

Whose Shoes Are You Walking In?

By Roger Bostdorff

Selling is not about you, selling is about your prospect. When you leave a voicemail does it many times sound like this, “let me tell you a little about my company” or “let me tell you a little about my product”? Your prospect cares about neither your company nor your product but rather they care about solving **their** business problems. For someone to be successful in sales they need to be able to walk in the shoes of their prospect. They need to be able to visualize the issues, problems and challenges that this company might be experiencing.

For example, if you are calling on a construction company and you have sold your solution to another construction company, what problem did your solution solve or improve? How about the wholesale distributor that you sold your solution to, what benefits did they derive from your solution? How about the manufacturer? If you know why these customers bought, then you know some potential hot buttons to grab the attention of your new prospect. You also add credibility to your story that you can help them because you have already helped other companies in their industry. Industry expertise and experience goes a long way in opening doors and getting the business.

By the way, you noticed that I referenced your “solution” not your “product or service.” If you are selling a product or service then you are selling a commodity that may be available by multiple product or service companies. However, if you are selling a solution you are selling the capability to solve your customer’s problems, issues or challenges. You are helping that customer improve their quality, cut their cost, improve their customer service, etc. Sometimes this is simply a state of mind or attitude. What you have to sell may not change but how you position it with your customer will change the perception and importance of your product/service...your SOLUTION!!

Voice mail in sales unfortunately is very prevalent, so let me ask you, which voice mail is going to get your attention if you were the prospect? Which voice mail has a higher probability of a return call?

1. I called because I wanted to tell you about our company
2. I called because I wanted to tell you about our products
3. I called because I have been working with several contractors/distributors/manufacturers (pick an industry) in the area to solve their _(blank)_____ problem. We have been able to solve this challenge with our _ (blank)_____ solution.

Some of you are asking yourself, “What problem or issue did I solve when I sold that copier, service contract, etc. to the XYZ Company? First, if your answer is they needed a faster copier then I am not communicating effectively. If that is the case the follow-on question is why? What business problem did they need to solve? Secondly, if you have to ask that question then you also need to re-evaluate your sales approach to determine if

you are really taking an approach to solve your customer's challenges or if you are simply taking the order?

I heard a neat saying a long time ago and I am going to modify it slightly for sales.

“Your customer cares how much you know when they know how much you care.”

Don't just sell your product or service but rather care enough about your customer to help them solve their problems with your solution. Why not walk in their shoes for a while?

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