

TURN MORE PROSPECTS INTO CLIENTS!

73 salesdoctor_uk/_us advices to increase
your conversion rate.



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ISBN/EAN 9789081804011

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Foreword

It was at the early age of fifteen that I started my then part-time career as speaker, salesman and entertainer at van Linschoten's Bakery in the De Hoogstraat in Rotterdam. At the time I had no idea that from then on the sales profession would mark my life. Now, forty years later I share my experience and knowledge with tens of thousands of people around the world. All in the hope of them learning from me and of them further developing the sales profession. Not all this knowledge is my own. Training and instruction by teachers, experts in their field and scientists have helped me become who I am and know what I know. In those forty years I educated and improved myself at well-established, renowned institutes and many lesser-known, yet equally fine organisations.

What I am about to share with you is original and authentic. For what I give is the sum of all my learning and forty years of sales experience. This knowledge has led to daily sales(t)wits on Twitter and among other things this ebook. With the intention to inspire people and to point them in the right direction. Many of my own pitfalls are discussed there so you don't make the same mistakes. My advice isn't merely theoretical, but proven in real life and ready to apply. Anyone who has ever learned from or worked in the sales profession will surely recognize the advice given.

The 73 sales(t)wits in this ebook are about the conversion of prospects into clients. Each one with an explanation or example. The ebook does not claim to be complete, but I am certain that if you put my tips to use, you will turn more prospects into clients.

Do not hesitate to debate with me or to send me additional remarks. Just email me at salesdoctor I also am still young enough to learn. Actually I learn from other people's remarks every day.

I wish you much pleasure in reading this ebook and lots of success afterwards in converting old and new prospects into new clients!

salesdoctor_uk/us



Rein Aantjes

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Making a selection

- ⁽⁰¹⁾ A new year starts with a new budget. The perfect moment for looking up old prospects that bailed out before.
- ⁽⁰²⁾ In 4 weeks time you'll visit more prospects, who also have more time for you, by keeping regional holiday periods in mind.
- ⁽⁰³⁾ You can still visit prospects with a big ego if you're a dominant salesperson, as long as your ego isn't bigger than theirs.

Collecting information

- ⁽⁰⁴⁾ On your way to a sales talk? Look at your prospect's vision of the future rather than at what he's busy doing now.
- ⁽⁰⁵⁾ You can come across dangerous competitors anywhere. Especially where you're looking for new prospects.
- ⁽⁰⁶⁾ There's no reason at all to be nervous or insecure if you're prepared for talks with prospects or clients.
- ⁽⁰⁷⁾ The more you know about your prospect's trade, the more likely he'll buy from you. Professional knowledge creates bonds.

Making an appointment

- ⁽⁰⁸⁾ When a prospect says he's not interested, that's most probably due to the fact you weren't able to interest him.
- ⁽⁰⁹⁾ Only when you offer something extra will a prospect be interested in you. What you actually deliver is less important.
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ Errors in name or address in the letters you send will tell your clients and prospects what you think of them.
- ⁽¹¹⁾ Maybe data suppliers and telecom providers are warmed by cold calling, callers and prospects certainly aren't anymore.
- ⁽¹²⁾ Your chances of success are 5 times higher with prospects that speak to you directly than those who'll phone you back later.
- ⁽¹³⁾ A preprogrammed sales talk lacks respect and won't stand a chance as all your prospects and

contacts are different and unique.

- ⁽¹⁴⁾ You won't sell anything when your prospect has no time. So meet at the right moment and create a relaxed atmosphere.
- ⁽¹⁵⁾ Don't talk about your product when arranging a meeting with your prospect, but show him the profit you're going to make him.
- ⁽¹⁶⁾ As your clients and prospects are limited in time and they don't need to be flexible, they determine your time schedule.
- ⁽¹⁷⁾ If your prospect knew exactly what he wanted, he wouldn't have needed you to advise him and would have ordered via the website.
- ⁽¹⁸⁾ Regularly use your prospect's name and the name of his firm in your sales talk. That way he'll know you're talking about him.

Preparing conversation

- ⁽¹⁹⁾ Knowledge lies at the basis of your success. Knowledge of your clients, prospects and their sector, AND of your firm, yourself.
- ⁽²⁰⁾ Acquaint yourself with your prospect group's purchase criteria. It'll come in handy if your first meeting turns out to be brief.
- ⁽²¹⁾ When typifying prospects and clients or categorizing them with colours, make sure you're a good chameleon yourself.
- ⁽²²⁾ Late for a meeting with a prospect, makes a glum prospect, a prospect late for a meeting with you means a cheerful prospect.
- ⁽²³⁾ 1/2 an hour of witty googling before a talk with a prospect will give you more useful info than 3 1hour talks.
- ⁽²⁴⁾ Smoke an hour before a sales talk and you stand 50% chance your prospect thinks you smell and 100% chance you actually do.
- ⁽²⁵⁾ When selling products or services you need to be able to show your prospect in figures how he's to benefit.
- ⁽²⁶⁾ Prospects who ask your advice have their preferences. That's why knowledge of their line of business and preparation are vital.
- ⁽²⁷⁾ Prospects only go to a new supplier as long as there are no risks involved. So first make sure you can guarantee there are no risks.
- ⁽²⁸⁾ Surprise important clients' contacts in a positive manner. Make sure your organisation knows their names.

Conversation

- ⁽²⁹⁾ Ask clients and prospects if you may take notes on the conversation. That makes what they say important and more reliable.

- ⁽³⁰⁾ Consultative selling is what you're into when prospects have even more valid purchase motives after a conversation.
- ⁽³¹⁾ Ask your prospect why he hasn't bought from you before at the start of the conversation and use the answer as a topic!
- ⁽³²⁾ Clients and prospects expect you to sell them something when you come calling. So don't disappoint them!
- ⁽³³⁾ Your prospects' body language says something about their attitude. So keep an eye on this throughout the conversation.
- ⁽³⁴⁾ Asking your prospect about his opinion will make a client out of him sooner than asking what he thinks of your opinion.
- ⁽³⁵⁾ Answers a client may give you are not always the answers to your questions. Luckily you've got check questions.
- ⁽³⁶⁾ Open questions in between like: "What do you think...?" prevent a prospect from saying later on he had already lost you halfway.
- ⁽³⁷⁾ Only make price concessions in a face to face negotiation when your prospect immediately decides to do business with you.
- ⁽³⁸⁾ It's an advantage when prospects like you, but without your empathy it will never amount to anything.
- ⁽³⁹⁾ Stop trying to interest your prospects once they're prepared to purchase. Otherwise you may blow the deal yet.
- ⁽⁴⁰⁾ Let your prospect do the slandering of your competitor i.e. his current supplier. The fact he wants to talk to you says enough!
- ⁽⁴¹⁾ Only use your laptop to show clients or prospects things you can only show with a laptop and when they are sitting next to you.
- ⁽⁴²⁾ Your prospects seldom read documentation left behind or sent in advance. It's better to read with them during the conversation.
- ⁽⁴³⁾ Tell prospects who your back-up is and what will happen should something happen to you. This creates trust in your organisation.
- ⁽⁴⁴⁾ Clients and prospects trust you if they share their private life with you. But, make sure you leave yours at home!
- ⁽⁴⁵⁾ Thank clients and prospects who criticize you and your products or services. They're actually helping you.
- ⁽⁴⁶⁾ When a prospect misses an important moment in your presentation, go back to that point for him and for yourself.
- ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Don't go into defence mode when your prospect comes at you with useless arguments, instead ask him why he thinks that way.
- ⁽⁴⁸⁾ Simply ask your prospect what would make him or her decide to switch to your services.
- ⁽⁴⁹⁾ With a procurement officer you discuss the best terms, whereas with a prospect you look for

the best solution first.

- ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Avoid mentioning all those objections that everyone mentions to you, if your prospect doesn't mention these himself.
- ⁽⁵¹⁾ When a prospect appears to be uninterested, it doesn't go to say he isn't interested. He may just be pretending.
- ⁽⁵²⁾ The kindest prospects are the most difficult decision makers. So confirm what you've agreed on and repeat this again and again.

Making a proposal

- ⁽⁵³⁾ You can count on lots of extra needs and demands from a prospect who does everything to be liked.
- ⁽⁵⁴⁾ When you know the prospect's budget before making a proposal, you'll end up discussing less about prices. So ask about it!
- ⁽⁵⁵⁾ Your prospect's critical remarks on your offer are easily foiled by emphasizing your unique strong points.
- ⁽⁵⁶⁾ Your prospect is not only looking for a solution, but also for an expert salesperson to find that solution.
- ⁽⁵⁷⁾ Prospects love it when you recognise their objections first. The trick is turning those into arguments to purchase.
- ⁽⁵⁸⁾ Not unless you don't succeed in quantifying their return on investment will prospects think you're too expensive.
- ⁽⁵⁹⁾ Client and future geared salesmen put down in writing all agreements with clients and prospects. You never know...
- ⁽⁶⁰⁾ You get to plan most of your tasks yourself. Except sales tasks. Your prospects plan those for you.
- ⁽⁶¹⁾ A salesperson sells when his prospects are awake. He does his preparation and completion when his prospects are asleep.
- ⁽⁶²⁾ Email your prospect a report within 24 hours of your conversation and grab the opportunity to add relevant information.

Closing a deal

- ⁽⁶³⁾ Exceptionally good salespeople do not only make fine conversation with prospects, they also land the most orders!
- ⁽⁶⁴⁾ Mentioning your well filled pipeline only helps when you occupy yourself with the conversion of prospects to clients.
- ⁽⁶⁵⁾ He who plans ahead and sets dates together with his prospect, will prevent purchase decision postponement.

- ⁽⁶⁶⁾ If your prospect wants extras, ask for something in return. For a good deal is always a balance between supply and demand.
- ⁽⁶⁷⁾ He who uses information from earlier talks with his prospect, makes his proposal made to measure and himself more successful.
- ⁽⁶⁸⁾ When your prospect doesn't have the answers due to not being able to confer, it means you're sitting at the wrong table.
- ⁽⁶⁹⁾ When a prospect bails out because it's too expensive, he really means the advantages of buying haven't gotten through to him.
- ⁽⁷⁰⁾ Prospects who say no to your propositions actually mean to say you haven't found their purchase motives yet.
- ⁽⁷¹⁾ Contrary to what you may believe, according to your prospects, only 15% of your offers are declined due to price.
- ⁽⁷²⁾ Phoning your prospects after delivery and finding out your sales arguments were right, means you've won another loyal client.
- ⁽⁷³⁾ Having a meal with the prospect that bailed out, could turn out to be a very useful 'self-investment'.

Preface

This ebook will help you improve your conversations with prospects*. By using the tips, you will certainly increase your conversion. However, I know many salesmen* who had very good conversations with prospects and still didn't succeed. If you want to land that order on time, you'll need to have the right knowledge and skills. So be aware that reading this book and using the tips, doesn't mean you're there yet. Because...

[\(63\)](#) **Exceptionally good salespeople do not only make fine conversation with prospects, they also land the most orders!** [↵](#)

* To make reading this ebook easy, I often use the word salesman, i.e. the male version. It goes without saying that in doing so I am referring to saleswomen as well as salesmen. The prospect named Mr. Johnson further on in this book is purely fictitious.

Approaching prospects is harder than you may think.

So you've made a list of prospects and have just decided to approach them? Obviously you decide to pick up the phone and start phoning. If you're lucky, you'll speak to someone and if you're very lucky that someone is also the person you're looking for. If this person has enough time, you may even be allowed to ask a question! Subsequently, the answer to your question whether the prospect wants to discuss your offer will be: "No thank you, we're really not interested..."

Depressing, for of course you know better. Otherwise this organisation wouldn't be on your list of prospects. Don't wonder what's the matter, but consider this...

(08) When a prospect says he's not interested, that's most probably due to the fact you weren't able to interest him! ⇐

Every prospect, however grumpy, is interested in matters that will benefit him or his business in the field of cost reduction or turnover growth. To attract his attention, you'll have to show him that further contact with you will benefit him. Also, the more precise you can be, the more precise his interest will be! So it's preferable to say: "Mr. Johnson, I guarantee you that after my visit you will know how to spend 1000 Euros less on office accessories and furthermore how you will achieve a time reduction for your secretaries of at least 2 hours a week per secretary." Instead of: "Mr. Johnson our online supply system will save you lots of money and time." That's because...

(09) Only when you offer something extra will a prospect be interested in you. What you actually deliver is less important. ⇐

Promising or guaranteeing something is one thing, but you won't be going anywhere if it appears your prospect doesn't believe you after your visit. Worse than that, don't count on going back to this prospect for the time being! So, you'll have to prove to your prospects that you are very knowledgeable. Not just of your own products, but also of your prospects' products and their lines of business. Only then will you be able to serve prospects as a true advisor and convince them you're right. Besides that, you won't be viewed as an advisor when you have the word consultant on your business card, but when you provide valid reasons that help your prospect along...

(30) Consultative selling is what you're into when prospects have even more valid purchase motives after a conversation. ⇐

• I found this video on YouTube in which Keith Rosen really hits the nail on the head. [How to capture a prospect's proposal](#)

Make an efficient job of it.

Let's go back to that moment at which you decided to approach prospects. Your goal was to deliver your prospects what they really want and you prepared yourself well. Now all you need to collect are some names, addresses and phone numbers, and you're all set to go. I wish it were that easy. While approaching prospects all sorts of things can go wrong and I know plenty of salesmen that quitted after four attempts. Their contact had left the firm, the phone number had been changed, a certain Mr. appeared to be a Mrs, or the firm was closed for a three week holiday... All a big waste of time and effort that you would have been better off putting into improving the relationship with your current clients. However, with a couple of handy tips you'll beat inefficiency and approach more prospects in less time!

For example, sometimes it can be helpful to send some information beforehand to tickle your prospect's curiosity. Then he'll be expecting you to contact him and be more prepared to talk to you. When applying such tactics, bear this in mind...

(10) Errors in name or address in the letters you send will tell your clients and prospects what you think of them. ⇐

Of course you can also decide to seek direct contact with prospects in an attempt to get them interested. In sales jargon this is called 'cold calling'. In that case make sure you know the name, the job title and direct number of the person you want to talk to. For, the question: "Could you put me through to the person responsible for...?" really gets people's hairs on end...

(11) Maybe data suppliers and telecom providers are warmed by cold calling; callers and prospects certainly aren't anymore. ⇐

The moment you seek contact, is very important for an efficient working manner. Because your chances of success will be highest when you choose the right moment and when the prospect has time to talk to you. When you interrupt prospects on their direct number when they really don't have the time and are in conversation with someone else, you will lower your chances by 99%! So always ask the prospect whether you're phoning at the right moment. When the prospect shows so much as an ounce of hesitation, move on to the question which day and which time is appropriate. Never let a prospect phone you, for then you'll end up at the bottom of his To Do list...

(12) Your chances of success are 5 times higher with prospects that speak to you directly than those who'll phone you back later. ⇐

You've finally got that prospect on the phone and he's even got time for you. You know exactly how to begin and hardly even need your script. Wrong! Of course you won't be working with a script. After all you can expect a good salesperson to listen well and to ask the right questions using the answers to the right questions and using the answers he gets to the previous question. Remember that two answers to the very same open question will never be the same. For...

(13) A preprogrammed sales talk lacks respect and won't stand a chance as all your prospects and contacts are different and unique. ⇐

External factors can also effect the chance of speaking to a prospect soon. A sudden takeover and economic issues or crises, are good examples. When times are uncertain organisations and people are usually unsusceptible to change. Actually that's why I've put many prospects on hold in my forty years of sales experience. Often the disappointing results in the first half year and the following cutbacks were the cause. In situations like these make sure that delay doesn't become permanent. Soon you can approach prospects again who bailed out earlier due to them being faced with cutbacks halfway into the year...

(01) A new year starts with a new budget. The perfect moment for looking up old prospects that bailed out before. ⇐

Of course you also want to approach new prospects when you have more time on your hands. Otherwise it may cost you current clients or would be clients. Holiday periods are an ideal time! Don't think all of your new prospects will be on holiday then. Have a look at this...

(02) In 4 weeks time you'll visit more prospects, who also have more time for you by keeping regional holiday periods in mind. ⇐

Yet, there are no certainties in life. Even when you've taken into account with the above said and what you've come up with yourself, it can still go wrong 5 minutes before the conversation you had planned. Something's popped up that is more urgent for the prospect (which easily happens...), the office next door is being renovated, your prospect's secretary tells you she has to rush off home because the children are off school all of a sudden... These and dozens of other unforeseen circumstances may arise. Many salespeople then make the mistake of giving as much information as possible in a limited amount of time. Even while the prospect is packing his briefcase. That's not going to work though. Don't cram everything into a short talk. Instead...

(14) You won't sell anything when your prospect has no time. So meet at the right moment and create a relaxed atmosphere. ⇐

• Some years ago I visited a conference in the US, where among others well known international top speaker Frank Furness was giving a talk. He has his own way of reaching prospects. How to make appointments. [How to make appointments](#)

You need to grasp this

Nearly all successful salespeople tend to show extremely dominant behaviour. Besides having an air of self-assurance about them (often taken for arrogance), they love to be in control of the conversation as well as take the initiative. However there are prospects who, although working in procurement can be equally dominant. In that case successful salespeople can distinguish themselves from prospects with their ability to place themselves in the background. So adjust your behaviour in order to maintain that pleasant atmosphere and your prospect's natural behaviour...

(03) You can still visit prospects with a big ego if you're a dominant salesperson, as long as your ego isn't bigger than theirs. ⇐

Imagine returning from a visit to a recently acquired client, who has happily shown you that the product you sold him meets his original expectations. He has praised you abundantly for the quick delivery and for the fact that your product is still working perfectly. You may be tempted to apply this client's positive remarks about this product to the way you make contact with your next prospect. Don't make that mistake! Earlier results do not guarantee future success, is what the prospect may think. Furthermore, your prospect will be sure to view things different than that satisfied client...

(15) Don't talk about your product when arranging a meeting with your prospect, but show him the profit you're going to make him. ⇐

Here it's not so important whether your calculations match your prospect's situation one hundred percent. For he will understand that you do not yet know his figures. He'll most probably apply your maths to his very own situation. That's why you're better off keeping your calculations on the conservative side than being too optimistic. It is more important that the prospect trusts you and that you're capable of interesting him. A reliable calculation will show your prospect that you understand his line of business and his firm. Knowledge of the facts lies at the basis. Don't overrate this knowledge, because your prospect always knows more about his line of business than you...

(19) Knowledge lies at the basis of your success. Knowledge of your clients, prospects and their sector. AND of your firm, yourself. ⇐

When you know your prospect's sector, i.e. line of business, then you'll also know what made earlier prospects fall for you and become clients. A new prospect on the other hand, will be reluctant at first when he hears you talk and will certainly ask you to keep it brief. Therefore you need to tickle his curiosity in the first minutes of conversation, in order to convince him to give you more time...

(20) Acquaint yourself with your prospect group's purchase criteria. It'll come in handy if your first meeting turns out to be brief. ⇐

Obviously you're smart enough to check these three criteria piece by piece with him and to only

elaborate on those he says are important to him. Remember he already said he had little time and that counts even more for information that he finds irrelevant!

Your prospect's time is valuable. You certainly won't be the first salesperson to hear halfway during the conversation, after the prospect takes a look at the clock: "Very well, my dear consultant, what are you getting at?" Which, by the way doesn't mean the prospect doesn't know that already...

(32) Clients and prospects expect you to sell them something when you come calling. So don't disappoint them! ⇐

As you know, not all prospects are the same. One prospect once became so interested in what I had to say and in my information, that I started to run out of time! Although it's dangerous to put people in boxes, it can prove to be useful to adapt your conversation strategy to the type of prospect sitting opposite you. For that purpose I sometimes use Jung's theory on colour categorizing...

(21) When typifying prospects and clients or categorizing them with colours, make sure you're a good chameleon yourself. ⇐

• Many personality categorizations are based on the theories of the famous psychologist [Carl Gustav Jung](#) You can read about colour categorization based on his theories on www.insights.com (you can also find out your own colour here!) or you can look up 'insights wheel' on the Internet.

What you need to know before you start talking

Do you recognize that feeling? When you're sitting there waiting for someone and that someone appears to be late? Your prospects have undoubtedly experienced this too on several occasions and have therefore had that same feeling. If you don't know how to deal with this situation, you're going to miss out on many new clients. For being hopelessly stuck in traffic or suddenly finding out you're being expected somewhere half an hour earlier than you've planned, can happen to anyone. Prospects hate that, but some things just can't be helped. In situations like these it's crucial you don't keep the prospect waiting for nothing and don't wait till the very last moment to inform him. Show the prospect respect and be sure to keep his schedule in mind. You've got a cell phone, right? So the very least you can do, is show manners and empathy. However the prospect also can find himself in circumstances beyond his control and in that case...

(22) Late for a meeting with a prospect, makes a glum prospect, a prospect late for a meeting with you means a cheerful prospect. ⇐

Luckily in most cases everything will be just fine and you'll arrive well on time at your prospect's address. With today's technology you can fill in this extra time, making the pending conversation even better. Moreover it will save you time in the long run, which means you can visit more prospects...

(23) 1/2 an hour of witty googling before a talk with a prospect will give you more useful info than 3 1hour talks. ⇐

Nowadays every self-respecting organisation has at least one website. On your prospect's website you're sure to find lots of information that will give you a good idea of his or her organisation, of the projects the organisation has recently completed and undoubtedly its mission statement and vision as well. The latter is very important. Also check whether your prospect has spoken at a conference or has given an interview to a trade magazine! For the most interesting prospects focus on the future instead of on things from the past...

(04) On your way to a sales talk? Look at your prospect's vision of the future rather than at what he's busy doing now. ⇐

Many salespeople, including me can't resist the desire to light up a cigarette. Especially when you have heaps of time to relax before an appointment and you want to look up some information on your prospect. Chances are the prospect will envy you for being able to smoke when he's not. And that's not the only drawback...

(24) Smoke an hour before a sales talk and you stand 50% chance your prospect thinks you smell and 100% chance you actually do. ⇐

That half an hour wait can be ideal for finding valuable information. For prospects seldom bet on one horse only. The odds are that you're running the race along with other suppliers. Also there is a high chance you and the other suppliers will be visiting the prospect one after the other.

I was once in the race for a big order and for reasons of his own the prospect wouldn't say who else he had invited. Without him knowing I stood on the lookout at a safe distance from his door at 9 a.m. Between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. I opened my own box of tricks for this prospect and when I left my strategic position at 6 p.m. to go home, I knew exactly who of my competitors had visited that day!

(05) You can come across dangerous competitors anywhere. Especially where you're looking for new prospects. ⇐

It's perfectly normal to feel some tension before a conversation with a prospect. Even the world's biggest theatre performers feel a bit of stage fright every time they go on stage. That's no disadvantage, for it helps you focus and to stay on the ball. It's important to bear this in mind. The more you know about your prospect, his line of business, your competitors' weaknesses, and the greater your ability to solve things, the better you will feel...

(06) There's no reason at all to be nervous or insecure if you're prepared for talks with prospects or clients. ⇐

In a way, your prospect can also feel uncertain about his business. He's looking for improvements, otherwise you wouldn't be sitting there. Apparently you managed to strike a sensitive chord when making the appointment, or then also you wouldn't be sitting there. In your first conversation the prospect will be seeing whether you (don't be mistaken in thinking this conversation is about your firm!) are the right person to help him out...

(07) The more you know about your prospect's trade, the more likely he'll buy from you. Professional knowledge creates bonds. ⇐

Confidence is also gained by keeping promises. He who promises to his prospect certain benefits when making a deal, will not get away with failing to deliver the goods. Your prospect is most likely to ask you about it when you arrive. So it's very important you can put your money where your mouth is. Only then will your prospect be all ears and will you win his trust. Also take into account that the prospect will take it through once more after you've left and will view it all in light of his situation. So...

(25) When selling products or services you need to be able to show your prospect in figures how he's to benefit. ⇐

The prospect will seldom express whether you've succeeded in gaining his trust straight away. You'll ask questions, he'll give short or long answers. He'll ask questions and you'll answer to the best of

your knowledge. Don't hesitate in asking him whether your answers appeal to him, but don't expect him to give you an honest answer. Especially when there are other players. Still a conversation can give you a good impression...

(33) Your prospects' body language says something about their attitude. So keep an eye on this throughout the conversation. [↵](#)

- Would you like to know more about body language or would you like to add your own experiences? Well click your way to the [wikiHow](#) site.

Now you're talking

So you're seated and the conversation's begun. Naturally you know everything there is to know about your product or service and also a lot about the prospect. Actually you don't even need to have this conversation, because you already know what the best solution is for this future client. Therefore you might be tempted to keep the conversation as short as possible. Quickly present your solution and ask the prospect what he thinks. Then expect nothing but a positive response and signing the contract is simply a piece of cake. Don't jump to conclusions now and wake up to reality. The prospect's real reasons for meeting are bound to be different to the reasons you give your prospect for purchasing your product. Remember that the prospect will only be prepared to do business with you when you bear his reasons in mind and adapt yours accordingly...

(34) Asking your prospect about his opinion will make a client out of him sooner than asking what he thinks of your opinion. ⇐

Now your prospect is really talking, it doesn't go to say he's telling you what you want to know. By now he should be regarding you as an advisor and confidant. Therefore he'll gladly tell you what's on his mind and that isn't necessarily what you need to discover his motives for purchasing. So make sure you watch where the conversation's going without keeping the prospect's enthusiasm in check...

(35) Answers a client may give you are not always the answers to your questions. Luckily you've got check questions. ⇐

At last the prospect tells you everything you wanted to know. You've already thought of the right reasons for convincing him you're the right person who can help him. That's when you fire away. You give an effective presentation and at the end of your plea you ask: "Well Mr. Johnson, what do you say, shall we make things in order for you?" Unfortunately you didn't see how Mr. Johnson jumped up and gave you extra attention when hearing your second point. Actually, he had been pondering on that point for the rest of the presentation...

(36) Open questions in between like: "What do you think...?" prevent a prospect from saying later on he had already lost you halfway. ⇐

• One of the world's best lecturers on sales, Jeffrey Gitomer, illustrates how important questions are in his video: [Asking powerful questions](#)

The chances of your prospect deciding right away, once you've interested him are minimal. He'll probably want to simmer on everything you've told him or might want to discuss it with someone else. Not responding appropriately to this, means throwing away your chances of turning this prospect into a client. 'Sorry, haven't had time yet' or 'We really don't need it' are frequently expressed reasons for bailing out. So make sure to agree on specific terms of continuation with that keen prospect. Mark every move and put it down in the notes of your conversation...

(65) He who plans ahead and sets dates together with his prospect, will prevent purchase decision postponement. ⇐

Now you'll probably have a great time schedule in mind. Deadlines, bonuses, manpower and your holidays are truly important items. However experience shows that schedules you'd like to impose on your prospects are seldom bided by. For the prospect also finds the items he suggested himself are most important. So the trick is to let your prospect do all the planning and get this to be in line with what you already had in mind as much as possible...

(16) As your clients and prospects are limited in time and they don't need to be flexible, they determine your time schedule. ⇐

There are all sorts of ways you can influence your prospect's time schedule. The easiest and most frequently used is the giving of a discount to prospects who decide to become clients before a certain date. What you will discover is that prospects gladly accept such a discount and still not keep to the schedule. Try telling your prospect that he is no longer entitled to the discount you promised him. You won't be the first salesperson who didn't make the grade. Therefore never use price as an argument for speeding up the purchase date. For that matter, there's only one moment in the sales process at which you should make price concessions...

(37) Only make price concessions in a face to face negotiation when your prospect immediately decides to do business with you. ⇐

Planning how to proceed is a subtle matter. Like I said before, both you and your prospect have the ideal time schedule. If you've had any sales training, you'll know most training is geared to convincing prospects with the right reasons. It's all about convincing him that what you've got to offer is the best thing that ever happened to him. With this sales method you may appear to be a sympathetic person to converse with, but are your motives really that honest? Don't be so arrogant as to assume your prospect can't see through your motives. He will only truly find you to be sympathetic when you're able to really get under his skin and understand his principles and involve these in the sales process...

(38) It's an advantage when prospects like you, but without your empathy it will never amount to anything. ⇐

Dos and don'ts in conversation.

For all the salespeople I hired over the years, I abided by one important principle. All the job applicants that arrived without pen and paper, were dismissed on the spot. Either they were too arrogant and thought they could remember everything I had to say in detail, or they thought beforehand that whatever I had to say or ask wasn't interesting enough for them to write down. By taking pen and paper with you, you show respect towards the person sitting opposite you. That shows that what they tell or ask you is apparently worth while taking note of. At the same time it's a good reason to give when asking your prospects whether they mind if you take notes during the conversation...

(29) Ask clients and prospects if you may take notes on the conversation. That makes what they say important and more reliable. ⇐

I always divided my notes into two columns. One column was for the prospect's questions that were still to be answered, plus other important items. The other column was strictly for noting the prospect's important purchase motives. One of my standard questions was: "Mr. Johnson, what do you find most important when choosing a supplier?" I then wrote down the answers in the second column. As soon as the prospect had named say one or two motives, I would repeat the motives and ask the next question: "Are there any other important motives when choosing a supplier?" Usually a lot of motives followed and these also I noted in the second column. In most cases the most important purchase motive could be found at the top and I knew exactly how and in which order I could interpret my proposition into the prospect's demands. This often resulted in the prospect saying he wanted to do business with me. Of course I refrained from mentioning the other motives if the prospect didn't either...

(39) Stop trying to interest your prospects once they're prepared to purchase. Otherwise you may blow the deal yet. ⇐

The prospect is bound to mention his present supplier. Actually the order in which he mentions his purchase motives is probably dictated by his dissatisfaction with this supplier. You may then be tempted to shove your competitor through the exit. For example by giving some spicy, sordid details about his failures. Don't! Concentrate on your own USPs and explain to your prospect what you and your firm are good at. You don't need to tell him that your competitor's shortcomings form the basis of all this...

(40) Let your prospect do the slandering of your competitor i.e. his current supplier. The fact he wants to talk to you says enough! ⇐

The so called inverted indirect question, is a fine way of finding out your prospect's purchase motives. At the start of a conversation with a long-wanted prospect, you ask why he hasn't bought from you yet. Because undoubtedly this prospect didn't choose you when he had to choose a supplier in the past. Perhaps you weren't around then or another supplier was more convincing. The prospect's answer to this question will at least give you the opportunity of giving the prospect's possible

misunderstanding of your firm a positive edge. This without you being caught in the act of recommending your products...

(31) Ask your prospect why he hasn't bought from you before at the start of the conversation and use the answer as a topic! ⇐

One of my most important pieces of advice is to combine written or spoken words with images. Most probably you're well acquainted with the saying: A picture is worth a thousand words. This is a valuable saying. The days of salespeople visiting prospects carrying big sales books are long gone. Nowadays you'll often use a laptop or tablet to show products to your prospect. Firms aren't spending all that money on their websites and software applications for nothing. Beware! Your prospect can't see what you're doing behind your laptop. What's worse, you are less visible too. This means the prospect will lose interest and due to your continual staring at your screen to find what you're looking for, you won't even notice this change in your prospect. So, involve the prospect when you need to use a laptop or a tablet and make sure what you want to show is ready...

(41) Only use your laptop to show clients or prospects things you can only show with a laptop and when they are sitting next to you. ⇐

Many organisations choose to confirm appointments with prospects by letter or by email. They then seize the opportunity of attaching some documents so that the prospect can prepare for the conversation. Well, it saves you time and time saves you money, right? Forget about it. 80% of all prospects note their appointment and don't make time for you until the moment you arrive. Documents? Which documents?

Isn't it wise to send information in advance then? Of course! After all, 20% of all prospects do read the information and prepare themselves. For the 80% that don't you need to take the information along with you. Not for leaving behind, because it will end up in the KIV tray (Keep In View) but for reading together so that you will recognise the topics relevant to your prospect during the conversation...

(42) Your prospects seldom read documentation left behind or sent in advance. It's better to read with them during the conversation. ⇐

Don't be surprised if your prospect gives you a long list of demands. Compare it to the list you made for Christmas when you were a child. It's all a matter of: nothing ventured, nothing gained. And don't count your eggs before they've hatched, even if you're able to meet every demand! Because there will undoubtedly be a reason for the prospect not already meeting all those demands. I'll wager a fine bottle of wine that it's all due to an insufficient budget. I've seen many salespeople forecasting huge sums with score rates of up 80%. Some time later they shamefully told about their proposal being declined because we were too expensive or about the forecast having to be altered considerably. While it's such a simple question: "Well Mr. Johnson, what's your budget for meeting all these demands?"...

(54) When you know the prospect's budget before making a proposal, you'll end up discussing less about prices. So ask about it! ⇐

The chances of prospects giving 'continuity' as the answer to your question what they expect from a supplier, are high. That's not very strange considering the fact that many firms depend on suppliers for conducting business. This is clearly visible in the retail sector, but also applies to the software sector and to the service sector. What's more, prospects don't feel like having to go through the whole process again in a month's time all because you happen to drop out. Not that many prospects will ask you straight off, but...

(43) Tell prospects who your back-up is and what will happen should something happen to you. This creates trust in your organisation. ⇐

Dealing with interaction.

Making conversation can be quite tricky. It's not just a case of you having your say, but more of listening to what the prospect has to say. Asking the right questions, listening to the answers, changing topics, it's all part of the job. Of course, you should expect the same of the person sitting opposite you, however the big difference is that you must be able to handle her or his lack of communication skills while it doesn't necessarily have to be so the other way around. Your communication skills will undoubtedly be put to the test as soon as the prospect leads you out of your comfort zone. The fragile balance between supplier and recipient will then be at risk. Especially in the case of a prospect asking for more than you bargained for...

(66) If your prospect wants extras, ask for something in return. For a good deal is always a balance between supply and demand. ⇐

Another uneasy moment will arise when the prospect decides to share his soul in answer to your open questions. Including his private matters. Beware, this isn't what you bargained for. Still, consider this as a big compliment. Apparently the prospect trusts you and is willing to show his tender side. Besides that he's glad he can tell you everything to his heart's content. Many salespeople interpret this as an invitation to chat about their own matters. Something along the lines of: "Oh, did that happen to you too? I recall that when it happened to me..." Drop it! If the prospect wants to talk about his private life, that's fine. It's a sign of trust, but you're there to offer solutions, to do business. So don't sit there blubbering together, but use that trust. Help the prospect and return home with a signed order...

(44) Clients and prospects trust you if they share their private life with you. But, make sure you leave yours at home! ⇐

It's never pleasant when you or your organisation are criticised in the first conversation. Like anyone else you'll probably be inclined to go into defence mode. Remember that the prospect's criticism, whether justified or not contains the prospect's reasons for not becoming a client. So don't put up a fight and start asking more questions instead. Keep asking till the prospect can't think of any more reasons and don't forget to thank him for being frank. Tell him you're going to look into what he's told you, that you're going to do something about it and make a new appointment so you can get back to his criticism...

(45) Thank clients and prospects who criticize you and your products or services. They're actually helping you. ⇐

Believing prospects will agree to your proposals right away is an illusion. With negotiations in mind I strongly advise you not to let them either. It's normal for prospects to voice objections and criticism concerning your offer. Usually they do this to try and get you to lower your price. You can defend yourself and try to invalidate their criticism with your own motives, but prospects hate it when you prove them wrong. It means you'll be getting yourself into a heavy discussion where the prospect will

cling on to his remarks even tighter, whereas your chances of reeling in the order are becoming smaller. There are other ways of going about this...

(55) Your prospect's critical remarks on your offer are easily foiled by emphasizing your unique strong points. ⇐

After all your offer is bound to have points that are stronger than anyone else's. That's why it's very important your prospect is familiar with these. Usually he will see these in your presentation, which is when you need to have your prospect's full attention.

Until suddenly, his cell phone starts ringing at a crucial moment. I guarantee you that whether he answers his phone or not, he will not fully grasp the importance of the point you were telling him about. So give him that unique point with all your enthusiasm, even when you're giving it to him a second time...

(46) When a prospect misses an important moment in your presentation, go back to that point for him and for yourself. ⇐

There's always that moment when the prospect mentions something that makes you wonder: "What's he talking about?" You just don't follow him and really don't understand why the prospect chooses to mention it. From your angle the remark came out of nowhere and you have the urge to ignore it. The danger in that is that you'll resist even more and prove the remark was pointless anyway. Well, you certainly showed him. Thinking it's probably better to let the prospect draw conclusions himself is a mistake. There's a very simple method for this...

(47) Don't go into defence mode when your prospect comes at you with useless arguments, instead ask him why he thinks that way. ⇐

Earlier on in this book I gave you some tips on getting appointments with prospects. Meanwhile you're busy talking away. Apparently you've struck a sensitive chord and you've made your prospect curious. Many salespeople will use such an opportunity to follow a certain pattern and to try and win the prospect's trust. A safe way to go about it, isn't it? Numerous motives will be flung on to the table and most prospects will agree to these. Just remember there's always one motive that makes the difference and the sooner you find it, the more you can focus on it. Finding that motive needn't be so difficult...

(48) Simply ask your prospect what would make him or her decide to switch to your services. ⇐

This is your prospect's angle.

Every good salesperson has the ability to empathise. He gets under the prospect's skin and senses his way of thinking and doing things. It's very helpful if you have this ability and quite often it makes your prospect feel sympathetic towards you. The following sales(t)wits can also prove to be helpful. They can show you which points to bear in mind. Prospects like to appear self-assured. It lets them give you the impression they know exactly what they want. Don't be put off by this, because it's all just make-believe...

(17) If your prospect knew exactly what he wanted, he wouldn't have needed you to advise him and would have ordered via the website. ⇐

One thing you can be sure of is that prospects are always looking for ways of reducing costs and of increasing turnover. Regardless of your services or products, these are usually the points that are on their minds. By the way don't make the mistake of assuming it's always about money. For example nonprofit organisations could well be wanting to render more services to their clients at the same costs or lower. That's how they profit when giving more service. Your offer will undoubtedly meet with such a demand, still the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Till that time the prospect will just have to take your word for it and that's where you come in...

(56) Your prospect is not only looking for a solution, but also for an expert salesperson to find that solution. ⇐

A pleasant conversation is bound to develop once a prospect trusts you. The prospect will give you the opportunity to tell him more about yourself and about what you have to offer. Also he will tell you more about himself and about his organisation. By now he will rely more on your expertise and he will be able to determine whether you understand his problems. So yes, the chances of you getting that order are good. Still, you won't be the first salesperson to make a mess of things and to leave the building without a new appointment. So remember...

(26) Prospects who ask your advice have their preferences. That's why knowledge of their line of business and preparation are vital. ⇐

There's a link between recognising a salesperson and basic sales training rules. It's called 'going along with' and becomes second nature to every experienced salesperson. Whenever a prospect voices an objection, we salespeople are used to saying: "I fully understand what you're saying Mr. Johnson. Especially in the situation you've just described. May I ask you...?" The trick however is not just to go along with the prospect. Anyone can learn to do that and if everybody were to resort to going along with someone else, we'd all be wailing in a deep pit somewhere. The true art of salesmanship is being able to follow up and turn prospects' objections into arguments for placing that order...

(57) Prospects love it when you recognise their objections first. The trick is turning those into arguments to purchase. ⇐

The objection you'll hear most in your sales career is that prospects find you to be too expensive. This year's budget has been spent, we're not spending our money on this, we're in the middle of cutbacks, and we've just gone into business with one of your competitors... These are all ways of scaring you off by saying there's no more money. However saying there's no more money is the most misplaced objection. Since you're not here to collect money but to deliver it instead! All those prospects that say beforehand that they have no budget, should actually be glad you're here. So make sure you can show them what their investment in what you're offering will earn them..

(58) Not unless you don't succeed in quantifying their return on investment will prospects think you're too expensive. ⇐

Nine out of ten times when you discuss the purchase of your products or services with a prospect, you'll be talking about changes for that prospect. Most times the prospect will be aware of the fact he needs to make changes, still often you'll notice his hesitation. After all he knows what he has now and doesn't know what he'll get. You can't guarantee him anything unless you're certain there are no risks involved...

(27) Prospects only go to a new supplier as long as there are no risks involved. So first make sure you can guarantee there are no risks. ⇐

Conversation is only the beginning.

Probably the most heard of salesperson remark is: “Just had a fantastic conversation with a prospect...!” Good news of course, only it says very little about its nature or its follow-up and absolutely nothing about the chances of reeling in an order. Imagine what would happen if some way or other you dropped out. You’ll do well to be prepared if you care about your future client and your relationship at all. That’s fine for your organisation and certainly as fine for the prospect you just met...

(59) Client and future geared salesmen put down in writing all agreements with clients and prospects. You never know... ↵

Since we’re on the subject of writing things down, let’s take a look at what those so called ‘sales pipelines’ are really worth. Sales managers who focus on what’s in the pipeline and who constantly report and communicate this, are bragging about something they haven’t got yet. You won’t believe the times I saw whole sales teams concentrating on filling in pipeline reports for hours on end in order to get a good assessment. Don’t join in! Your assessment will be a lot better when you spend the time you save on pipeline reports on getting orders...

(64) Mentioning your well filled pipeline only helps when you occupy yourself with the conversion of prospects to clients. ↵

It’s no wonder that you and most of your sales colleagues loathe doing admin. Still, it’s all part of the job, especially in regard to the advice I gave earlier. The trick is to limit your reports to the essence and to do this in a flexible manner in between sales activities. Planning reports at set times will have an adverse effect on your results. The same goes for compulsory sales meetings by the way. Not that they’re not useful, but because it could just so happen that a prospect asks you to shed light on your proposal at the time your meeting’s scheduled. For that’s when your prospect has time. I’ve always given priority to my prospects over my own commitments and apart from my bosses’ frustrated looks that got me many orders...

(60) You get to plan most of your tasks yourself. Except sales tasks. Your prospects plan those for you. ↵

• This [amusing video](#) pokes fun at ‘important’ sales reports.

By now it should be clear that I believe your chances of getting orders are a lot lower when you visit prospects without proper preparation. Careful processing and rapid completion of what you’ve agreed on, should be at the top of your To Do list. However, remember that 99% of the time your prospects can only be reached between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. So be sure to organise your activities in those hours, if you plan on contacting many prospects...

(61) A salesperson sells when his prospects are awake. He does his preparation and completion when his prospects are asleep. ⇐

You may be tempted to start negotiating as soon as possible, as this takes up most of your sales time. However, for the benefit of a long term relationship, it's better to occupy yourself with the prospect's demands and finding the best solution first. Never have I come across a prospect who didn't agree with me on this one. For no one will base their decision on price or quick delivery, the latter being an insufficient solution. You must realise that the pain of paying invoices will be long gone when the joy of choosing the right solution is still present...

(49) With a procurement officer you discuss the best terms, whereas with a prospect you look for the best solution first. ⇐

Sometimes it's the small things that work in your favour

To this very day I still find hearing that my prospect will choose my solution very exciting. And it's not just his choice that interests me. I find his motives just as important. What made the difference? Often the difference is in those things that appear to be less important than they really are. In this chapter I'm going to give you some tips that could tip the scales in your favour.

For instance, prospects are allergic to standard sales talks and also dislike the feeling of being at the bottom of your phone schedule. You'll create more attention with a more personal approach and by learning in depth about the prospect's organisation...

(18) Regularly use your prospect's name and the name of his firm in your sales talk. That way he'll know you're talking about him. ⇐

Like I said before, an important part of the training you did to improve your sales skills were about removing objections in the right way. Or even better, about turning objections into purchase motives. In due time you'll get better at this by bitter experience. You'll even become that good at it, that you'll be able to figure out clients' objections beforehand. I've witnessed salespeople anticipating objections and naming these at the very moment a prospect is about to express these. For example: "Now you may be thinking Mr. Johnson: Well I never use that..."

Don't fall for this tactic. The chances are high that Mr. Johnson will reply: "Actually I wasn't thinking that at all!" What you've done is place Mr. Johnson in the same box as all the other prospects. Moreover Mr. Johnson now has the impression you don't know what you're talking about. But what's worse, is that Mr. Johnson hadn't thought of that objection before and that he does so now. One person's objection in need of turning around, needn't be another person's objection at all...

(50) Avoid mentioning all those objections that everyone mentions to you, if your prospect doesn't mention them himself. ⇐

Many interesting prospects are short of time and will wonder before the conversation starts whether the time they are spending is worth their while. So the fact they're prepared to make an appointment with you is worth a compliment. You should hold on tight if you also make a good impression during the conversation. Make no illusions. Maybe you can remember what you discussed a week after the conversation, but the prospect can't. Once you closed the door behind you, the prospect's attention will have been drawn to other matters that are even more important to him. Fortunately you can make sure the prospect is still interested and wants to continue conversation...

(62) Email your prospect a report within 24 hours of your conversation and grab the opportunity to add relevant information. ⇐

You can distinguish yourself yet once further conversation develops into you making a proposal. You've probably got a standard proposal lying around somewhere and maybe even a colleague in

back office can send it to your prospect. However, it's far better to alter a standard proposal here and there and to refer to relevant items in the conversation. This will make the prospect feel special and he will recognise the attention you're giving him. The proposal will look made to measure...

(67) He who uses information from earlier talks with his prospect, makes his proposal made to measure and himself more successful. ⇐

Whether you're a sole proprietor, or whether you work for a big or a small organisation, you'll always have opportunities of making contact. Chances are that one day a prospect will make contact with you. You can make a good impression by making sure people in your organisation know the name of the prospect's organisation and of his contacts there. The prospect will surely be vain enough to think the whole company is looking forward to him becoming a client and in that he will feel more welcome...

(28) Surprise important clients' contacts in a positive manner. Make sure your organisation knows their names. ⇐

No doesn't necessarily mean no

“Sales don't start until a prospect says no!” is a classic expression that will make any job applicant popular. There's certainly some truth in this expression in the case of a prospect not intending to say no and actually saying something else in disguise. For sometimes prospects say no to get things over with and so they express their inability to make a decision. A refusal like this can easily be undone. For example when a prospect leaves the wrong impression on purpose and it turns out he is not authorised to make decisions...

(68) When your prospect doesn't have the answers due to not being able to confer, it means you're sitting at the wrong table. ⇐

Another one of those killjoys is 'too expensive'. What the prospect really means then is you haven't convinced him of the profit he'll make by accepting your offer. It just isn't clear to him what the benefits are. He's worried about all the time it will cost and bails out. This deal can still be saved, but expect nothing in the short run. You'll probably get to speak to the prospect in due time once you announce a lot has changed in the meantime. Then 'too expensive' won't be an objection anymore. This approach will also buy you some time for shedding light on your methods and for looking into this prospect's purchase motives...

(69) When a prospect bails out because it's too expensive, he really means the advantages of buying haven't gotten through to him. ⇐

The chances of there being a prospect on your list who will not at all benefit from purchasing your product or service are very small. Unless you've randomly picked some addresses from a phone book, you'll always have a good idea of the group of organisations that can benefit from your offer. However, you'd be mistaken in thinking that the whole group will have the same motives for showing an interest. Each organisation will have its own motives and even if different motives show some similarity, the chances are high that the priorities differ. So always adjust your offer in accordance with the most important purchase motive. You'll recognise this motive simply due to it being at the top of your prospect's list of priorities...

(70) Prospects who say no to your propositions actually mean to say you haven't found their purchase motives yet. ⇐

I'm still surprised how often price is claimed to be the reason for a deal going sour. Prospects are inclined to name price as their objection for purchasing, because price is difficult to dispute at this point in negotiations. For the same reason you'll announce the deal was called off because competitors proved to be cheaper. Much research has been done on the importance of price and this showed that only in 15% of all cases the deal was actually called off for price reasons. In the remaining 85% price is claimed to be the reason, while in reality there are other reasons. Mostly reasons that prospects do not wish to elaborate on. Sometimes the reason can even be the prospect's inability to judge the offer...

[\(71\)](#) **Contrary to what you may believe, according to your prospects, only 15% of your offers are declined due to price.** [↵](#)

Things aren't always as they seem

Anyone who wants something bad enough, is prepared to pay more. An example is a phone store chain that asks its prospects 25 euros more for its latest model simply for being the privileged first buyer. More common is the scenario in which couples view houses or showroom cars. One will haggle and the other will have taken it upon himself/herself to scrutinise. Their motto seems to be: make sure the salesperson gets the impression you're not very enthusiastic, then you'll knock something off the price...

(51) When a prospect appears to be uninterested, it doesn't go to say he isn't interested. He may just be pretending. ⇐

It also works the other way around. Prospects can also be extremely friendly and cordial with you. You love calling on them and every time you've visited, it feels like you've been to a party. But do you also get down to business? Their hospitality almost makes you forget that you went there to turn them into clients. Besides that, all this socialising will cost you a lot of time! Well, at least you're being sociable. Continually remind these prospects during your conversation that you're there to do business. Confirm in writing what you've agreed on in your last visit. Then both of you can easily pick up where you left, next time you visit. It's a good idea for you to make an appointment for making a final decision. That will help you both stick to the business in hand...

(52) The kindest prospects are the most difficult decision makers. So confirm what you've agreed on and repeat this again and again. ⇐

Remember that your prospect also wants to do business and some prospects are over friendly in the hope of extras and higher discounts. These prospects are never in a hurry and without you knowing you'll give them more attention and more information than other prospects. They keep you interested by promising you small things. This makes you keep believing you'll get that order the next time you visit. However, the next time the prospect will have thought of something else. A new demand or a new request. The only way to put a stop to this is by making solid agreements and by constantly reminding the prospect of these. Also decide how far you're prepared to go, beforehand...

(53) You can count on lots of extra needs and demands from a prospect who does everything to be liked.. ⇐

Last but not least

This book is about turning prospects into clients. The beads on my advice's narrative thread are: giving attention, preparation, personalising, advising, agreeing on and recording. This will get your prospects to become clients. It will take a lot of time and therefore you will be making a big investment. By using this approach you hope for a long term client relationship to make your investment more than worth your while. It's always wise to look back at your advice and find out whether the offer the prospect accepted, met with the expectations the client had when he was still a prospect. That way you'll be able to learn for the future and your client won't feel like he's been hurled over the fence into the after sales department. Satisfied new clients are your best references, so keep in touch. You're bound to get some nice new leads on your doorstep through this converted prospect...

[\(72\)](#) Phoning your prospects after delivery and finding out your sales arguments were right, means you've won another loyal client. [⇐](#)

This book would be much more expensive and more successful if reading it guaranteed that all prospects became clients. Unfortunately I have to disappoint you. Even though you'll undoubtedly succeed in improving your conversion rate by following my advice, there will always be prospects who bail out and choose a different solution. Hearing this from a prospect is never pleasant and still it creates opportunities. It will give you something new to learn! Pick the right moment and invite such a prospect to voice his thoughts on you and your firm. What went wrong and how would your prospect have gone about it? There is one thing I guarantee you. That meal will earn itself back generously...

[\(73\)](#) Having a meal with the prospect that bailed out, could turn out to be a very useful 'self-investment'. [⇐](#)

Postscript

I am especially grateful to the following people who contributed constructively towards publishing this book:

- Historian Kees van Geel BSc.
- Herman van Oorschot BSc., working partner at Fullmoon Interactive Solutions
- Wim Beunderman, owner Copywriting Needed
- Arianne van Geel MEng., owner of Domus Flavus publishing company
- Wiebe de Jager MSc, author of the book: ‘Zelf ebooks uitgeven

The ISBN/EAN code is 9789081804011

This book contains hyperlinks to:

- Via You Tube:
 - Keith Rosen (www.Allbusiness.com)
 - Frank Furness (www.Frankfurness.com)
 - Smoke Enders (www.proeflokaal.nl.tt)
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[⇒ Preface.](#)

- Exceptionally good salespeople do not only make fine conversation with prospects, they also land the most orders!

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[⇒ Approaching prospects is harder than you may think.](#)

- When a prospect says he's not interested, that's most probably due to the fact you weren't able to interest him.
- Only when you offer something extra will a prospect be interested in you. What you actually deliver is less important.
- Consultative selling is what you're into when prospects have even more valid purchase motives after a conversation.

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[⇒ Make an efficient job of it](#)

- Errors in name or address in the letters you send will tell your clients and prospects what you think of them.
- Maybe data suppliers and telecom providers are warmed by cold calling, callers and prospects certainly aren't anymore.
- Your chances of success are 5 times higher with prospects that speak to you directly than those who'll phone you back later.
- A preprogrammed sales talk lacks respect and won't stand a chance as all your prospects and contacts are different and unique.
- A new year starts with a new budget. The perfect moment for looking up old prospects that bailed out before.
- In 4 weeks time you'll visit more prospects, who also have more time for you, by keeping regional holiday periods in mind.
- You won't sell anything when your prospect has no time. So meet at the right moment and create a relaxed atmosphere.

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[⇒ You need to grasp this.](#)

- You can still visit prospects with a big ego if you're a dominant salesperson, as long as your ego isn't bigger than theirs.
- Don't talk about your product when arranging a meeting with your prospect, but show him the profit you're going to make him.
- Knowledge lies at the basis of your success. Knowledge of your clients, prospects and their sector, AND of your firm, yourself.
- Acquaint yourself with your prospect group's purchase criteria. It'll come in handy if your first meeting turns out to be brief.
- Clients and prospects expect you to sell them something when you come calling. So don't disappoint them!
- When typifying prospects and clients or categorizing them with colours, make sure you're a good chameleon yourself.

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⇒ [What you need to know before you start talking.](#)

- Late for a meeting with a prospect, makes a glum prospect, a prospect late for a meeting with you means a cheerful prospect.
- 1/2 an hour of witty googling before a talk with a prospect will give you more useful info than 3 1 hour talks.
- On your way to a sales talk? Look at your prospect's vision of the future rather than at what he's busy doing now.
- Smoke an hour before a sales talk and you stand 50% chance your prospect thinks you smell and 100% chance you actually do.
- You can come across dangerous competitors anywhere. Especially where you're looking for new prospects.
- There's no reason at all to be nervous or insecure if you're prepared for talks with prospects or clients.
- The more you know about your prospect's trade, the more likely he'll buy from you. Professional knowledge creates bonds.
- When selling products or services you need to be able to show your prospect in figures how he's to benefit.
- Your prospects' body language says something about their attitude. So keep an eye on this throughout the conversation.

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⇒ [Now you're talking.](#)

- Asking your prospect about his opinion will make a client out of him sooner than asking what he thinks of your opinion.
- Answers a client may give you are not always the answers to your questions. Luckily you've got check questions.
- Open questions in between like: "What do you think...?" prevent a prospect from saying later on he had already lost you halfway.
- He who plans ahead and sets dates together with his prospect, will prevent purchase decision postponement.
- As your clients and prospects are limited in time and they don't need to be flexible, they determine your time schedule.
- Only make price concessions in a face to face negotiation when your prospect immediately decides to do business with you!
- It's an advantage when prospects like you, but without your empathy it will never amount to anything.

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[⇒ Dos and Don'ts in conversation](#)

- Ask clients and prospects if you may take notes on the conversation. That makes what they say important and more reliable.
- Stop trying to interest your prospects once they're prepared to purchase. Otherwise you may blow the deal yet.
- Let your prospect do the slandering of your competitor i.e. his current supplier. The fact he wants to talk to you says enough!
- Ask your prospect why he hasn't bought from you before at the start of the conversation and use the answer as a topic!
- Only use your laptop to show clients or prospects things you can only show with a laptop and when they are sitting next to you.
- Your prospects seldom read documentation left behind or sent in advance. It's better to read with them during the conversation.
- When you know the prospect's budget before making a proposal, you'll end up discussing less about prices. So ask about it!
- Tell prospects who your back-up is and what will happen should something happen to you. This creates trust in your organisation.

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[⇒ Dealing with interaction.](#)

- If your prospect wants extras, ask for something in return. For a good deal is always a balance between supply and demand.
- Clients and prospects trust you if they share their private life with you. But, make sure you leave yours at home!
- Thank clients and prospects who criticize you and your products or services. They're actually helping you.
- Your prospect's critical remarks on your offer are easily foiled by emphasizing your unique strong points.
- When a prospect misses an important moment in your presentation, go back to that point for him and for yourself.
- Don't go into defence mode when your prospect comes at you with useless arguments, instead ask him why he thinks that way.
- Simply ask your prospect what would make him or her decide to switch to your services.

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⇒ [This is your prospect's angle.](#)

- If your prospect knew exactly what he wanted, he wouldn't have needed you to advise him and would have ordered via the website.
- Your prospect is not only looking for a solution, but also for an expert salesperson to find that solution.
- Prospects who ask your advice have their preferences. That's why knowledge of their line of business and preparation are vital.
- Prospects love it when you recognise their objections first. The trick is turning those into arguments to purchase.
- Not unless you don't succeed in quantifying their return on investment will prospects think you're too expensive.
- Prospects only go to a new supplier as long as there are no risks involved. So first make sure you can guarantee there are no risks.

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⇒ [Conversation is only the beginning.](#)

- Client and future geared salesmen put down in writing all agreements with clients and prospects. You never know.
- Mentioning your well filled pipeline only helps when you occupy yourself with the conversion of prospects to clients.
- You get to plan most of your tasks yourself. Except sales tasks. Your prospects plan those for you.
- A salesperson sells when his prospects are awake. He does his preparation and completion when his prospects are asleep.
- With a procurement officer you discuss the best terms, whereas with a prospect you look for the best solution first.

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⇒ [Sometimes it's the small things that work in your favour](#)

- Regularly use your prospect's name and the name of his firm in your sales talk. That way he'll know you're talking about him.
- Avoid mentioning all those objections that everyone mentions to you, if your prospect doesn't mention them himself.
- Email your prospect a report within 24 hours of your conversation and grab the opportunity to add relevant information.
- He who uses information from earlier talks with his prospect, makes his proposal made to measure and himself more successful.
- Surprise important clients' contacts in a positive manner. Make sure your organisation knows their names.

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[⇒ No doesn't necessarily mean no.](#)

- When your prospect doesn't have the answers due to not being able to confer, it means you're sitting at the wrong table.
- When a prospect bails out because it's too expensive, he really means the advantages of buying haven't gotten through to him.
- Prospects who say no to your propositions actually mean to say you haven't found their purchase motives yet.
- Contrary to what you may believe, according to your prospects, only 15% of your offers are declined due to price.

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⇒ [Things aren't always as they seem.](#)

- When a prospect appears to be uninterested, it doesn't go to say he isn't interested. He may just be pretending.
- The kindest prospects are the most difficult decision makers. So confirm what you've agreed on and repeat this again and again.
- You can count on lots of extra needs and demands from a prospect who does everything to be liked.

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[⇒ Last but not least.](#)

- Phoning your prospects after delivery and finding out your sales arguments were right, means you've won another loyal client.
- Having a meal with the prospect that bailed out, could turn out to be a very useful 'self-investment'.

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