

8 Steps To A Sale



1. Preplanning

This is probably the most crucial step in making a sale. Before you do anything, you need to organize yourself by knowing where you are going everyday, what you are going to sell and to whom you are going to sell. If you can wake up in the morning and know exactly where you are going and what you are going to sell, it makes your job and your life a whole lot easier.

a. Set up a schedule for an entire month-You don't need to have appointments for an entire month, just know roughly where you are going to be each day. See the 4 week schedule attached. Use each Monday morning to schedule firm appointments for that week as well as accounts you intend to prospect that are in the same general area as your firm appointments. Use a pencil on your schedule so you can erase and rearrange your schedule.

b. Where am I going to go?-There are a multitude of resources you can use to schedule appointments. For someone just starting out, I'd suggest the spending a day at the library with the Harris Directory (Harrisinfo.com) and the yellow pages. With those two resources you could not only schedule appointments at major manufacturers or target accounts in a given area, but also look up where the Highway Dept., Schools, Hotels, Hospitals, Nursing Homes etc are located near those manufacturers. After you've seen your appointment in Bucktush, VT, drop in at the Highway Dept, School etc. and do some prospecting. There are hundreds of other online resources as well as publications at the library that can help you find prospective customers. Make sure you stay in a given area for an entire day. Don't criss-cross the state as you'll waste precious time with too much "drive" time.

c. What am I going to sell?-It is critical that you walk into an account with a game plan. Do I have some giveaways to hand out to "warm up" the customer(s). What am I going to show this customer? Do I know how to present that product? Maybe I should practice in front of a mirror demonstrating that product, closing and dealing with objections. Do I have a promotion to present to the customer (because we all know that promoting is the key to success in this business)? What did I present to him last time? What did I sell him last time? Are there other departments in the same company my customer can refer me to? These questions should all have answers before you even walk in the door.

If you do a good job at preplanning, eventually you have to spend less time doing it because your schedule will fill up all by itself with steady repeat customers. The ultimate goal is to have a "milk route" of customers that you service every month. That's when this job becomes truly enjoyable and rewarding.

2. Warm-Up

There is no better way to optimize the chances for a sale than for both you and the customer to be relaxed. If you walk in all nervous and fumbling all over yourself, then customer will be nervous too and it's unlikely that you will make a sale. You've done so much work (via preplanning) to finally get in front of this customer, you need to create an atmosphere that will optimize your chances for making a sale. So first, **TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND RELAX.** As soon as you walk into the account, I strongly suggest you start handing out "giveaways" to everyone and anyone you see. I firmly believe that every person I see in a potential account (that realizes that I am a salesperson) is thinking the exact same thing. What is this guy/gal giving away for free? Once I understood that, life got a lot easier. You never know who can help you make the sale. Make eye contact with everyone, hand them a giveaway and make a joke about it. For example, if you are handing out peanuts say "Hi, I brought your lunch" or "Here's your paycheck for the week". If you are handing out pens say "Here, this pen is guaranteed never to run out of ink". "Really?" they will respond. You say, "If it does, give me a call and I'll get you another one." These are just a couple examples to help relax both you and the customer. Through this simple banter, you've basically made a friend for life believe it or not. Because I have given this person something, I truly feel I now have permission to ask him/her a favor. "Perhaps you could help me" you say to the person. "Do you know who is in charge of maintenance for your company?" "I sell things like cutting tools, maintenance chemicals and fasteners. Do you know who would use those?" Often times, I ask that person to bring me right to the person you should see. It's almost like a true referral because your new "friend" is taking you to your contact. Important: While you are walking to your main contact, continue to give away items to everyone you see. **YOU NEVER KNOW WHO CAN HELP YOU MAKE THE SALE!**

Note: I have found dealing with purchasing agents in generally a waste of time. If someone tries to refer you to a PA say that you'd prefer to deal directly with the maintenance people because you have some products that you'd like to demonstrate to them. Once in front of your main contact, you need to take at least five minutes to talk to this person about something that has absolutely nothing to do with Chromate and His/Her Company. This is when the skill of a salesperson shines through. You need to be extremely observant. If the person has pictures of his/her kids on the wall, start up a conversation about them. Ask a question about them. Relate a story about your kids. If he has pictures of fishing or Nascar or hunting or ballerinas, strike up a story about that subject. Relate to the customer on a human level. Let them realize that you are a real person just like he/she is. Get comfortable with the customer. Once you feel comfortable and you think the customer feels comfortable, ask this question. "Do you have a few minutes for me to show you a couple things?" Almost always, they will say yes. You should then ask, "Can we move out to the shop as I'd like to demonstrate a couple items that I think could save you time and money and they really need to be demonstrated in the shop". Almost always they will say yes again. You definitely want to avoid demonstrating in a lobby or conference room. Being in the shop allows you to observe their operation. Make mental notes on their operation. Ask questions about their operation. How are they currently storing their shop supplies? "Where do you currently buy things like drill bits, electrical connectors, chemicals and/or fasteners?" Ultimately we want to build the red wall, but we do it little by little starting with a drill bit demonstration, promoting and closing on the organizer.

3. Demonstration

This is the easy part. Just pick an item that you are familiar with. You don't need to be an expert on the item. Make sure you include as many people in the shop as possible (especially those people you gave a "giveaway" to). **JUST READ THE DEMO PAGE WORD FOR WORD.** When demonstrating drill bits, read the demo page word for word using a little bit of inflection to keep it interesting. I always read the line like it's a question. This gets the customer nodding in a positive manner. For example, instead of "This drill bit will cut up to 55 Rockwell C." I say, "This drill bit will cut up to 55 Rockwell C!" inflecting my voice up like a question. I do this on every sentence in the presentation.

After a while, the customer is nodding so much, he'll have to say yes when you close. Try to close on two products at once by introducing Tool Cool or Tool Lube during the demo. Say "Let's try drilling another hole and I want to try it using some of this product" Pre-close: While demonstrating something, do a pre-close to see what the customer is thinking. For example, once you've drilled something, ask, "How did that seem to cut?" or "What did you think of that?" If they respond positively, move on to the close.

4. Close (PROMOTE!) **(FOR COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTS ONLY!)**

Once the customer has responded fairly positively to your pre-close say something like.. "Great, Let me show you how they come" or "Let me show you what we're doing this month on these". This is where you need to introduce promoting as part of your presentation. I would present a promotion everytime I close on something. It doesn't necessarily have to be a promotional item. It could be free chromate bins or one package free or even the breakage guarantee on the drill bits. With the drill demo, we typically close by saying "We are offering a drill cabinet which gives you one central location for all your drills, if you break any bits, put them back in the drawer and I will replace them next time I come in. Plus we are throwing in 6 cans of that Tool Cool that I think you liked (nodding) and you get one of these nice Schrade, lock-back knives for you to use in the shop". Put the knife in the customer's hand and point to the promotion price in the book and say "And this is what we're doing on that whole package this month...(Here comes the close) Say," Does that sound like something you could use?" THEN SHUT UP. Do not talk. Let the customer be the next one to talk. It could seem like an eternity to you, but don't talk. If he says yes, you say "Great, let me show you what else we're doing this month" while you jot the part number of the promotion onto your order pad. If they say, "That's a little more than I can spend", you could say "Can I get you to try a few sizes, say 1/8", 3/16" & 1/4" and I'll throw in the cabinet at no charge. Then each month we can get a few sizes more until it is filled up. (Close) Does that sound better to you?" This whole process at least lets you know a couple things. It lets you know if this customer has the ability as well as the "balls" to say yes. It also lets you know what their spending limits may or may not be. It also lets you know if the customer likes to "take" the promotional items. Some of my best customers are the ones who like the promotions more than anything.

5. Build the order

As mentioned above, after the customer says yes to your first demo, the first thing out of your mouth should be "Great, let me show what else we're doing this month". You then want to move on to the next item you planned to show them. Pull that item out and repeat steps 3 & 4 above (including more promoting). Continue until either the customer says something like, why don't we take a look at that next month or I can only spend X amount each month.

6. Referral

One of the best and easiest ways to get new customers is through referrals. The customer you just sold something to did so because he/she liked you and/or your products and would most likely be willing to refer you to someone else as well. In big companies, there are often many other departments that would use your products as well. Ask the customer, "Do you know anyone else in XYZ company or elsewhere that would use the type products I sell"? If he says yes, ask him to give him a call right then and there on your behalf. You'd be amazed how well this works. Often times you can write two or more orders right in the same account just from the one appointment you made. If you do make a sale based on the original customer's referral, make sure to thank him/her by giving them something nice. For that matter, always thank your customers by saying something like "Thanks for all you do for me, Bill! It really means a lot to me". That really goes a long way.

7. Set up future call

Always let the customer know you intend on seeing him/her again in the near future. Ask them how often would be appropriate to see them. "Would you like me to come by once a month or would every two weeks be better for you?" "Is the second week of the month good for you all the time?" Now you can fill in your 4 - week planner such that XYZ company is expecting you the second week of every month. Soon you'll have a whole month full of customers waiting and expecting to see you.

8. Post call review

One of the most important things to do once you leave an account is to sit in your car and think about what you did right and what you did wrong. What did I do right that helped me get that sale? Lock that info into your brain. What did I do wrong that killed that sale? Also, lock that into your brain. This is the only way you can hone your skills. Ask yourself:

1. Did I warm-up everyone?
2. Did I close and then SHUT UP?
3. Did I promote?
4. Could I have built the order bigger?
5. Did I ask for a referral?
6. Did I set up for a future call?

Last piece of advice!!!

Do business on your terms! Don't ever let the customer control the situation. You should be in charge. This is your "Dog & Pony" show. Don't ever let the subject turn to price. Whenever a customer asks me how much something is, I respond by saying, "I don't know, but whatever it is, it's worth it". The customer usually laughs at this and drops the subject because frankly I don't think he/she truly cares about the price. They just want to know that they are getting a good value. I can safely say that with the quality and service level that I provide my customers; they are truly getting a good value no matter what the price. The sooner you believe that, the better off you'll be and the more money you will make. If your customer is insistent on knowing prices and constantly beating you down on price, maybe it's time to move onto another account that will do business with you on your terms! Believe it or not, there are plenty of accounts out there that will do business with you on your terms. You just have to get out there and find them. You'll have to gain and lose a lot of crappy accounts that won't do business on your terms until you find just those few that will do business with you on your terms! Those are the best customers to have. It's a numbers game and if you stay focused and follow the above eight steps to a sale religiously, you will succeed! I have used them from day one and I have been among the top 20 sales agents at Chromate for the past 10 years. You could be too!

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quality products make all the difference!***



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