

Plan to Make the Sale

By Mike Stewart, CSP



I am coaching Len to close more sales.

Prior to each of his sales calls this afternoon, Len called me to review his pre-call planning using the checklist in my book, "Close More Sales" (page 82).

He had identified six objectives for his first call of the afternoon, which I felt were too many. He agreed and, after discussing it, realized that two of these objectives would actually work against him.

- One objective was simply to discuss a possible industry change that had no bearing on this call, which would have sidetracked the customer, and used time and energy better spent elsewhere.
- Another was to push the customer to buy a product that he had said time and again that he had no interest in, which would have, in all likelihood, introduced a "No" into the process. If this happened early, it could have affected other objectives. If it happened at the end of the call, it would have left the customer with a negative feeling about the conversation with Len.

In planning this call, we determined that the behavioral style of the customer was Cautious and Compliant (High C) and Len, who is a High D (Dominant and Directing) prepared himself physically, mentally and emotionally to slow down and be patient in order to adapt to the customer's style. Afterwards, he reported that this was the best conversation he'd ever had with this customer. He felt the customer opened up with him and felt much more rapport.

As a result, the call was successful and Len accomplished all his objectives, including one that he has added for all his calls, and that is to dig deeper. He says, "We've worked together for (a long time now) and I'm finding that some of my customers are doing things I had no idea about. Is there anything you'd like to tell me about your business I may not already know?"

**"Life all comes down to a few moments.
This is one of them."**

- Bud Fox, Stockbroker
(1987 movie "Wall Street")

Bang! This simple question, "Is there anything you'd like to tell me about your business I may not already know?" led to a very profitable opportunity Len had never even considered. He is quoting the deal and is confident he will close it.

Planning for the second call, we identified the preferred behavioral style of one of his contacts as Steady and Supportive (High S), and the other, the primary decision-maker, as a High D, the same as Len's.

The call went well and he accomplished his main objective, which was to move an important deal to the next level in the sales process. However, Len never got around to asking the Drill Deeper question. When we were talking after this call, the debrief revealed:

- When he was dealing with the slow, steady contact he said slowing down and adapting to the individual's style "Forced me to be more in tune with what I was saying and how I said it" resulting in a successful interaction.
- When it came to the second person, however, Len got all wrapped up in a fast-paced conversation (two High D's!) and lost his focus. As a result, he never got to an important objective, and asked the wrong questions. What possible opportunities did Len miss? Who knows? Hopefully, he will be able to find out during his next call on this customer.

"The will to win demands the willingness to prepare."

- Mike Stewart, CSP

I hope you will take five or ten minutes before every call and answer these questions:

1. What was I supposed to do for this customer before this call?
2. What was my customer supposed to do?
3. What, specifically, do I want to accomplish on this call?
How will I do this?
4. How should I adapt my behavior in order to connect more effectively with this customer?
 - Should I slow down or speed up? Be more patient or don't worry so much about the details?
 - Should I be more friendly or more business-like? More open or more formal?
5. What question can I ask on every call that will allow me to drill deeper to find more sales?

Do you have someone to review your pre-call planning with

and debrief with after your calls?

If you are a manager, do any of your salespeople need your help in this area?

I hope the answers are what you want them to be. If not, I encourage you to take action now to begin to correct your situation so you, and your team, Close More Sales!

"No one can reach their full potential alone."

- Oppenheimer

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