

Sales Skills

Welcome



In the following lesson, you'll learn sales skills to implement from prospecting to closing. Pass these skills along to your team to start closing so many deals that your pens can't keep up.

Let's get started...

Introduction

Sales skills are important for everyone, not just salespeople.

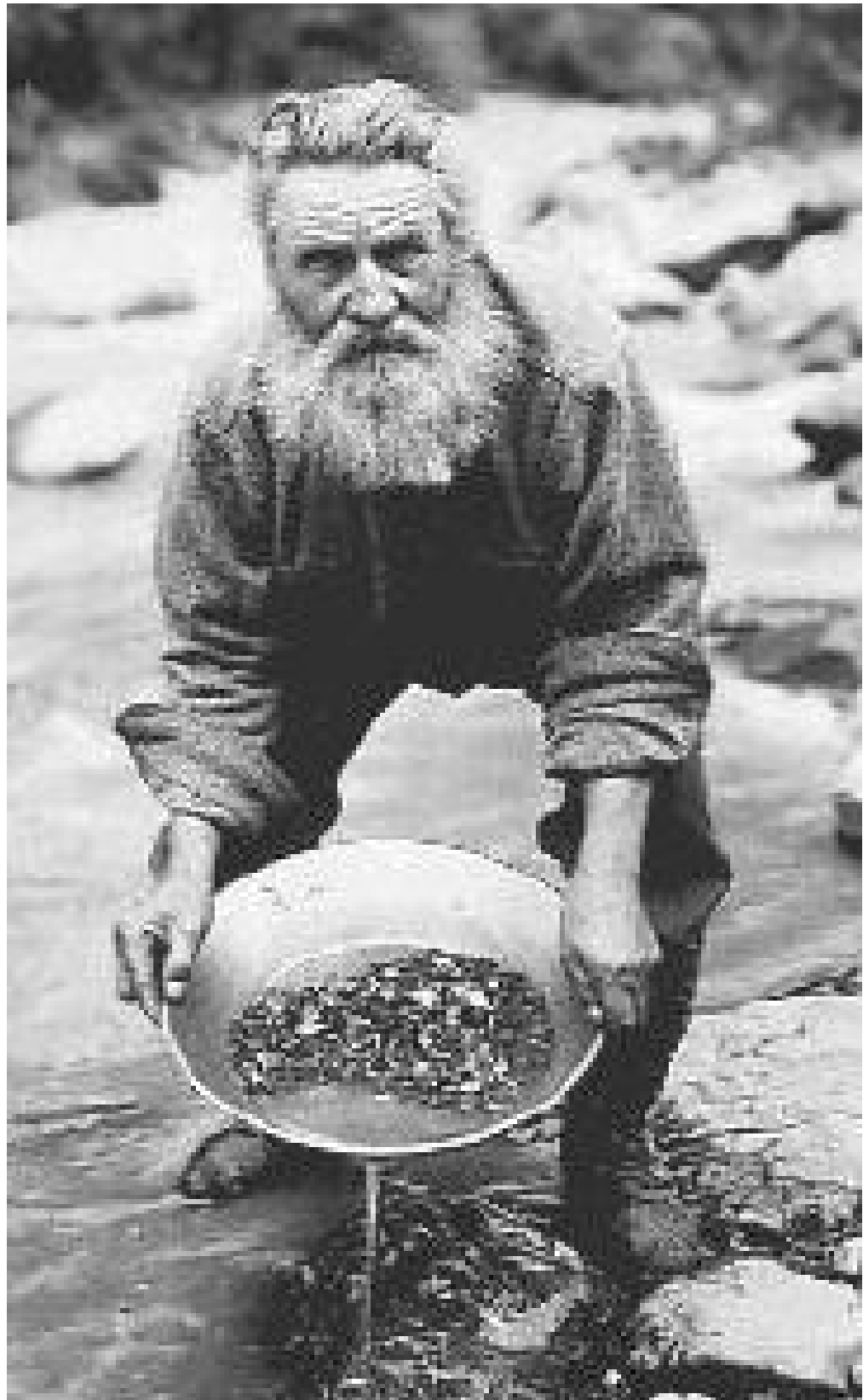


- In a debate, you are selling your position. You need to be persuasive and address concerns of the opposition.
- While interviewing, you need to sell yourself to the potential employer. They should be ready to hire you as soon as you walk out of the interview.
- After you get your offer letter, negotiating the offer is sales. You're attempting to upsell yourself at a higher rate.

So, these skills will be important to you throughout your career, not just in your sales roles.

We will go through the sales cycle from prospecting to closing with some extra advice of knowing when to quit. After this lesson and a little practice, you'll be on your way to better sales.

Prospecting



Not this kind of prospecting. That lesson in the near future.

Depending on the industry, your prospects might already be aware of you, your company, and your competition. But, they might not; you could be reaching out to satisfy a need they didn't know they had.

Either way, you should know more about their company and its needs than they know about you.



The result of too many cold emails

Keep It Warm

Cold calls are all too frequent. Every day your clients could be receiving cold calls and cold emails and they're not a misnomer. They feel cold. Eventually, they get colder and colder until your prospects catch hypothermia.

Consider warming up with an initial contact email. If you mention something their company is doing, even better. Gather research from other sources than just their website. Find an outside publication about them and mention it in your outreach email. Familiarizing the contact with your name and business before making a phone call can increase the chances they've heard of you before. They'll likely do their own research on your company and have a few questions at the start!

Be a Resource

Along with your customer service team, you should offer your time as a resource. If your prospect encounters a problem in the future as a customer, you could be the person they reach out to, thus continuing a relationship.

You might be thinking “That’s not my job. I would send them to customer service.” Establishing a relationship with a client could result in a reference from them when a colleague mentions needing a service similar to yours.



When you haven't memorized a script

Know Where the Conversation is Going

This might be the easiest to accomplish with a script. If you need a script, use one. It will reduce the number of awkward pauses and keep the conversation moving in the right direction.

If you decide to use a script, learn it before the call. The point of a script is to keep a conversation moving and if you have to pause and look up where to go next with which question, it's moving in the wrong direction. Be comfortable enough in your conversation that you don't end up nervously sweating.

Don't Go for Gold

You don't need to cross the finish line in this stage. Don't ask closing questions. Instead, establish a personable relationship where you can reduce pressure on the prospect. As a consumer, you should know that people hate being sold to.

If this company seems like a good fit so far, set a meeting to talk over their problems and your solutions.

Differentiate yourself and form a foundation of trust instead of sales-based. Sell to companies to solve a problem, not to have more money in your pocket. Ideally, you'll end up with both.



Once you do get a gold, you can buy yourself a grill.

Building Rapport

Rapport is a fancy word people use to describe the concern for another's well-being in a relationship. Simply, it's the understanding of another's needs.



You don't have to be rapper Ginuwine to be genuine.

Be Genuine

Throughout the process, be genuine. You don't want to turn into the sleazy shark, used car salesman that pushes the car out of the lot with a no return policy. By being honest with your customers, they'll be honest with you.

You should have a real interest in your prospect's problems. You are there to solve their problems, so without their problems, they don't need you.

Stay Warm

You were already friendly in your prospecting email, so don't stop now. Being friendly throughout the process will keep them wanting to work with you.

Even if they don't love your product, at least you'll provide a nice conversation.

Don't Be Pushy

Slow down. Don't give your prospects a closing conversation at the demo. Let them try out your product and talk it over with the rest of your team.

It might seem hard to believe, but they might be talking to your competitors. Give them some time to realize why your product is the best. Tell them why your product is better than the others and let them sign the check without standing over them.



Your life likely doesn't depend on finding the balance.

Find the Balance

Work on finding a balance between just having a conversation and only pushing your product to the point you know nothing of their needs. You don't want your prospects to leave the meeting saying "What was he selling?" or "How does that apply to our company?".

Answer questions as you go and describe how your product or service could help them rather than features that might not affect them.

If a meeting is shorter than initially planned, I doubt your prospects will mind. Don't feel like you have to use the entire time to show off everything your product can do.

Adapt to Culture

If you are going to a suit and tie company, dress appropriately. If you are going to a startup, dress down a little bit. You want to show your products adaptability as well as their employees.

Learn your prospect before you show up.

Asking Questions



Asking easy questions can stunt your sales conversations. Instead, asking open questions can give you better insight into your prospect's needs.

Keep Them Open

When asking about quarterly goals, challenges the company and employees face regularly, or costs of those challenges is a great way to gauge how closely their needs fit into your solutions.

Plan for the Next Steps

During this time, think of how you are going to present your product or service to address their problems.

By solving specific problems for the company and for the employees, you can frame your product to correspond accordingly.

The value in important questions is the placement of your product into the void of your prospects.

Listening



Asking questions won't get you to a close. You need to actively listen to these questions and hear what solutions you can provide.

Pay attention

If you are in the same room, listening is easy. You likely have few distractions and the meeting is your main focus. If you are on the

phone it could be a little different. People could be around you also on the phone. Maybe you just got a new email with a funny gif. Don't look at it!



Maybe someone showed you this.

Prepare

Always take notes. Open your favorite note-taking application or have a pen and paper nearby. Have a tab of the company's website open so you can look up anything they may reference while on the call.

Run That Back

Follow up questions are a great way to ensure proper understanding. Your prospect has likely developed a little internal vernacular, so translating it back into your understanding shouldn't be an issue.

Feel free to run back key points to the prospect after they have finished.

Presenting Solutions



You get a solution and you get a solution!

The time has come to offer solutions to your prospect's problems. This is not Oprah's Favorite Things of solutions. Everyone is not getting the same solution.

I was once advised to use the STAR method in interviews where you answer every question or objection by stating the situation, the task you were challenged with, the action you took, and the result. We're essentially just going to change that to a pitch format.

Situation

Recap the challenges that your prospect faces without your product. You don't need to reiterate how difficult this task is because they live with it on a day-to-day basis where you likely do not.

Task

Reveal a feature of your product that can help solve this problem. This is how your customer is going to handle the situation.

Action

Walk through the process with them on a demonstration to show how to use the feature. The action is using the feature to

actually solve their problem. How easy is it for them to fix the situation?

Result

Your result should have a competitive advantage. Think of saving time or cutting costs. Present the end result to your audience to likely be thanked with applause. If you don't get applause, just imagine it.

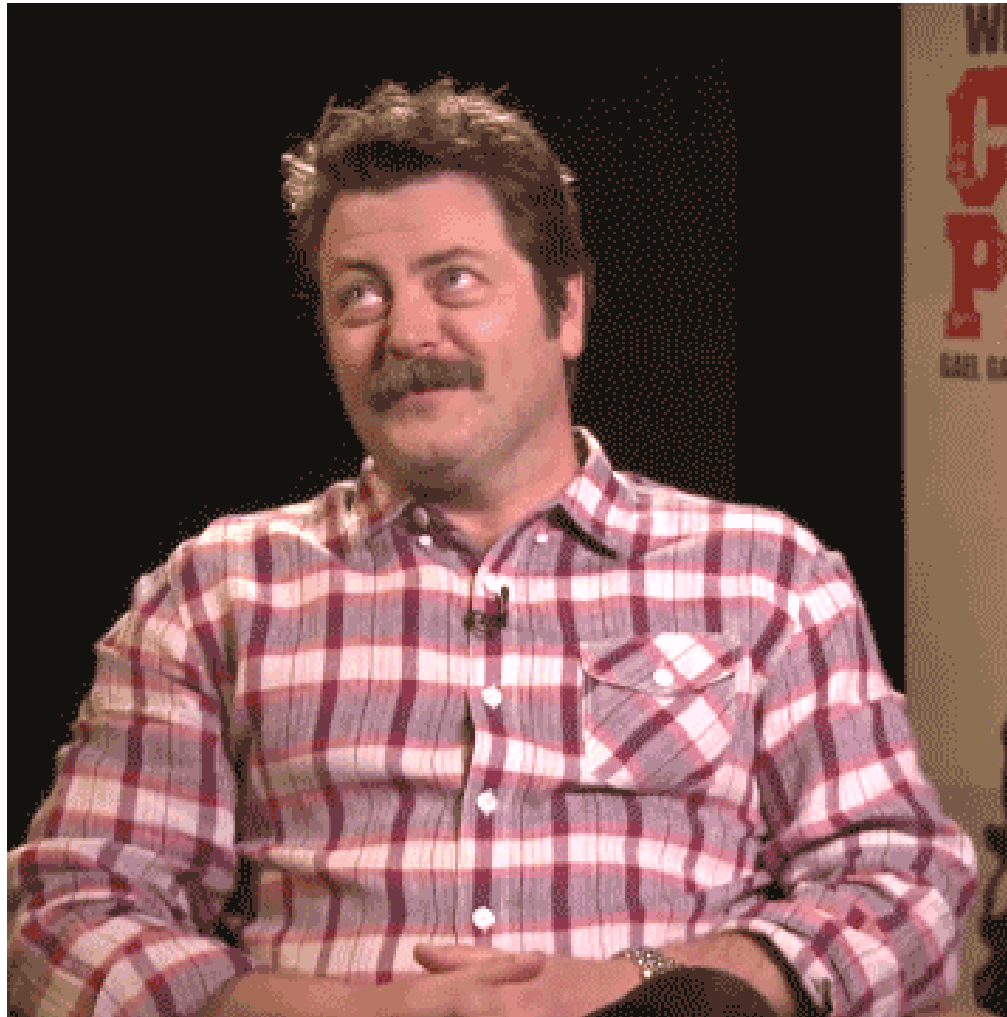
Closing



After all of this buildup, you can't just ask if they're in or out. You have to know how to ask for a decision. Pressuring your prospect could deter someone from signing and being passive might end up in an opportunity lost. Being unprepared can also give some hesitation to your prospect, which could result in a sudden change of heart.

Always Have a Contract

If you are selling remotely, use a company like [TinderBox](#) to offer online contracts. But, if you are fortunate enough to sell in the same room as your prospect, have a contract and a pen ready. Once they decide they want to sign, you don't want to have to run out to your car to grab a pen and the contract. They might have a few minutes to change their mind.



Use Humor

Signing away a couple or several thousand dollars is easier to do with a smile. By using humor, any decision feels a little more lighthearted. Lightening up the atmosphere can lessen the severity that a contract might have.

Do not use humor to be deceitful and distract your prospects from contractual details, but merely to lighten the mood.

Circle Back

You shouldn't be afraid to circle back and reposition your offer after the first "no." Remember, persistence is vital, but don't be pushy. Find the balance.



Establish a Closing Question

Practice a closing question so you can nail it in every attempt.

Some examples to choose from:

- "Is there any reason, if we gave you the product at this price, that you wouldn't do business with our company?"
- "Taking all of your requirements and desires into consideration, I think these two products would work best for you. Would you like to go with [X] or [X]?"
- "I know you said you need to have a solution in place by [date]. Working backward from that day and factoring in implementation and training time, it looks like we'd need to have a signed contract by [date] in order to meet that deadline. Can you commit to that signing date?"

Or make up your own! Come up with something your clients haven't heard before from another company or even a competitor. Make it unique to you. You don't want to sound like your company has a go-to close line. Choose what fits your personality and something you can see yourself saying.

After you've established and practiced your closing line in a mirror several times, hopeful that no one comes in, get out there and start closing deals.

Know When to Quit



Not your job. Just the sale.

Persistence in sales is key. But, there is a fine line between persistence and annoyance.

Disregard Result

Whether you have won or lost a deal, you have to know when to quit. Once a customer agrees to a deal, you don't need to try to

upsell them immediately. If you thought they needed more, you should have started at a higher package.

Focus on the Relationship

If you have lost a deal, it's okay. Leaving on a good note and maintaining a good relationship, maybe that company will change their mind. Or, if the company changes needs, your departure will still be pleasant and they can reach back out to you instead of your competitors.

Don't force a fit

If your product doesn't fit the company's needs it's okay to move on. You don't want to force a company into a deal that it doesn't need. If you do, they're going to cancel their service quickly or be upset. By maintaining a good relationship, if you aren't the best fit at the time, maybe they will consider you in the future.

Next Steps



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