

# The Sales Presentation

## – how it's done

With all B2B selling, the objective is to take your sales message and deliver it as a compelling sequence of events that will convince buyers and others in the decision chain to buy from you.

Whether a sale takes an hour or 18 months, the result is still has to be the same, in that your company is given the order. We need to start by looking at the different situations your company sales team will be called on to give a presentation.

Sales presentations can take place in many different circumstances and situations:

- Rep and buyer meetings, such as normally occur at different levels of the sale
- Corporate account major presentations, where you get one shot to close the big deal
- When your customer champion needs to tell work colleagues about your products and services, spreading the good word
- At seminars, exhibitions and conferences, or places where customers meet
- As a response to a request for information where the buyer receives a ram stick, cd-rom or uploadable file to view at their desktop

Each of these sales presentation opportunities can be called Touch Points.

Ideally we also need a presentation that can cover exactly what the customer needs to see, no more and precisely no less. Often the information required to be seen will be specific to them, such as contract details, implementation schedules or case studies of similar clients. With this in mind your sales presentation has to be flexible. It has to cover all the regular points such as your company's scope and capability, while still showing specific information that is directly relevant to the client's needs and will help clinch the sale, or successfully progress the deal to the next level, eg, presenting to the board or the senior buyer.

Whatever sales presentation you choose, or whoever you choose it from, it has to have the flexibility to cover every situation and every client.

#### Summary

An effective sales presentation needs to fit all sales meeting opportunities, such as buyer meetings,

major account presentations, conferences and seminars, requests for information, and still provide support for your customer champion. An effective sales presentation has to cover every Touch Point.

Sales presentations need to be flexible so they can be tailored specifically to any client situation. They can play for more or less time, depending on the specific client requirement, and include extra information the buyer needs in order to be persuaded. If you're looking for an effective sales presentation, be sure it covers all the above points.

#### Effective design

Presentation design covers everything regarding the content and structure of your presentation. What are the elements of presentation design, and what really works.

#### 1. Keep to 15 slides

Companies always tend to show overlong presentations where 20 to 30 or more slides is not uncommon. The first target in designing an effective presentation is to get the slide count down to 15 slides or less. This means being ruthless and stripping away unnecessary content, which is really quite a pleasurable and easy process to do. Simply look at each slide and say "so what?!"

Does the slide really deliver key information the buyer needs to see? If it doesn't, cut it out, until you're left with a list of information that's shorter, more easily digestible and more potent for its brevity.

#### 2. Think from the buyer's point of view

Smart programme design always starts from the buyer's point of view. Every day buyers and specifiers get hammered by company reps pushing presentations at them, Each presentation has the same recurring theme – We are mighty! We are mighty!

While it's understandable that you want to impress on the buyer how big or smart or powerful or effective your company is, it can grate if that's all they hear all day. Start your presentation with something the buyer and everyone in the room can agree on.

Briefly cover the state of your marketplace. Don't labour it, but make some smart point that will get heads in

An effective sales presentation needs to fit all sales meeting opportunities

# Feature customer quotes at key points in your presentation

the room nodding as you start to introduce your proposition. Obtain agreement over something you all have in common.

There are so many 'state of the marketplace' comments to make. For example:

- The effect of far east manufacturers
- Changing digitalisation and the impact of new technologies
- New legislation, trading conditions, or seasonal influences.

The point is to pleasantly surprise the buyer by saying something smart, rather than trot out "we are mighty – we have 500 this and 4 million that ... "

### 3. How to convince

Back on the theme of finding alternative ways to express ourselves other than "we are mighty – we are mighty", we convince by showing what we deliver. Match the buyer's need to what you deliver and tell them so.

In practice this means taking your top three unique selling points, and expressing them as unique deliverables that no competitor can match or has offered.

Effective programme design is structured around what you deliver, and not what you think the buyer ought to know about you.

### 4. They don't believe a word you say

Whenever you make a claim, buyer's eyes glaze over. They may smile and nod politely, but they don't necessarily believe your claims.

The moment you make a claim, prove it irrefutably, there and then. Don't let an unproven claim linger in the air. If you say your product or service can deliver 500 of this, or save 300 of that, then quickly and briefly show the proof. Good programme design ensures no doubts linger on.

### 5. Use testimonials

The buyer mightn't believe you, but they might believe your customers, so feature customer quotes at key points in your presentation. Be flexible. Have quotes to match different situations, rather than use the same blanket catch-all quote.

Testimonials can be text only, text and photo with logo and caption, or a video clip where the customer speaks to camera or to an unseen interviewer standing off camera. In this way, the design of your presentation wins your customer's confidence at exactly the right moment.

### 6. Adapt to circumstances

Good presentation design has flexibility high on its list. For example, you might have 15 great slides but the buyer may only need to see six of them in order to be convinced. The buyer might also need to see one or two extra slides covering specific points in the contract or proposition you have in mind. So adapt your presentation to each situation. Use the built-in flexibility of your presentation and tailor it to the buyer's exact needs.

Okay ... maybe it is all about price. But regardless of price, the buyer has to be certain you can deliver what you say you can. Added-value features you can bring out to help mitigate the price need to be given due prominence. Effective design will always mitigate price, without always actually saying so!

### 8. Always have a proposition

Every presentation has a desired outcome, and this needs to be designed in. So explain the desired outcome. Make your presentation, show your unique deliverables, prove your claims, and have testimonials to support what you say. Then deliver your proposition.

State what you want. Close. Let the buyer see what you're after, the conditions you need, the level of cooperation you require. Be precise. If they know precisely what you want then they'll help you figure out how to get it, rather than treat you in a generic supplier way.

### Summary

Effective presentation design is more than just making your existing presentation look and feel more impressive. It's a grass roots heart-searching examination of all that's best and worst in your sales presentation. You need to keep it short, less than 15 slides.

- You need to think from the buyer's point of view, and be interesting and smart
- Always focus on what you deliver to the client and avoid describing your internal processes and systems, no matter how good they are
- Prove all claims. Never assume you're believed.
- Use testimonials to support your claims
- Always adapt your presentation to every single circumstance
- Always state your proposition

Presentation design is about structuring your sales message for maximum effectiveness.

### Presentation services

What are the presentation services you need to ensure you get exactly what you want from a presentation production company? We can understand this better by breaking down the different steps of the business presentation production process.

At every step, you are looking for added-value, as the cumulative effect of added-value will ensure your final presentation is significantly more persuasive and compelling when compared to the average powerpoint that gets kicked around buyer's offices.

## Endeavour to be interesting and smart

# Sales presentations need to be flexible so they can be tailored specifically to any client situation

### The key production steps in a presentation service are:

- The proposal
- The 1st production meeting
- The script meeting
- The storyboard meeting
- Sample artwork sent for comment and approval
- The rough cut viewing
- Final delivery and duplication
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Let's take a look at these one by one, and see how they stack up.

#### 1. The proposal

Many proposals today are generic templates, designed to overwhelm you with a welter of generic information, usually as powerpoints and pdfs explaining the wonder of the production services on offer. There is so much of this information that it's hard to know whether to feel flattered or battered!

But when you actually start to examine proposals in detail, a different story often emerges.

Read through your sales presentation proposal and look to see how many times your company name is mentioned. Or count how many specific references there are to your company, its logo, or its markets, or its specific needs. The proposal that mentions you a lot has obviously thought about you a lot.

By contrast, the proposal that hardly mentions you is really just a price quote with lots of boilerplating. Batter rather than flatter.

This isn't the same thing as a real proposal detailing how the production service is geared exactly to your precise requirements, and showing examples of this in a way that relates directly to your organisation and its needs.

#### 2. The first production meeting

To get the best out of the production services on offer, you'll

need a team. Ideally, the team you assemble to produce your company presentation should represent the best sales intelligence in your company.

So this might include a business development director, the top salesperson, a marketing professional and a technical specialist. Plus your presentation producer/scriptwriter.

If this seems like a lot of people, then consider: What is it worth to get a presentation that's really convincing, that will persuade the maximum number of buyers?

#### Also consider:

My company presentation is right there in the front line of sales every day, helping to win customers. What do I have to do to ensure it always delivers the perfect message in every situation? Be in no doubt. You need the best sales intelligence in your company in order to get the best presentation.

The tasks for your company presentation production team in the first production meeting will be to:

- Develop bullet point content for the presentation
- Creatively discuss all possible presentation options and sales messages
- Set a schedule through to completion, which could take two or three months
- Bond as a team
- Appoint an anchorperson for the project

It's important not to try and start writing all the script at this meeting. Make the best start by scoping out the project together, and gathering more ideas. It'll pay you later to do this. Any quality presentation service will always start with a meeting where people can get to know each other, share their attitudes, and blue sky ideas together, freed from the constraints of "we must, must, must write that script today".



## You need to think from the buyer's point of view and be interesting and smart

### 3. The Script meeting

Sometimes this meeting may be combined with the storyboard meeting, depending on how complex the production is. A professional scriptwriter will be included as part of the production service. At the script meeting, all the bullet points covered in the last meeting will need structuring into a presentation design – a series of fluid, persuasive and compelling messages.

Every single point needs critical examination and discussion. By doing this you're ensuring your presentation is flawless. By contrast, what you don't want to do is dump the presentation onto a scriptwriter with a copy of the old powerpoint and tell them to get on with it.

Simply re-hashing the old powerpoint is wasting an opportunity to design the greatest presentation your company ever delivered! Subsequently, your scriptwriter will write up your script for the team to comment on and approve.

### 4. The storyboard

If your presentation is complex, then the service will include an additional meeting to cover these complex elements. Examples of complexity are:

- Voiceover or standalone versions of your presentation
- Lots of interactivity and presentation menu options
- Lots of customisation features to cover every sales presentation eventuality
- Recurring visual or animated motifs, or special graphics and visuals

In addition you'll need to discuss where to source stills for the presentation.

These can be from the company's own internal stills library, from the presentation producer's own library, or stills sourced from high-quality online photo stock libraries.

### 5. Sample artwork sent for comment and approval

Once your message has been nailed down as a script and approved, you'll need to see artwork as the next stage in

the production service. While it's not realistic to stand over a presentation designer while they're developing your presentation, it is essential to see a sample of their visual intentions, and approve this. Once this is done you can take a back seat while they get on with it.

### 6. The rough cut viewing

Rough cut is more a traditional term, and not wholly accurate! The core presentation at this stage should be nigh on perfect, as we've followed all the previous production steps to ensure that it is as perfect as it can be.

Because of this, no major changes should be needed at this stage. Small amends may be required of the core presentation, and some discussion of implementing customisation features may be needed. But the main topic of the meeting will be planning roll-out of the presentation.

This is the happiest part of the whole production service, as the results of all the hard work can finally be seen. If all has gone well, it should be a triumph!

### 7. Final delivery and duplication

Once the core presentation has been approved, the final part of the service kicks in.

All the add-ons and different versions, and menu structures will now have been put in place, and the whole package delivered to you, complete and ready for showing to customers.

### Summary

Effective production services are based around effective proven production steps. If the temptation is to take shortcuts by having less meetings, or spending less time on it, or involving less people, then don't. The perfect sales presentation will clinch deals for you. But in order for it to be perfect, you have to commit to it. A professional presentation service will ensure every ounce of this commitment is maximised.

Examples of sales presentations, presentation design, presentation services and conference presentations can be viewed at [www.rossiterandco.com/salespresentations.htm](http://www.rossiterandco.com/salespresentations.htm).