



How To Sell More By Talking Less And Listening More

Too often professionals feel that they are only selling when they are talking. This is a mistake. The old model of selling required the “gift of gab” or a “silver tongue.” No longer does this hold true. The better and true professional listens more than he or she talks. The true professional asks good, penetrating questions to uncover issues, problems and priorities. And listens and takes notes.

The ability to ask questions and listen well is a vital success characteristic in selling today. The ability to listen well is an indispensable tool for success in all personal relationships.

In fact, the ability to listen is perhaps the foundation of sales success in the new model of selling today. Without the ability to listen well, you may become an abject failure in winning business.

So how could we listen better? Here are the critical points we should learn to master.

1. Many salespeople have been bought up with the idea that, the better we are at talking, the better we are at selling. Eliminate this old concept of selling from your mind. It is true that we should be a good talker only in the sense of recapping ideas and critical points of the client’s issues, problems and priorities. But having the “gift of the gab” is not a prerequisite.
2. Focus all your energies on the client’s issues and problems. If there is no problem - there is no sale. When we talk - there is only one thing we can talk about - ourselves. Remember the definition of a “bore; someone who wants to talk about themselves when you want to talk about yourself.”
3. Once you learn the problems and priorities, determine how they affect the person you are talking with. Ask yourself, “How does this issue affect them professionally or personally?” Once you translate the issue from the company to something more personal - the issue becomes more tangible relative to the importance of a solution.



4. When you think about the problem from the personal perspective of the client, you become “other centered.” You are no longer focused on yourself and the money you stand to make. This conveys to the client or prospective client that their issues and problems are a priority with you.
5. Before every meeting, prepare good questions. Write them down. Allow your client to see that you came prepared by seeing that you wrote out your questions. By asking your top two or three questions, you will probably inevitably get a dozen of your questions answered.
6. If you feel compelled to sell or make a statement, make it in the form of a question. For example, ask the perspective client, “How would you feel if the solution could do A, B, *and* C versus just A and B? Is this important?” This is more powerful than making the statement, “Our solution not only does A and B, but it does C too.” Remember what a psychologist once said, “A good question is a statement with a hook on the end of it.” In other words, a good question grabs the other person’s attention.
7. Take notes. And recap for clarification.
8. If there is anything unclear - look at your notes and tell the prospect that, “this one item is a little vague in my mind. Could you clear this up for me?” This is a great way to clarify and confirm.
9. Remember, poor salespeople dominate the talking, but top salespeople dominate the listening.
10. Your ability to listen and ask great questions demonstrates that you know the business, you are secure with who you are and you are consultative in your dealings with potential clients.

