

Sales Techniques

“It is no use saying, “We are doing our best.” You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary.”

- Winston Churchill

There’s no getting around it. Doing a fundraiser involves selling two things - your cause and your offering. The right things need to be said to your potential supporters to promote your cause and to “sell” what you are offering as a fundraiser. If you don’t have a process in place that provides some basic sales techniques to your participants, then your fundraiser will never reach its full potential.

Don’t assume, teach

You should never assume that someone will automatically know how to sell something. Good sales techniques follow a defined communication path to develop rapport, define a need, demonstrate value, and obtain agreement. If you want to maximize your results, be sure to provide all the sales help you possibly can to your sellers.

Ask for outside help

Ask a member of your organization who’s a sales professional to help construct your selling guidelines. Work out a scripted participant introduction and a basic sales pitch in advance. Put it in writing and make sure everyone gets a copy.

Do some role-playing. Have the adults perform a “what to do” and “what not to do” skit at your kick off meeting. Make it fun so everyone will enjoy it, but be sure to get the message across as well – good sales technique means good sales.

Put sales techniques to work

Increase your group's success by putting professional sales techniques to work in your organization. Have your sellers do what every sales professional does - practice, rehearse, train, review, talk to the mirror, etc.

Work from a prospect list

Selling always follows the law of large numbers – the more people you contact, the more of your offering that you will sell. Have everyone create a written prospect list. Have your team or sub-group leaders review these and offer additional suggestions.

State a specific goal

Remember that stating your group's specific goal should be a prominent part of what your sellers say to their prospects. It should be mentioned before they even say what they're selling. Then, it should be mentioned again while the prospect is reviewing the product offering.

Don't forget free prospects

Team up with local merchants to get prime selling locations in high-traffic areas. When it comes to prospects, you can never have too much of a good thing.

For more information on sales techniques, study sales materials in the library and on the Internet to get more tips. Focus on the classics like Dale Carnegie's "How to Win Friends and Influence People." There's a reason why they are classics.

Sell your brand

Whether or not what you are selling is a name brand item, the primary "brand" in fundraising is your organization and the enthusiasm of your entire group. If your sellers are enthusiastic about what they are selling, or even the cause for which they are selling, success will follow.

See through the customer's eyes

Would you buy that, at that price, at that time, from that person? Remember the power of “me” - as in “What’s In It For Me.” Enough said.

Sell on an emotional level

Buying decisions are almost always made at an emotional level, not through logic. Logic is used to justify the buying decision after it has already been made. Therefore, you want to couch your offer in terms that stir an emotional response.

Think about visiting a car dealership. They’re not focusing on the logical side of the buying decision. The salesman wants to get you to test drive that new car so that you form an emotional bond with the idea of having a new vehicle. The last thing they want to do is talk about financial numbers until you’ve gotten “hooked.” Then, they’ll limit that discussion to “affordable” monthly payments, so that you can rationalize the buying decision.

Focus on their wants, not their needs

When people spend money on something without advance contemplation, 98% of the time they are buying a “want” item, not a “need” item. Think of the checkout lane at the supermarket or any other retail establishment. They are loaded with impulse buy items that customers can quickly add to their purchases.

So, how does this relate to fundraising? Its another sales technique that your sellers should have in their toolkit. It works a couple of ways. First, if there is buying (or donation) resistance, respond with a statement that addresses the emotional “want” side of their brain. It’s much easier than trying to convince someone that they “need” what you’re offering.

People want to help. Use that as a lever to get someone to take action. You can say, “We really need your help because (your stated goal/need) is important.”

People tend to procrastinate. You can say, “This is your chance to help out now.”

People set limits on their donations. You can say, “This is a cause that needs your support because its important to you.”

Once buying resistance is overcome, you can appeal to the emotional “wants” to increase the level of participation. For example, if you’re selling from a catalog, you can say, “There sure are a lot of great gifts in there. Are you buying gifts for out-of-town family members that you want to keep in touch with?”

The same thing applies to other product sales. You can say, “Is there someone else you’d like to buy a (insert fundraiser product here) for? A lot of people are doing that.”

Convert benefits into feelings

Make a statement that creates a pleasant mental picture for your prospective buyer. Your goal should be to get a feeling of positive emotion linked to the purchase of your offering. Your prospective customer should have a vivid word picture created for them that dramatizes the benefits of your offering.

An example would be when you are selling a discount card that contains multiple merchant discounts. Instead of reciting a list of a dozen offers, make mention of the satisfaction associated with saving money. You might say, “Isn’t it great when you can save money for the things you really want?”

Or you could say, “Doesn’t it feel good when you get a great bargain? Check out these fantastic freebies!” Most people love getting a bargain and getting something for free, regardless of their income.

Dramatize their loss if they don't buy

Talk about what your prospective customer won't get if they decide not to purchase your offering. Fear of losing out on a good deal or a valuable benefit is a strong motivator. You've already created a positive emotional feeling about what they'll gain; now link that good feeling to one of loss.

For example, if your group is selling pizza cards that have twenty free pizzas on a two-for-one basis, you can talk about paying extra every time they buy two pizzas. You can say, "Without this card, every time you want an extra pizza, you'll have to pay for it." (loss of good deal linked to reminder of extra cost)

If you're selling gourmet lollipops, you can say, "These are all we have left. When they're gone, everyone else is out of luck." (loss of opportunity)

If you're selling from a catalog or a brochure, you can say, "Ordering gifts doesn't get any easier than this." (loss of time savings/convenience/selection)

Limit choices

Make sure to focus your prospect on a narrow range of options. Too many choices can cause hesitation in making a buying decision. Aim for an immediate choice from a limited pool of attractively priced options. If there is no easy choice, people will often make no decision at all.

For example, in the gourmet lollipop example above, make your first pitch with the three most popular flavors. Don't confuse the prospect with 25 different lollipops to choose from! You can say, "These three are the best sellers." If they ask for other choices, try to get a specific flavor they're looking for before you show them 22 other ones. You can say, "What's your favorite flavor?" If they still can't choose one, sell them a bundle. You can say, "A lot of people buy five flavors and enjoy them all."

Another example of limiting choices would be sales from a catalog. It's important to point a prospective buyer toward an easy decision by highlighting a personal favorite, a best seller, or an attractive price point. You can say, "There's a ton of good choices, but this one right here on page three is a great deal and it's only five dollars."

Offer more ways to buy (and pay)

Make sure that you offer as many ways to pay for what you're selling (or collecting pledges/donations) as possible. Don't always limit yourself to cash or checks. Make it easy for people to do business with your group.

For example, it's fairly inexpensive to get your group set up to accept credit cards. Just ask your banker for a merchant kit. That way, you can collect and process credit card payments at a central location. Think of ways to leverage that capability. You can use your website and process payments online. You can host an auction at a convenient location and accept credit cards (which allows people to spend more).

You can even sell products with a credit card form that the customer fills out. Imagine how much larger your sales volume could be if customers could charge their holiday gift selections from your catalog instead of just writing a check.

Think about collecting pledges and membership payments. You can take credit cards for payment or you can setup an automatic draft on their account. Put together a selection of \$5, \$10, or \$20 a month pledge packages. Don't forget to give them significant membership rewards along with their pledges.

Some important point-of-sale techniques:

Look your best

When making a sales pitch, take the time to make a good impression. Dirty jeans and a ratty t-shirt won't help your cause.

Smile

A smile is a universal communication that invites further communication. To get the best results, smile first and smile often.

Say hello

Always introduce yourself first. It puts you in control of the conversation.

Attitude is important

Be positive and enthusiastic. Nobody likes a glumph.

Don't mumble

Speak up. Mumbling doesn't get the message across.

Be positive, not negative

Make only positive statements about your products. Don't close the door on yourself by being negative.

Recommend a favorite item

State a preference for a favorite item and provide a reference price point.

Demonstrate value

Show the value in relation to the price point by pointing out the benefits or superior features of the product offering. Always be truthful about what you are selling and about the cause you are promoting.

Reaffirm need and solution

Remind the prospect that they are helping meet the stated, specific need of your organization.

Offer a reference

Reference another sale, preferably someone known to the prospect.

Ask for the order

Always ask for the order. This is so basic, but it needs to be remembered and put into practice. Never try to sell something the customer doesn't want.

Because is important

Always use the word "**because**" when you ask for the order. "Can you help us out because..."

Be quiet after asking

After you've asked for the order, don't say anything else. Wait for the prospect to respond, with a yes, a no, or a request for more information.

Be ready for business

Be prepared to write up your order. Have plenty of pens and don't seem like you are in a hurry. Give them time to decide on how many items they'd like.

Have a Plan B

If they say no thanks to what your group is selling, offer them your supplemental fundraising item. Always have an optional approach ready for those who don't like the main offer. If there is no other offering, then simply ask for a small donation of a dollar or two.

Always say thanks

Remember to say thank you whether someone buys something or not.

Summary

The entire fundraising experience can be a positive influence on young sellers. Selling teaches children good communication skills. They're interfacing with the adult world and trying their best to achieve personal and group goals.

Just like in sports, using good technique is essential to succeed. Equip your team to succeed with the right techniques and with well-rehearsed sales scripts.

Make fundraising a positive experience for them by putting the best tools and the right skills into their hands. You'll not only maximize your results; you'll also give your young sellers some valuable skills. Successful fundraising skills help them incorporate some positive experiences into their lives. Years from now they'll thank you for it.

Sales Scripts

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

- Aristotle

Equip your sales team for success and watch your results improve dramatically. You’ve invested a lot of time and effort to get one of your organization’s sales representatives in front of a potential supporter. Now what are they supposed to do?

If they are inexperienced, if they are shy in unfamiliar situations, or if they lack public speaking experience, then they will most likely have difficulty “regurgitating” your group’s message.

Why use a script?

Why are sales scripts needed? So that the right message does get across and so that each prospect will more likely become a supporter of your organization. Studies have shown that two things make a major difference in a sales situation – a confident, winning attitude combined with an ability to smoothly articulate the offering and ask for the order.

Develop abilities

How does a youngster develop the confidence and that ability? By being provided with a sales script and then by rehearsing it several times. Rehearsing has been demonstrated many times to provide confidence in sales situations.

The elevator speech

In sales, most professionals have a quick concise “pitch.” The idea being, if you find yourself on an elevator with the CIO, what would you say in the 30 to 60

seconds you've been given while he's your captive audience? What do you say to make him want to hear more? In fundraising, you have approximately 30 to 60 seconds to lay the groundwork for making the sale or get the opportunity to tell them more. Use that time wisely by developing your "elevator speech" to cover the most important points.

Convey enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is conveyed to the potential buyer and subliminal emotional signals are exchanged between the two parties. These nonverbal cues need to be correctly taught as part of the sales script. While nobody expects a child to be a professional sales person, delivering the message well is important.

Encourage developing rapport

Do you have any idea what the most important nonverbal cue is when two people are talking? Many people don't. It's called a smile. People are predisposed by imprinting to react favorably to others who smile at them.

Try it yourself the next time you meet a stranger on an elevator. Chances are, you'll get a smile in return, and a possible conversational opening will result.

So, now we know that a smile is a good thing for our sales force to use when they discuss the fundraiser. Where does that smile fit into the subject of sales scripts? Lots of places, but specifically it ties in with the selling checklist covered in the Section on **Sales Techniques**.

Selling Checklist

- List of prospects created – ten needed
- Sales pitch in writing
- Sales pitch rehearsed in room
- Sales pitch rehearsed on family

- Sales pitch ready to be put to use
- Smile
- Introduce yourself
- State goal
- Ask for help (use “because”)
- Smile again
- State a reason to buy
- Point out a favorite
- Show wares
- Ask for order
- Smile again
- Get order (think positively)
- Smile again
- Ask for more (supplemental sale or reference)
- Communicate delivery timeframe
- Thank you (regardless of order or not)

I’ve worked up a short sample sales pitch for a PTA gift-wrap fundraiser to serve as a basis for looking at the underlying psychology of sales.

“Hi, Mrs. Smith.”

(get response)

“My name is Timmy Jones. Our school is raising money for new playground equipment with a holiday catalog sale. Could you help us because some of that equipment is really old?”

(get response, hand catalog to Mrs. Smith)

“There’s some great wrapping paper on the third page. This shiny red one here is my favorite. It’s real thick, so it won’t tear easily, and nothing shows through. Pretty nice, huh?”

(point out favorite)

“Plus, it’s only \$7 a roll. Mrs. Sanders bought four of them! And half the proceeds go to the playground fund. Can you help me out because I’m trying to be the top seller?”

(get response on personal goal)

Here are the underlying psychological aspects of that basic sales script:

- Timmy gives personal greeting *(then smiles and looks at the prospect directly, then looks down and away)*
- Greeting returned by prospect *(Timmy lifts eyes back up)*
- Timmy gives self introduction *(Timmy smiles again)*
- Query received from prospect *(Timmy shifts feet and adjusts grip on catalog)*
- Timmy names his group affiliation & states specific goal *(Timmy looks up, then continues)*
- Timmy asks for assistance to meet specific goal *(Timmy smiles nervously, then looks away to await answer. Note - It’s key that he awaits the answer)*
- Response received from prospect *(Timmy leans forward to show catalog)*
- Timmy shows value and promotes favorite *(Timmy waits without smiling for a display of interest)*
- Non-verbal response received from prospect
- Timmy defines price point
- Slight verbal response from prospect
- Timmy references another sale *(displays happiness)*
- Eye contact from prospect
- Timmy reminds of specific goal, implies need *(looks shyly downward after finished talking)*

- Affirmative body language from prospect
- Timmy asks for help/order by personalizing it and adding personal goal (*looks intently and directly at prospect, but says no more*)
- Prospect agrees to “help” with group need and personal goal (*Timmy smiles*)
- Body language reflects shared pair bond of minor nature
- Timmy collects order and says thank you

What the heck does all that mean?

There are a couple of key points here. One, you're not going to be able to teach any youngster the psychology of sales in a short period of time.

Two, there's nothing wrong with constructing an effective sales script that allows the right communication patterns to unfold by asking your sellers to say some key phrases, make a few pauses, and smile from time to time. Kids can understand that.

Leave the rest of it to the psychologists who study human interaction. Now, where does that leave us with constructing a good sales script for your fundraiser?

Actually, pretty well off. Once you understand some of the rituals involved with face-to-face selling, you'll have more insight into why you want your sales force to smile and pause a lot.

The key points of the sales script are:

- Personal greeting
- Smile & pause for response
- Self introduction

- Pause for query
- Name group and state specific goal
- Pause & smile
- Ask for assistance to meet goal
- Pause and wait for response
- Introduce offering
- Smile
- Promote favorite and show value
- Wait for display of interest
- Define price point
- Quickly reference another sale
- Pause and wait for response
- State personal goal and imply need for help
- Pause and wait for response
- Ask for order
- Smile
- Conduct business
- Smile
- Say thank you
- Smile again

It's totally up to you how much you want to emphasize the pausing and smiling. The older your sellers are, the more they need to follow the ritual pattern of the minor pair bond. Adults give young sellers the benefit of attentively listening and responding favorably in most situations.

Summary

There was a famous psychological study done in a busy public library where there was always a line to use the copy machine. Hidden cameras observed the results as various individuals tried to “cut in” ahead of someone else.

Interestingly, a majority of people would allow an individual to cut in front of them in the line if they were asked pleasantly. That demonstrates the importance of asking for the order and smiling.

Even more interesting was the fact that using the word “because” to preface a supposed reason for cutting ahead in line increased the percentage of people allowing someone else to cut ahead by another 30%. That demonstrates the hidden psychological power of the word “because.”

It made very little difference what the supposed reason was just as long as the word “because” was used. A nonsensical reason such as “because I have to make copies” was nearly as acceptable as “because I’m in a hurry” or “because my own copier is broken.” Even a silly answer like “because it’s raining outside” gained widespread acceptance.

So, in your sales scripts, be sure to include a pleasant exchange that includes eye contact, asking for the order, and a justification for helping that includes using the word “because.”

For more information, you can read any number of sales books, attend seminars, etc. Take my word for it though. For greater success, always use a sales script that includes at least rudimentary pause and smile instructions. Good selling!

Incentives & Rewards

“Image creates desire. You will what you imagine.”

- J. G. Gallimore

Incentives are meant to drive additional participation and generate more sales. The best incentives are those that have value in the eyes of the participants and will motivate them to give their best effort. Therefore, your reward program should offer quality items within a fairly structured setup that doesn't cause unwanted behaviors such as excessive or unsafe competition.

Who's paying?

An important consideration is who ultimately pays for the rewards program. If you think about it, all rewards will come out of your net profit one way or another. Doesn't it make sense to get the most for your money while at the same time offering the best overall incentives?

Look for ways to save

Ask your supplier how their reward program works and whether there are any discounts for not utilizing their prize package. You might be able to not only save money, but also construct a better incentive program through local merchants. Consider putting together a selection of gift certificates for top sellers that are donated or bought at a discount from businesses that want to participate.

Go local

Offer locally generated prizes such as lessons, gift certificates, baked goods, and other items. Discount coupons can also be easily printed and supplied as a participation reward for everyone. Local merchants like toy stores, fast food restaurants, family entertainment businesses, sporting goods stores, etc. are examples of coupon sources or potential prize suppliers.

Think it through

Brainstorm with your team on how to create the best possible set of rewards at the lowest cost to your organization. Try to structure your incentive program to reward everyone - merchants, buyers, volunteers, sellers, parents, each sub-group of participants, etc.

Weigh competing factors

Consider the long-term impact of an improved prize program based on local offerings versus the alternatives. Don't default to low-end prize packages unless you have to.

Consider what's important

An incentive program should pay attention to what's important to the grass roots level of the organization. Look at these ideas for incenting higher participation in a school fundraiser and think if they might have a greater impact than simply using token giveaways.

Example elementary school incentives:

- Giving a portion of funds raised by them directly to that class
- Offer the teacher an incentive for hitting classroom goal
- Allow a class to retain a portion of funds raised above their goal
- Give class bonus funds for hitting 100% participation goal
- Let teachers sell fundraising items directly for their class's benefit
- Reward the top five classes with a teacher prize package
- Provide a premium rewards catalog via a points system

Sales rewards

Design your program with the appropriate level of reward for all participants. A little reward can produce a lot of motivation. Be sure to set the initial reward level low enough so that at least 50% of your sales force gets a direct reward. Group

awards will also stimulate additional sales, but not as much as individual rewards.

Progressive rewards

Offer ever-increasing levels of rewards. Allow roll-up combination of rewards into one big one. For instance, a seller might select a basic prize for each level of success or one larger prize for his ultimate success.

Valuable rewards

Give awards for success that really have value. Nobody wants junk. Skip trinkets and work with your community to come up with better prizes that don't subtract from your net. Example: \$5 coupon for a local fun center such as miniature golf, bowling, etc. Those merchants are well aware that more spending will result from that visit.

Big customer rewards

On sales from a catalog, consider motivating customers to make bigger buys by giving prizes for the biggest orders. Good coupons always work. Example: free car wash with a \$50 order. Obviously, work with a local car wash on this promotion.

Volunteer rewards

Don't forget to reward your volunteers. You want them to come back, don't you? Select an appropriate reward for various levels of participation or at a minimum, do a reward party or luncheon.

Appreciation

Show your appreciation to all facets of your organization and supporter base. Be sure you do fun things that aren't fundraisers. For example: offer discounts on tickets to athletic events, group outings, parties, barbecue night, etc. These fun

activities will help build the camaraderie useful for future fundraisers (and for getting those volunteers to come back again).

Prize preview

Show off what sellers can win for different levels of achievement. Build a “want” or desire to have one or more of those prizes in each of your participants.

Recognition

Never underestimate the power of being praised before your peer group for doing a good job. Consider having a group awards ceremony. Award plaques are a nice touch, particularly if you can get them at a discount (remember the influence of your organization in other areas).

Personal goal

Motivate each salesperson with a self-selected personal goal stated in front of their peer group. Tie a reward to the achievement of that goal.

Tiered rewards

Give better prizes for better sales volume. Save money by dropping the lower tier reward once the next level is reached and offering a better prize for that achievement than if they got two lesser prizes. Example: Level B seller gets nicer Level B prize, but forfeits the Level A prize upon reaching Level B.

Merchant prizes

Contact your local merchants for best prizes that mean the most to your sellers. Work deals for movie passes, merchandise discounts, gift certificates, miniature golf, theater trip for top ten sellers, etc.

Classroom Incentives

In school fundraisers, try to include something that directly benefits each classroom by providing supplies, special classroom privileges, or extra playground time.

Party rewards

Ice cream, pizza, movies, a group trip... All of these and more can be great motivators and increase competition between sub-groups.

Quality rewards

Junk is always junk and will end up in the trash shortly. Only offer rewards that will truly motivate your sellers.

Structure rewards fairly

Design your program so that everyone is rewarded proportionately and is proud of participating toward winning one.

Seek prize donations

Otherwise, rewards will always come out of your net profit, one way or another. Look to your **Merchant Plan** for how to develop sources for extra prizes that really have value.

Fun Incentives

Offer a Cream Pie Attack party to all sellers reaching a certain level. Equip multiple tables with paper plates full of shaving cream to either attack each other or attack the coach, the youth minister, the troop leader, etc.

Use a wacky reward

Have key organizational figures promise to do something funny if the goal is met. Examples: The coach has to shave his head, the principal has to dance with the school mascot at the pep rally, all the second grade teachers will dress like

clowns on Friday, the youth minister will sing off key a chosen song. Ask your sellers for suggestions!

Thanks for listening

Consider offering a coupon sheet to everyone contacted by your participants as a way of saying “thanks for listening.”

Million dollar bill

Say thanks to your buyers by giving them a “million dollar bill.” Feature your organization on the front, say with a mascot picture in the center. List sponsors on the back. Offer a premium tie-in at local merchants. Have customers go inside to find out more (builds your value with merchant).

Summary

The proper use of an incentive program will definitely maximize your results. Plan well to motivate your participants, encourage repeat business, reward your volunteers, and build your support within the community.

If you want the best results, don't settle for less than the best incentive program. Get your sellers imagining themselves winning awards and collecting rewards. Now that's motivation!