

The Sales Presentation

It's show time and it's about one thing-- communicating the benefits of your product or service in such a way that prospects or customers want your solution to their problem... now. For the formal presentation opportunity, you've likely worked through a tremendous amount of grunt work, front-end discussions, needs analysis and internal buying processes to get to the presentation stage with a prospect or customer. Even for the informal presentation, the front-end work invested by a salesperson can be enormous. And in some cases you may not know which you'll have the opportunity to deliver until the last moment. Fortunately, the professional is prepared for either.

Below is your checklist to effective presentations. It's based on the fundamentals. As you create your standard presentations in written form (any other form is not preparation), keep the checklist handy. When you're done, evaluate your work by checking yourself against it. You should be prepared for both formal and informal presentations for each prospect type you have in your sales world. With the standards built and practiced, customizing for personalities and specific scenarios is a quick task. Remember... do not wing a presentation because of laziness or a rationalized concern that your message will sound "canned"-- it's not the way of the professional. Advance presentation preparation (written and practiced) is the way to bet. Choose to be prepared and sell...

A professional's presentation...

I have...

scripted (in writing) my standard presentation(s)
outlined my scripted presentation as a guide for the actual
scripted (in writing) responses to any probable questions or objections that may arise
delivered my standard presentation(s) to at least two different people who have offered me feedback
prepared appropriate standard presentation material for my expected audiences and forums (e.g., auditorium, small round table, conference room, hallway, etc.)

My presentation...

focuses on the benefits of my offering as they relate to solving the specific problems of the prospect
begins with the most important benefits and continues in descending order of importance, including only pertinent benefits
has no unneeded statements (zero fluff-- ask, "does it really matter?")
includes a very brief company background discussion only if it adds credibility to the product or service or if it's anticipated that the audience would like it addressed
includes appropriate, customized and easy to understand illustrations where applicable
includes opportunities for prospects to engage
includes a powerful conclusion which clearly illustrates the benefits my prospect will receive as a result of buying my solution now

is 10% shorter in terms of time than would be expected for a presentation which discusses a solution of its relative complexity

I will be sure to...

minimize the preparation work on the part of prospect (e.g., acquisition of projectors, flip charts, markers, etc.)

confirm all individuals necessary to purchase my solution will be present

be enthusiastic and transfer my enthusiasm to the individuals in the room

avoid reading directly from any slides

avoid reading directly from my scripts and outline

avoid using industry jargon unless i'm absolutely sure the attendees will understand it

share my attention with all individuals in the room-- not only the primary decision maker

confirm next action steps with all appropriate parties at the conclusion of the presentation