



Book

Selling 101

What Every Successful Sales Professional Needs to Know

Zig Ziglar

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Everything you need to know about selling in a tidy package, from prospecting to presenting to closing the deal.

Recommendation

Seldom is a book as aptly named as *Selling 101*. This is a true primer on the ABC's of selling. Author and sales expert Zig Ziglar walks you through the sales process, teaching you how to find prospects, overcome "call reluctance," pose the right questions and ask for the order. He touches on all of the fundamentals, using examples from his experiences to illustrate his main points. His brief, concise prose is easy to understand and even easier to incorporate into your sales practices. The seasoned sales professional will not find anything new in this basic textbook, but *getAbstract* recommends it to anyone who is new to selling, particularly if you lack a mentor to give you this kind of guidance. This handy manual will provide know-how that is usually gained only by experience in the field.

In this summary, you will learn

- How to master the basics of selling from prospecting to closing
- How to use a four-step selling process to assess your prospect's needs

Take-Aways

- As a salesperson, you are your own boss and you control your own destiny.
- Successful salespeople are always prospecting.
- Develop a "center of influence" by asking someone who believes in you to introduce you to people who would benefit from your product or service.
- Overcome "call reluctance" by committing to making calls at the same time daily.
- Follow the four-step selling process: "Need Analysis, Need Awareness, Need Solution and Need Satisfaction."
- During the sales process, ask questions that elicit the prospect's thoughts, feelings and emotions.
- Ask "open-door, closed-door and yes-or-no" questions.
- To conduct a conversation, not an interrogation, use the "P.O.G.O formula." Ask about the Person, the Organization, and the person's Goals and Obstacles.

- Always ask for the sale. Practice closing techniques until they feel natural.
- Make sure your customers are happy and satisfied with your product or service.

Summary

“To be the winner you are capable of becoming, you must plan to win; you must prepare to win; and then you have every right to expect to win.”

Why Do You Want to Sell?

Sales professionals are treated offensively now and then, and they experience rejection - not once, but numerous times. They are subjected to feelings of frustration, paranoia, anxiety, nervousness, discouragement and self-doubt. So why would anyone want to pursue a career in sales? The reason is that for the right person, the upside of selling far outweighs the negatives. As a salesperson, you are your own boss no matter what company employs you or which supervisor checks your call sheets. This is a huge responsibility, but it offers a tremendous opportunity. You control your own destiny. Realizing your dreams is within your power. Salespeople, or "professional persuaders," are in the problem-solving business, which is tremendously gratifying. Nothing compares to making a sale while also helping others through the product or service you offer.

Every salesperson must possess certain skills regardless of what he or she is selling. To succeed in the long-term, today's sales professional must be honest, embody integrity and behave ethically. The skills required to build a successful sales career include trustworthiness, dependability, and the ability to listen well and communicate clearly.

Prospecting for Gold

The first step in making a sale is finding a prospect. "A prospect is an individual or a group capable of making the decision on the product or service the salesperson is selling." Successful salespeople are always prospecting, a task that does not conclude at the end of the workday. Exhibiting a genuine, unaffected interest in people is the best way to attract prospects. Some people are reluctant to sell to their friends and relatives, afraid that they will appear pushy or greedy. However, if you truly believe in your product, you will want to share it with the people closest to you. You don't want them to do you a favor by buying; you want to do them a favor by selling your product or service to them.

To ask for prospect referrals, develop a "center of influence" by asking someone who believes in you to introduce you by phone or note to someone he or she thinks would benefit from your product. Obtain the names of several potential clients from your center of influence contacts. Record their names and pertinent information on a prospect card. Then, ask your referrer to help you prioritize your list.

Other sources for prospects include newspapers, Dun & Bradstreet, various Web sites, the book *Contacts Influential: Commerce and Industry Directory*, your local Chamber of Commerce, the Better Business Bureau and trade publications.

To prepare to contact prospects, learn all you can about your product, industry and competition. Become an expert by reading trade publications, studying trends, gathering information and demonstrating how to use your product or service. Then, you'll be ready to ask the right questions, uncover prospective clients' needs and offer informed solutions.

Conquering "Call Reluctance"

Making sales calls is tough. In fact, 84% of all salespeople experience some form of call reluctance. To overcome it, realize that you are an expert in your field. No one knows as much about your product or service as you do. Next, make your

“K.I.S.S. - Keep It Simple Salesman - has been the battle cry since the cave dwellers sold each other fire sticks.”

“I strongly encourage those in the world of selling to deal with a product or service they cannot help talking about!”

sales calls substantial by focusing on the prospect, not the sale. Remember, "You can have everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want."

"Asking the right question and listening to the answer is a great relationship builder, which is important to the persuasion process."

When making phone calls, set objectives - such as making an appointment or closing a sale - before dialing. Make your calls first thing in the morning when people are fresh and ready to listen. Dress professionally to make your calls even though the prospect can't see you. Prepare, train, stay motivated and make calls when your energy and confidence are high.

The critical step in conquering call reluctance is to "get on a regular schedule and make an appointment with yourself to contact a prospect at the same time every day." One of the main reasons salespeople fail, particularly salespeople who are not directly supervised, is that they do not commit to a regular schedule.

The Four Steps

Sales don't happen by accident. Today's successful sales professional must develop and follow a plan of action. The author's "Ziglar Training System" teaches a four-step selling process.

"Selling with integrity is the only way you can build a long-term career with the same company selling the same product to the same people - which brings sales stability and financial security."

1. "Need Analysis"

"People buy what they want when they want it more than they want the money it costs." For example, people want cell phones because they like high-tech gizmos and they want the cool things their friends have. However, they also buy cell phones to get convenient communication and reliable accessibility. The trick is to uncover your prospect's needs by asking the right questions and listening to the answers carefully. When you offer someone a reason or an excuse to buy something he or she already wants and needs, you'll make a sale.

2. "Need Awareness"

Once you identify a client's need, it is imperative that he or she also recognizes the specifics of the need. Create awareness with questions that clarify the need to the prospect. Highlight the imbalance your prospect is trying to fix with queries based on your "product, industry, pricing, application and competition."

3. "Need Solution"

Now is the time to talk about your product or service. You have identified a need and can offer a solution: your product. When presenting your product, remember that "people don't buy products," they buy benefits. Always tell potential clients what your product can do for them.

"True selling professionals don't talk about ethics; they live ethically."

4. "Need Satisfaction"

You have uncovered your prospects' needs and have a solution in the form of your product. When offering your solution, it is imperative to "lead with the need." Salespeople often talk about "features, function and benefit" but what do these terms mean to clients? A feature is an aspect of your product. The function is the purpose of the feature and the benefit is the advantage this feature offers your client. Start with the client's needs, but follow up by asking for the order.

"Asking Questions"

Conducting a needs analysis requires you to ask questions. Pose questions that are designed to elicit the prospect's feelings, thoughts and emotions. Understand that people make purchases based on emotions and then rationalize their purchases with logic. For instance, after you make a presentation based on savings, ask questions such as, "Are you interested in saving money" or "Can you see where our product would save you money?"

"In sales you don't have to wait for things to happen; you can make things happen."

To get the information you seek during needs analysis, ask "open-door, closed-door and yes-or-no questions." Open-door questions allow the prospect to answer any way he or she prefers. "What is the most exciting aspect of your job?" and "How do you see your responsibilities changing in the next five years?" are open-door questions. Closed-door questions - such as, "How does your division compare in size to the other divisions in this company?" - require the prospect to answer within a certain framework. A yes-or-no question requires a direct response and is often useful as a trial closing. For example, after you make a presentation you might ask, "Would what I'm proposing fit into your goals?"

"Organization, discipline and commitment make for consistent high-volume production."

Conversation versus Interrogation

Making calls is easier if you know how to engage potential customers in a relaxed, natural chat. To conduct a conversation, not an interrogation, use the "P.O.G.O formula."

"P" stands for "Person"

Learn about your prospects' thoughts, feelings, goals and emotions by encouraging them to talk about themselves. Never spend more than 25% of the time talking about yourself. "P" questions include: "How did you get into this particular business?" and "Do you like living in Dallas?"

"O" stands for "Organization"

Next, learn about your prospect's company. Again, refrain from monopolizing the conversation. Pose such questions as: "Would you tell me something about your organization?"

"G" stands for "Goals"

Elicit your prospect's personal and professional ambitions. Ask something like: "How are you currently tracking the progress of your goals?"

"O" stands for "Obstacles"

Everyone encounters obstacles to achieving their goals. If you can find out what challenges your prospect faces, you can offer a solution. Ask a question such as: "What is preventing you from being where you want to be?"

Closing: How to Seal the Deal

When you are confident about the value of your product or service, complete the first three steps of the selling process, and feel genuinely committed to making a sale, the odds are in your favor. If you are competent, professional, authentic and friendly, your prospect will be reluctant to say "no" to your proposal. But first, you must ask for the sale. Find closing techniques that work for you and practice them until they feel quite natural. One technique you can use is the "summary close," which calls for reviewing the high points of your presentation and asking for the order.

"Personalize the benefits for the prospect."

Getting Beyond "No"

What if your customer says "no"? Some sales experts contend that 60% of sales only occur after the prospect has said "no" five times! Assume that your prospect is turning you down because he or she doesn't know enough about your product to move forward. This gives you the opportunity to offer new information regarding features, functions and benefits that he or she can use as the basis for a positive decision.

"Your value to your company comes basically from the skills you develop in dealing with everybody, including...disgruntled

Ask questions that identify the prospect's objection. Then test the objection to see if it is real. The "Suppose" test asks the potential customer to answer a hypothetical question that sounds something like: "Suppose you felt good about (fill in the right factor), then would you make a yes decision?" The other method

customers and prospects, in an effective and professional manner."

for testing an objection is to "isolate and validate." In this process, ask: "Is there any other reason that would prevent you from taking advantage of my offer today?" After you answer two objections, move on and ask for the order again.

Customer Service

The sale does not end when you get the order. You must continue to work with your customers to make sure they are satisfied. If a client is dissatisfied, you should react professionally and calmly. Help find a new solution. When a person understands that you are truly trying to help, that knowledge will quickly diffuse his or her anger. When dealing with an unhappy customer, keep the following in mind:

"Discipline yourself to do the things you need to do when you need to do them and the day will come when you will be able to do the things you want to do when you want to do them!"

- "Hear them out - let the anger erupt."
- "Be patient" and "Be tactful."
- "Empathize."
- "Acknowledge their importance."
- "Articulate your response slowly, quietly and carefully."
- "Never grant them permission to control you."

Getting the Most Out of Your Time

Most salespeople spend 80% of their time on nonsales activities. Learn to structure your workday so that you spend as many hours as possible with prospects. Outwork and outperform your competition by investing one extra hour per day in productive tasks, such as making phone calls. Delegate nonselling tasks when possible. Many salespeople find it useful to have a system that makes them accountable and to log their use of time.

About the Author

Zig Ziglar is a popular motivational speaker. He has written 22 books about personal development, sales, leadership and success. His bestsellers include *See You at the Top*, *Secrets of Closing the Sale* and *Success for Dummies*.

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