Fuel For Sales

ART OF SELLING | PARTICIPANT'S HANDOUT

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The Process of Buying and Selling

On your way back to home, you receive a call from your mother to get 'mangoes' from the market. The market has received supplies of absolutely fresh varieties of the ripe, fleshy and juicy fruit and your family is just not willing to give it a miss. They need mangoes at home.

You get to the market and start looking for the best of the fruit, which is available in plenty, with the fruit vendors who are offering the fruit at different prices, depending on the supply of the fruit or stock with them, the quality of the fruit, the anticipated demand for any specific variety and the popularity etc. You have an option to evaluate the mangoes depending on the willingness to buy and the ability to pay for it.

The vendor engages in a conversation with you trying to justify the price for a specific variety and if both of you agree to a common price, you end up buying and the vendor ends up selling the mango.

But, if there is a disagreement between the two of you with respect to either the price or the quality etc, both of you get into justifying your own point of view, where the vendor offers you options beyond your preferred variety, by eliminating doubts on the quality of the next best alternative and both of you reach a point of agreement to end up on a transaction by deciding on either your preferred variety or the option offered to you by the vendor on the next best alternative at an agreed upon price.

What has been happening in this entire episode of your interaction with the fruit vendor?

Now, an interesting question, what made you to decide on a particular fruit vendor from among dozens of others? It could be the location of his fruit stall, the abundance of variety of the mangoes, the display of mangoes, the unique way of the vendor's approach to draw and attract your attention to him and his fruit stall.

All that the fruit vendor did, before drawing your attention, was to do his homework properly as a part of offering the mangoes on sale. It could be the cleanliness of the stall, making the fruits visible through display, ensuring the freshness of the fruits through merchandising, putting up price tags on each and every variety that was on offer etc.

While he was developing the need for the mango, you were 'eliminating doubts' on the basis of the 'proposed solutions' offered by the fruit vendor. Once, both of you arrived at a mutually agreed and accepted upon point of the 'decision making' which could be the price, quantity, quality etc you decided to buy and he 'closed' the sales.

This transaction between the 'buyer' in you and the 'seller' in the fruit vendor, against a commercial consideration is called 'SALES'. Be it buying 'mangoes' or vegetables, motorcycles or cellular phones, televisions or invertors each and every thing that has a need to be either used or consumed by you is governed by this logical sequence of steps followed by us, either as a buyer or a seller to arrive at a transaction, against a monetary consideration to conclude and qualify the transaction, called or known as a 'SALE'.

As a buyer you got engaged with the fruit vendor into a logical and step by step process of deciding on a particular variety of a mango. Firstly, there was this 'need' which was communicated to you by your mother.

Once the 'need' was established, you started 'evaluating options' to fulfil the need by getting into a conversation with the fruit vendor who first drew your attention to him and his mangoes from among other vendors in the same market by further 'developing' the need by talking about the freshness, the fruit being juicy, about the fruit's sweetness, quality, price etc.

So, let's look at the logical sequence or the step-by-step process involving the 'buying' and 'selling' as a process.

The Buying process involves the following:

a) Identification of a 'need' for a product. (Goods or services)
b) Evaluation of options.
c) Elimination of doubts.
d) Decision making.

The Selling process involves the following:

a) Pre-sales preparation
b) Opening a sales call.
c) Developing needs.
d) Proposing solutions.
e) Eliminating doubts.
f) Closing.
g) After sales, service.

A thorough understanding of the buying and selling process will help us in drawing a methodical approach to 'selling'. As a 'seller' of goods and services, we have to understand that a 'buyer' is led to his/her decision making when we get to draw his/her 'consideration' to make him/her aware of the product and then go on to create an 'aspiration' for the product and lastly, end up with a sense of 'accomplishment' or 'achievement' for the buyer on his/her having decided to buy the product.

To create the consideration, aspiration and the accomplishment for the buyer, we will have to go through the selling process which will appeal to these three different features of 'buying'.

And, this involves the 'seller' in us to first identify a potential buyer for the product by meeting his buying criteria and helping him/her move towards the state of aspiration from the state of consideration by revealing and exhibiting the features and benefits of the product to finally lead him/her to a sense of accomplishment or achievement by seeking approval for the product after having addressed doubts, if any, on his/her arriving at the decision making and thereby concluding the transaction.

Having gone through the buying and selling as a process, could you name a career or profession which do not come under the purview of Sales?

Sales Planning

A plan containing an assessment of current sales for a product/service in a given region or market, a statement of sales objectives, strategies for achieving the stated sales objectives, and resources available for achieving this goal is known as a sales plan. A sales plan may also assign particular sales representatives or other staff to particular roles or territories, and may include a breakdown of who will focus improving sales for which product. A sales plan is a crucial tool for all salespeople. Your company may have a sales plan in place, and if so, you should definitely make a point of learning and following it. But if you don't have an individual sales plan as well, you're missing an opportunity to succeed.

A sales plan will cover two major components: sales strategies and sales tactics. Strategies and tactics are military terms used to describe a war plan. Strategy is about the war itself: what the leaders want to accomplish, and which battles they choose to fight. Tactics determines how an individual battle is fought. So in business terms, a strategy might be to let the people in your community know about your company, while the associated tactics might include attending chamber of commerce meetings, putting an ad in the local paper, setting up an event at your place of business, going door to door, etc.

Sales plans break down further into new business growth strategies and tactics, and existing business growth strategies and tactics (e.g. selling additional products to people who are already customers). These four components provide a framework for your sales plan, and it's important to include all of them. However, it's up to you to prioritize these components in a way that makes sense to you. If you've already hit up your existing customers recently, you'll probably want to focus on acquiring new ones. If you've just launched a new product that dovetails with an existing product, then your sales plan should take this into account and focus on selling it to current customers.

Before you create your sales plan, you must be intimately familiar with three things: your sales quota, your sales territory, and your line of products and services. Understanding your sales quota helps you to build a plan that will make your manager happy, and will also enable you to design a plan that will maximize your commissions – which will make YOU happy. Knowing your territory keeps you from stepping on your fellow salespeople's toes. And knowing your products and services helps you to define your prospect requirements, which in turn gives you a realistic view of how and how much you can sell.

Even the best sales plan will need regular revising. Changes to your quota, your product line, your existing customer base, your industry – even economic ups and downs can call for an adjustment to your sales plan. At the very least, you should review your plan quarterly and decide if you need to make any changes. Consider the sales plan a living document, not something set in stone.

If you have trouble deciding on your sales strategies and tactics, your line manager is a terrific resource. He will usually have a better grasp of company-wide sales goals and will be able to help you tailor your sales plan to meet these goals, while also making the most of your unique opportunities. The other members of your sales team can also help. Do not hesitate to ask your star salespeople what they include in their sales plans, and use these strategies as a jumping-off point to develop your own.

We do not plan to fail but in most of the cases, we fail to Plan.

Sales Process

Selling is a process with distinct steps that should be followed in order to achieve success. The steps include prospecting, preparation, approach, presentation, handling objections, closing and follow-up. A sales cycle is the series of predictable phases required to sell a product or a service. Sales cycles can vary greatly among organizations, products and services, and no one sale will be exactly the same.

You can get by if you're weak in one of these areas but you'll never achieve your real potential as a salesperson.

The seven steps include prospecting, setting the appointment, qualifying, making your presentation, handling objections, closing and getting referrals.

The selling process is the series of steps followed by a salesperson while selling a product.

The 7 Steps of the Sales Process

Product Knowledge, prospecting, approach, needs assessment, presentation, close and the follow-up.

<u>The 7 Steps of the Sales Process</u>

1. Product Knowledge

This step is fairly straight forward, but it is also the great undoing of many a sales person. When one is extremely well versed in a particular product especially a technical one as banking and third party products like mutual fund and insurance, it is easy to get caught up in a monologue of all the great features it provides.

The sales person is so eager to explain how the product works or why it’s unique that the benefits to the customer are left out of the discussion. Never assume that a prospect will easily link a feature to a benefit.

The acquiring of product knowledge is less about the features of the product itself, and more about how the customer will benefit from those features. When discussing product, the mantra should be; “So what?” Consider those two words to be what the prospect thinks every time a feature is mentioned, and re-learn your product from that perspective.

2. Prospecting

Prospecting, just as the word implies, is about searching for new customers. Like product knowledge, this step may seem fairly straight forward but upon closer examination it becomes more complex. The key to prospecting effectively is about knowing where to dig and what to look for. It's also important to distinguish between a lead, a prospect, and a qualified prospect.

The most important element in this step is to create a profile of existing customers. In the broadest sense, prospecting is an ongoing process that everyone in the company (particularly the sales force) should be involved in. This simply means everyone should have their "prospecting radar" up when they are out and about in the world. Very often, a great lead turned customer was first discovered after being heard or seen in the news at a party, or event, etc.

3. The Approach

This is where the ***rubber meets the road*** in the sales process.

For our present purposes let's consider the approach in the context of a sales call rather than lead generation (i.e. the difference between a mass mailing and a telephone call). This is the step where you begin to build a relationship and the intelligence gathering continues (it started with prospecting).

A good approach is crucial to sales success because it will either identify you as a bothersome salesperson to cause a prospect's guard to go up, or it will identify you as an obliging salesperson with something of value to offer.

What would be a good approach for each of the above follow up actions? Think about eliciting information and advancing the sale (closing, step 6).

What would be a good approach for a cold call?

4. The Needs Assessment

This is arguably the most important step of the sales process because it allows you to determine how you can truly be of service. To be a highly effective salesperson, that is to sell to the prospect's needs, you first have to understand what those needs are.

This means you must think in terms of solving a prospects problem. The only way to do that is by asking lots of questions. Does a health practitioner prescribe remedies before a thorough exam? Asking good questions will not only help you determine what will best suit the prospects needs, but it builds confidence, trust, and will very often help the prospect consider issues they may never have thought of.

This last point is powerful because it provides an opportunity to showcase features, which the prospects answers led you to. What questions would you ask to illustrate how your product is different/better than a competitor's? Although intelligence gathering occurs throughout the sales process, it is at step four where it happens in earnest.

What other information would be important to gather at this stage?

5. The Presentation

Remember the discussion in step one, focus on benefits rather than features? If you consider your product/service in terms of how it benefits the customer, your presentation will be a focused and relevant dialogue rather than a self aggrandizing monologue.

Nothing is worse than a sales presentation which proceeds from the seller's perspective. This is why the needs assessment is so important and why it will ideally flow in and out of this step. A good needs assessment allows you to tailor your presentation to your audience, and keep it interactive.

6. The Close

Eighty percent of sales are lost because a salesperson fails to close. Closing is about advancing the sales process to ultimately get an order. What you are trying to sell at each stage may be different.

In a later stage you might need to meet with a committee, in that case what you are selling is a meeting. Seeing the sale process in this light takes a little pressure off of each encounter and makes things a bit more manageable. But don't be lulled into complacency, you must ultimately ask for the order and no sales conversation should ever end without an agreement to some next step.

Do not be satisfied with "we'll get back to you", where is the agreement in that? What could you say in response to such a remark in order to advance the sale?

In large part, closing is about discovering obstacles. Have you heard these before: "I'll need to think about it.", "It's too expensive.", "Let me run it buy some other people." "Sounds good but I've already got one."

What could you say to overcome these objections?

There are lots of ways to close. Actually, closing a sale has become a science unto itself. Books have been written on this topic alone.

But there is one elemental truth – if you don't ask you don't get.

Don't forget to ask for the referral.

7. Follow-up

Good follow up will double your closing ratio. When a sales person makes contact with a prospect a relationship has been built, and follow up is how it is nurtured. Staying at the forefront of a prospect's mind requires persistence and should not be confused with being bothersome. This is why it's important to get agreement on some next step each time there is contact. Follow up therefore should never end.

The pace may slow but it will never end. When a sale is made, then a new type of follow up begins.

Follow up conversations are best handled by the salesperson who started the relationship. Who else can better gauge a prospect's "willingness to buy", or pick up where "we last left off". This means that detailed notes must be kept on each prospect with particular emphasis on their "state of mind". It is unwise and ineffective to keep track of this information anywhere other than a centralized database.

Additional note: It's important to hold some follow up ammunition in reserve. Overwhelming your prospects with every piece of information you possess on their first request hampers your ability to stay in touch. Having a stable of collateral materials gives you reason to follow up.

During the course of s sales presentation, the prospect intentionally passes through five distinct stages. The four main stages are Attention, Interest, Desire and Action, Satisfaction being the fifth one. Propagates of this theory emphasise that the sales person should focus on designing his presentation in a manner that it envelopes all these stages of the selling process. The various stages are:

AIDA MODEL

A: Attention: The main job of the salesperson is to attract the prospect towards his presentation. This should be done before the details of the product are explained to the prospect. A successful attempt in this direction ensures that the prospect has a receptive approach towards the following presentation. The need to secure attention is very important.

The prospect is always engaged in something or the other that could be a part of his daily routine. His mind is also preoccupied there and may not focus on the product or its presentation by the salesperson. The attention of the prospect can be drawn by beginning a conversation that may be of interest to the prospect.

Often few words of praise about the taste, preference or decision making skills of the prospect make him ring his focus towards the salesperson. A complete detachment from what he is engaged in and involve in the sales presentation is half the battle won by the salesperson.

I: Interest: Only gaining the attention is not enough. Though it a well start the next step is to maintain interest throughout the presentation. The salesperson must strive towards ensuring that the prospect is glued towards the entire selling process without any distractions.

This is possible when the sales person has done enough homework about the prospect and has prepared in his presentation keeping in mind the likings of the prospect.

D: Desire: Inkling desire in the mind of the prospect is the third crucial step in the selling process. It is the initial phase of getting the customer ready to purchase the product. Highlighting the benefits of the product to the prospect aligned with the motivators of the prospect help in quicker decision making.

This stage is not as simple as it sounds and there may be resistance from the prospect in this direction. The salespersons should be well prepared to handle this resistance that may come out in the form of questions and queries by the potential customer.

A: Action: In this stage there is a gentle and subtle push by the salesperson to the prospect towards taking the decision. When there is a positive response by the customer the deal is closed successfully. However a smooth transition through this stage requires the salesperson to be skilful.

Personal Selling based on Personality Traits

Personal selling is where businesses use people (the "sales force") to sell the product after meeting face-to-face with the customer. The sellers promote the product through their attitude, appearance and specialist product knowledge. They aim to inform and encourage the customer to buy, or at least trial the product.

The dismay and the dejection at the face of an inability to convert a prospect to a client gets written at large in a financial services' products advisor's face, which takes a toll on the entire day.

Much to the chagrin of the professional, peddling the most important product for the sustenance of the present living standards at a future cost becomes a disdainful affair. The reasons subscribed to the failure of 'prospect-to-client- conversion' gets aligned to the market dynamics of interest rates, lack of direction in equity markets, macro fundamentals, investment indiscipline, lack of knowledge or for that matter disagreement to a payback for a service made availed etc.

What gets ignored is the involvement of a 'human factor' in the entire transaction between the investor and the advisor. Now, why do I call this a transaction? The very fact that we tend to disassociate the 'human factor' between the two parties involved in the act of identifying the need and making avail of the product or service to suit the need; makes us ascertain that a 'transaction' has not taken place. On the contrary, a far bigger transaction is veiled in the entire act, which if, is accepted and re-worked upon, will effect and contrive the desired state of the transaction.

I am a great admirer of the mechanics involved in the inter-personal skills, especially of the acts and the intellect behind the success of the masters in the financial advisory services. These are the ones who have risen in eminence not merely by managing the assets and counts of their investors but by managing the investor. Has it ever occurred to you, that your first encounter with a prospect, who subsequently became a client, was less on the grounds of your profound knowledge, academic credentials and professional pedigree and more on the basis of how you handled him and his expectations?

It's only on having acquired your maiden account or a client that the knowledge, education and the professional edge became important to reinforce your credential to build up the asset size and the count. So, why do we fail to identify a new situation,

either with an existing client or a prospect is a great opportunity to go back to Day One, where we had
exercised a measured approach to establish the connect between two people and not between one person and one solution (product).

It is because we get mechanically conditioned to apply the same success technique with different people and then start questioning the macro fundamentals and the market dynamics as a measure of our inability. The art of creating connect between you and your client or a prospect is not about re-inventing the fire but applying one simple thumb rule, “different strokes for different folks”.

Each one of us are endowed with certain natural traits which gradually gets influenced and shaped by the environment around, that leads to forming our distinct behaviours, conduct, perceptions and interpretations. A careful observation of the people around us helps us appreciate that each one of us are unique by demonstrating a prominent trait or a blend of more than one which can be bucketed as (B.E.S.T) follows:

a) Bold - These are the people who do not beat around the bush when it comes to airing their opinion or input either on a person or an event as they are direct. These people are demanding when it comes to tasks and expectations as they themselves are doers and drivers of what they believe and decide. They come across as extremely confident of themselves.

Suggested ways of handling and managing someone who demonstrates these traits:

Be polite, specific, and clear in your communication.

Let him feel he had a role to play in the decision.

b) Enthusiastic- These people are the easiest to note as they are the life of any circles that they are by being talkative to attract attention to themselves and their views, rarely would they let go of an opportunity to grace social occasions as they are extremely social. They would at times, go to extent of unsolicited assistance and emotional support and land up being incorrectly adjudged as interfering. These people are very fun loving and infuse energy by being enthusiastic to a cause and a concern.

Suggested ways of handling and managing someone who demonstrates these traits:
Be business-like and professional.
Be brief and to the point.
Discuss specific deliverables and the time lines to be adhered to.

c) Steady – The most sought after for they are extremely forthcoming, sincere and loyal. They have a remarkable quality of being a very good listener by extending and offering their time, careful views and opinions.

One look at them revels that they have pronounced harmony in life and at work. These people do not jump guns, conclusions and queues and instead take a careful note of situations around and the context to act and to arrive at their perspectives.

Suggested ways of handling and managing someone who demonstrates these traits:

Ask and encourage him to share his views.

Appreciate his patronage and support.

Establish clear directions with deadlines.

Don't be overbearing on him, allow him to be his natural self.

d) Technical – When it comes to exercising reverence to facts and figures and cautious guard to ignorance, it is important to recognise this breed as they have an uncanny eye for detail.

These people are quality conscious and come across as a good listener with their ear and eyes for facts and figures. You will find these people looking for evidence before arriving at a conclusion or for that matter arriving at any opinion.

Suggested ways of handling and managing someone who demonstrates these traits:

Be specific in your communication.

Furnish figures and evidence as possible to your claims.

Share with him the agenda for the meeting and the time with clear objectives and the deadlines.

Let him decide on his own; don't attempt to influence his decision.

The suggestions are indicative in nature and to demonstrate proficiency, it is important to meet and observe people, take genuine interest in understanding their traits and apply the thumb rule of ‘different strokes for different folks’.

The only caution that I would request you to exercise is to accept the fact that as prudent sales and marketing resource from Union Bank of India is not to let the outcome of one interaction decide your intent of relentlessly pursuing the quest for knowing people.

Transaction is human and takes place between two people while the successful outcome of the transaction qualifies as business.

Understand the BEST type.

They are quite simple and thus easy to use. Then play to the person's preferences and overall type.

With **Bold** people

- Build respect to avoid conflict
- Focus on facts and ideas rather than the people
- Have evidence to support your argument
- Be quick, focused, and to the point
- Ask what not how
- Talk about how problems will hinder accomplishments
- Show them how they can succeed

With **Enthusiastic** people

- Be social and friendly with them, building the relationship
- Listen to them talk about their ideas
- Help them find ways to translate the talk into useful action

- Don’t spend much time on the details
- Motivate them to follow through to complete tasks
- Recognize their accomplishments

With **Steady** people

- Be genuinely interest in them as a person
- Create a human working environment for them
- Give them time to adjust to change
- Clearly define goals for them and provide ongoing support
- Recognize and appreciate their achievements
- Avoid hurry and pressure
- Present new ideas carefully

With **Technical** people

- Warn them in time and generally avoid surprises
- Be prepared. Don't ad-lib with them if you can
- Be logical, accurate and use clear data
- Show how things fit into the bigger picture
- Be specific in disagreement and focus on the facts
- Be patient, persistent and diplomatic

SPIN SELLING

SPIN Model

It consists of a set of ideas how to sell successfully in large sales, based on the most extensive research ever carried out. More than 90% of Fortune 500 Companies use it to train their sales force. Mr.Neil Rackham is the creator of this model, and his book is called 'SPIN Selling'. Most of the large account selling is done using the SPIN Method.

Origin of the SPIN Model

It is based on massive research conducted on over 35000 sales calls. The research set out to answer a question which was troubling most sales heads. Initial companies were Xerox and IBM.

Based on the findings, a new model was developed, called SPIN.

Basic Findings

In successful sales calls, who does most of the talking?

Buyer?

Seller?

In successful sales, the buyer does most of the talking.

You get the buyer to talk by asking questions.

It wasn't any questions, but questions asked in a sequence.

Situation Questions

Questions of this type ask about facts.

Exploring the buyers present situation.

You can't sell without them.

Who benefits most from these questions? –

Buyer or Seller?

The more SQ in a call, the less likelihood of success.

Most people ask a lot more SQ than they should.

Ask SQs economically.

Problem Questions

The other 3 types of questions are extremely powerful, and are the foundation of the SPIN Method.

These are about the clients present state, dissatisfaction, difficulties and problems.

E.g.

How satisfied are you with the present system?

What prevents you from achieving that objective? Etc…

Most experienced sales people ask more Problem Questions than inexperienced ones.

Problem Questions

Why is the level of PQ higher in successful calls?

Because products and services, from cosmetics to banks, all sell because they solve problems for buyers.

A product or a service is a solution to a buyers problems.

Even if products at first sight don’t look to solve problems, they always do, if you look closely.

Implication Questions

These are the most powerful of all the questions.

SPIN Research pointed out that top sales people introduced products, services or solutions very late in the discussion.

This was true across all industries.

The question is: *Why do you think this is the case?*

Inexperienced people do not link problem and solution.

Questions about effects or consequences of a Buyers problem is called IQ.

Implication Questions

They are powerful because they help the buyer see that the problem is big enough to justify the cost.

E.g.

Could that lead to an increase in your cost?

IQs are powerful because they induce and build pain.

They build the consequences of a buyers problem and make him more anxious.

They build pain before any gain, because…

Need Pay Off Questions

This asks about Value or Usefulness about a solution.

E.g.

What if we could help you save cost by 20%?

They focus on solutions.

Mirror images of IQ.

They get the buyer to list the benefits of your solution.

E.g.

Our faster system will help you reduce present production bottle-necks.

How would a faster system help you?

Putting SPIN to Work

Implied Need

A clear statement of a buyers problem, dissatisfaction or difficulty with the current situation

Explicit Need

A clear statement of a buyer’s want, desire or intention to act

Needs & Sales Success

A need is any statement a buyer makes that expresses concern or a want

There are 2 types:

Implied

Explicit

According to SPIN research, successful sellers uncovered exactly the same number of implied needs as unsuccessful sellers

But, successful sellers uncovered twice as many explicit needs as unsuccessful sellers

Needs & Sales Success

In large sales, effectively developing Explicit Needs is the key to success

Uncovering, understanding and developing Buyer’s Implied Needs are the raw materials which can be converted to Explicit Needs later on

E.g.

I am unhappy about service delays

Breakdowns are a problem

I want faster response time

I need 99% reliability

EXPLORING SPIN

Exploring SPIN

SITUATION QUESTIONS:

One way of using Situation Questions effectively is identifying high risk and low risk areas

Exploring SPIN

PROBLEM QUESTIONS

People buy only if they have needs

Needs start with a problem or a dissatisfaction

PQs are asked to reveal buyers

Implied Needs

Clarify Difficulties

Gain Understanding of Buyer Problems

Identify Pain

E.g.

Where, when, how often, what happens if, etc.

Exploring SPIN

A good way to start planning Problem Questions is by thinking about the problems that our product or service can solve for the buyer

Exploring SPIN

IMPLICATION QUESTIONS

Their purpose is to develop clarity and strength of Buyer’s problem by:

Focusing on consequences of the problem

Extending and expanding the effects

Linking a problem to other problems

Exploring SPIN

IMPLICATION QUESTIONS

The purpose of implication questions is to develop Implied needs so that they become Explicit.

Ask Implication Questions as much to UNDERSTAND as to PERSUADE.

Exploring SPIN

NEED PAY OFF QUESTIONS

The purpose is to develop buyer's desire by:

Focusing on the Pay Off of the Solution

Probing for Explicit Needs

Getting the Buyer to tell you the benefits

Exploring SPIN

NEED PAY OFF QUESTIONS

The ICE model

Identify

Clarify

Extend

ICE Model

Strength of product or service

Finally

"You never persuade clients of anything. Clients persuade themselves. You have to feel their problems just the way they feel them. You have to sit on their side and look at issues from their point of view."

It would be hard to find a better description of the SPIN model in action.

7 Steps to Effective Inter-personal skills that Gets Result

Communication is everything in business and in all of our relationships.

Honestly, how else would people communicate? In order to enjoy an agreeable business and personal discussion, the communication level has to be excellent. How does one communicate effectively?

Simply put, say what you mean, say it clearly, and say it with respect.

Step 1: Establish Trust

Some people naturally distrust other people, because they do not know what the other one is thinking. Therefore, the sooner that you come out and say what you want, the sooner you can begin establishing trust. If you sense that someone is especially apprehensive, then you could go try and reassure him or her that you are not a threat. As you can guess, this doesn't always work, so don't waste time trying to change someone's mind.

Instead, continue being cordial and ethical and hope that your professionalism and consistency eventually wins them over – assuming you want to win them over.

Step 2: Speak Clearly and Concisely

Speaking clearly can sometimes be a problem since not everyone actually takes the time to improve in diction or word usage. For the best results try practising speaking in front of a mirror and recording yourself for playback.

Step 3: Recognize Problems in Communication

What are some of the most common barriers in effective communication? For starters, there is language, or word usage. One cannot always assume that what sounds benevolent to you would strike others the same way. People can easily misinterpret or even distort a statement’s original meaning.

It is wise to avoid saying anything questionable that might confuse a listener, or inadvertently provoke a negative reaction.

Step 4: Learn How to Use Tone and Body Language

Together in trying to improve your own communication, beware of a defensive posture or negative voice inflection. Once a person goes on the defensive, the conversation tends to spiral into oblivion. Make sure that you use a friendly and welcoming posture, with open arms and a smile.

If you sense yourself taking on defensive gestures or even resorting to a defensive tone (perhaps provoked by the other person) then eliminate those telling signs. Don’t let emotion overpower good judgment. In fact, the misreading of body language and tone of voice is one of the most common problems in the breakdown of communication.

Even if you are saying something agreeable, if you show physical signs to the contrary, your message and your honesty will come under suspicion. Remember that negative and positive body language comes across in any language and in any circumstances.

Step 5: Never Assume Anything

Assumptions are another common problem, whether they are self-fulfilled assumptions or merely assuming that others see things in the exact same way that you do. Never assume—the fact of the matter is that most people do not see things they way that you do, nor do they have the same feelings as you do. The less you assume the better. This falls under the category of making sure that your communication is always clear.

Step 6: Recognize Communication Issues Caused by Technology

With the advent of new technologies also come new technology-related barriers in communication. Sometimes messages can be misunderstood because of cell phone static. Additionally, when communicating by phone it is common for people to use selective hearing (hearing what they want to hear), which can add to the problem.

Other technology based communication problems might result from lost phone messages or ambiguous email messages. Lastly, remember that this form of impersonal communication usually doesn't allow for non-verbal clues.

Step 7: Learn How to Talk Business

If you are trying to get someone to open up then try using open-ended questions rather than yes or no interrogations. When reviewing your own tactful manner analyze how you approach people. Do you bully them with close-ended questions or do you ask them in a positive manner how the both of you can make necessary changes to get a project, for example, moving more efficiently?

The more effective you can be with your communication the more successful you will be – personally and professionally.

Some Tips to Spruce up Good Interpersonal Communication Skills

1. Listen first. Communication is a two-way process; getting your message across depends on understanding the other person.

2. Be interested in the people you are communicating with. Remember people are more attracted to those who are interested in them, and will pay more attention to what they are saying.

3. Be relaxed. Bad body language such as hunched shoulders, fidgeting, toe-tapping or hair-twiddling all gives the game away.

4. Smile and use eye contact. It's the most positive signal you can give.

5. Ask questions. It's a great way to show people that you are really interested in them.

6. If the other person has a different point of view to yourself find out more about why they have that point of view. The more you understand the reasons behind

their thinking the more you can understand their point of view or help them to better understand your point of view.

7 Be assertive. Try to value their input as much as your own. Don’t be pushy and don’t be a pushover. Try for the right balance.

8 When you are speaking try to be enthusiastic when appropriate. Use your voice and body language to emphasize this.

9 Learn from your interactions. If you had a really good conversation with someone try and think why it went well and remembers the key points for next time. If it didn’t go so well - again try and learn something from it.

Conclusion: No matter your job or your workplace, dealing with people effectively is a must for success. Dealing with everyday people successfully will make work more fun and inspiring. Dealing with people is both a joy and a challenge. But, dealing with people successfully is the most significant factor determining whether you will have the impact and influence you need to accomplish your mission at work.

By increasing your repertoire of interpersonal communication skills, you can increase your overall effectiveness and perhaps your job satisfaction.