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Presented  
by  
Tom Shay

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P.O. Box 128  
Dardanelle, AR 72834  
[www.profitsplus.org](http://www.profitsplus.org)

## **Relationship Selling Skills are a Big Deal!**

Today, we are going to work on the ways in which we sell our products and services to our customers. Instead of my talking at you about the ways customers want to be and should be spoken to, this is an interactive event. So that we may maximize our time together, **please read this information to assist in minimizing our preparation time.**

Locate three to five other participants whom you do not know and gather yourselves around a table so that you may see one another.

Each group will be given a deck of cards containing 24 cards. Each card has one question and information with regard to that question. On some cards, the information is the “answer” to that question, based on the many scientific studies performed on the interaction between a salesperson and a customer. Sometimes the information is a guideline or suggestion for dealing with that customer.

**Our “game” today will be played in three rounds.** The first (“spades”) round deals with the words we use and the questions we ask of our customers. Pages 2 and 3 of these notes cover the “spades” round. The questions are restated, and there is space for you to write your thoughts and responses.

The second (“hearts”) round deals with the actions, body motions, and voice tones we use with our customers. Pages 4 and 5 of the notes cover the “hearts” round.

The third (“diamonds”) round deals with our follow-up to our customers. Pages 6 and 7 of the notes cover the “diamonds” round. **Each round will consist of approximately 16 minutes.** Do not worry if you do not get through all of the eight cards of each round. It is more important that you obtain the maximum from the information shared.

At the end of each round, **each group will be asked to input one thought** from that round. Obtain a consensus from your group and have one individual be prepared to share that idea with the rest of the participants. Please have someone different provide a response for each round.

When our time together is completed, you will leave with several things. The first is the information on sales techniques from leading authorities that is printed on the playing cards. The second is input from the participants within your group. The third, and most important, is that you will be better prepared to sell yourself, the business you work in, and your products and services.

## **Round One (Spades): The words we use in our questions and statements**

1. How many words does the typical person speak in 1 minute? How many words is the typical person capable of hearing in 1 minute? What happens with the difference?
2. A person is likely to drift when listening because he can hear words a lot faster than he can speak words. What can you do to minimize this problem when speaking with a customer?
3. Clarifying is the act of paraphrasing what your customer has said to you in order to confirm your interpretation of the message that was sent. It involves four steps: On target, state, extra info, and identify. Define each and put them in the proper sequence of occurrence.
4. The most important question you can ask a customer is a variation of "Why?" "Why are you replacing...?" "Why have you asked for...?" "What other variations of "why?" can you think of? (Variations do not have to start with the word "why").

## **Round One (Spades): The words we use in our questions and statements**

5. When a customer states an objection or concern as you are asking for the sale, what can you ask to learn what is preventing you from closing the sale?
6. While it is easy to make a statement instead of asking a question, a question lets the customer know you desire their information. Take these four statements and change them into questions.
  - This product has a lifetime warranty.
  - This product requires little maintenance.
  - The quality is well worth the price.
  - This is the newest item available.
7. Many customers visit with a salesperson while having preconceived ideas with regard to the product or service. Our example customer does not believe what you are selling is compatible with what he or she already owns. How can you overcome this incorrect idea? Each person should give an example of how to resolve that misconception.
8. When a customer walks into a business, the salesperson can often be at a disadvantage because he does not know why the customer walked in. Give examples of unique questions you can ask customers that are sure to draw them into a conversation.

## **Round Two (Hearts): Actions, body motions, and voice tones**

1. Communication consists of three sources: words, body language, and tone. How much does each source contribute to determining one's meaning?
2. What can you do to focus on the person talking with you?
3. Most people have five senses. Name them, and give an example of how you can appeal to each of them.
4. Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, encourages us to "listen with the intent to understand, rather than with the intent to respond." What does this statement mean to you?

## **Round Two (Hearts): Actions, body motions, and voice tones**

5. People buy much more easily from people they like. What are key ways of building that friendship with a customer?
  
6. Customers' questions and statements are signs they are ready to purchase. What examples can you think of?
  
7. Customers give physical signs as well as verbal signs of their interest in making a purchase. How many signs can you think of that indicate a person is making the decision to make a purchase?
  
8. When a salesperson is in the same general area as a customer, there are four distance zones that come into play. Can you name them, define them, and give an action you would take?

## **Round Three (Diamonds): Follow-up: going that extra mile**

1. Just as the question, "Is that all?" is incorrect in assuming that the sale represents the end to your interaction with the customer, expecting there is only one sale with the customer is also incorrect. What other leads could you ask for?
2. A good customer can lead you to another good customer, as people spending money tend to associate with people spending like amounts of money. How can you use these six contact techniques? Flowers, thank-you note, birthday card, door hanger, telephone, customer survey.
3. Several months after the sale is completed, you should contact the customer again. What could you use as an entry for the conversation?
4. Research has shown that customers quit buying from businesses for specific reasons. Do you know what they are?



## **Round Three (Diamonds): Follow-up: going that extra mile**

5. Some follow up techniques are most unusual. What techniques can you think of?
  
6. What unique ways can you use to keep your name in front of the customer?
  
7. What reasons can you think of for following up with a customer?
  
8. The average salesperson will lose 20% of their customers each year. What are your chances of recovering a lost customer as compared to the chances of making an initial sale to a new customer? Why would you want to recover a lost customer? What could you do to recover a lost customer?



## Always "On"

By Tom Shay

**SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS**

After speaking at a recent tradeshow, this writer flew Southwest Airlines from Las Vegas to Tampa with a stopover in Nashville. The flight from Las Vegas to Nashville was the type of flight I enjoyed and had come to expect from Southwest: flight attendants and crew members engaging in conversations with passengers, telling jokes, tossing bags of peanuts, singing, and generally engaging the passengers.

They were quite proud of their additional efforts. At the end of the flight, this announcement was made, "Thanks for flying our airline. If you had a good time, this was Southwest flight 157. If you did not have a good time, this was Delta flight 1."

In Nashville, all but five passengers got off. Oddly enough, the five of us all sat in the same area. We had a discussion among us about our flights as the Nashville-to-Tampa flight was quite different from the first one. On the second flight, the pilot—the same as on the first—was "matter of fact" with his comments in the one time he spoke to the passengers on the second flight. The flight attendants, while also the same crew as the first flight, gave the usual type of service experienced on airplanes. They served the customary drinks and snacks, but something was missing.

Passengers were not given the individual attention that we had in the first flight. The flight attendants did not give passengers a sincere look in the eye or smile at them. The fun was gone, and now the Southwest flight attendants were performing their jobs in the same manner as flight attendants on other airlines.

The response by the Southwest flight attendant, while lengthy and filled with a combination of explanations, could be summarized by the last sentence she gave. "Hey, we can't always be on."

Of course, anyone can have an off day: a headache, a cold, a problem at home with the kids, or dealing with personal finances. Almost everyone has an occasion where he or she has gone to work with a less-than-ideal personal situation.

However, when it comes to interacting with customers, co-workers, management, or even the delivery person from UPS, being "on" is not an option. If you are truly a professional at what you do (sales, installation, service, office support, warehouse or delivery personnel), your job requires you to be "on" when you perform your duties.

This writer remembers from his days of store ownership when a radio announcer was emceeding a contest at our business. The announcer, after performing part of his duties, began to complain about the microphone, the speakers, the acoustics of the building, and the lack of time to warm up his voice. His remark was, "I am a professional. I have to have things just so when I work."

Tiring of a complainer, my response was, "Gee. I thought being a professional meant you could do your job in any circumstances." I remember that was the last of our discussion for the day.



## **Always "On"**

**(continued) By Tom Shay**

**SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS**

On the other hand, how many times have you worked with someone who always has a smile on his or her face? You know—the person who always has a kind word for co-workers and at least two kind words for each customer. These are the staff members whom customers ask for by name.

The pleasant disposition is not something that can be taught. More simply, it is something that can be pointed out to a new staff person observing a co-worker who is enjoying his or her work or interaction with the customer.

Imagine the scenario as you and the new staff person observe and discuss the techniques and skills shown. After several of these efforts, you should expect the new staff person would be able to handle his or her duties.

Of course, there are some people who just are not suited to work in situations where they interact with customers.

This writer remembers speaking to a group in South Carolina last year about this issue. Visiting with one of the attendees some six months later, she said that as I spoke she knew exactly the person in her business about whom I was talking.

While her business rarely had a customer complaint, she said she was surprised if the complaint was about anyone other than this one staff member. She went on to say that she had a restless night thinking about the situation; and that when she went to work the next day, the first thing she did was to terminate that employee. Hearing that story, I gasped and asked what happened next. Her response was, "That was the best thing I ever did for my business. And I felt a lot better afterward."

Not recommending this as a cure-all for any business, there are two other points that need to be made. The first is that the person who is not "on" is indirectly working to cause all of his or her co-workers to not be "on." It is like algae in a pool. It spreads, and it spreads rapidly. Like the algae, it does not just go away on its own; it has to be dealt with.

The second point is that a management person who is "on" can do more to get the rest of the staff in the "on" position than the lowest ranking staff person can do to get his or her "on" position to filter up through the business.

Undoubtedly, you know the advantages of you and your staff being "on." The disadvantages of not being "on"? Most likely your customers will tell others about their experience—much like this writer told others of his experience with a Southwest Airlines staff that decided not to be "on."