently do business. Develop high level relationships. For more information on this subject, see my book *Take Me To Your Leader\$*. Your toughest prospects are new account and cold call prospects.

- Prospect for those that fit your profile.
- The more organized your approach, the better your chances of finding quality leads that are interested in doing something. Then do 7 through 1 above in that order only.
- If you don't prospect enough, you won't have enough plumbs and you will gravitate to the rhubarbs.

When selling is done systematically it becomes easy. People make it tough by pushing product, going after everything, and trying to beat the competition. These people usually close at about 30 percent at best. Do the above and you'll soon be closing 70 percent of the opportunities you choose to pursue.