

How to Sell Yourself – 10 simple steps for personal success

We're all in the selling business whether we like it or not. It doesn't matter whether you're a lawyer or an accountant, a manager or a politician, an engineer or a doctor.

We all spend a great deal of our time trying to persuade people to buy our product or service, accept our proposals or merely accept what we say.

However, before you get better at persuading or influencing other people, you need to get better at selling yourself.

Every day of your life you are selling yourself, nothing happens until you're successful at doing that.

Here are 10 simple steps to self-selling success:

1 - You must believe in the product

Selling yourself is pretty much like selling anything. Firstly, you need to believe in what you're selling. That means believing in "you". It's about lots of positive self-talk and the right attitude.

The first thing people notice about you is your attitude. If you're like most people then you'll suffer from lack of confidence from time to time. It really all comes down to how you talk to yourself.

The majority of people are more likely to talk to themselves negatively than positively - this is what holds them back in life. It isn't just about a positive attitude; it's about the right attitude - the quality of your thinking.

Successful people have a constructive and optimistic way of looking at themselves and their work. They have an attitude of calm, confident, positive self-expectation. They feel good about themselves and believe that everything they do will lead to their inevitable success.

If you're in a sales job or a business owner or a manager then you need to continually work on your attitude. You need to listen to that little voice inside your head. Is it saying you're on top, going for it and confident, or is it holding you back.

If you're hearing - "I can't do this or that" or "They won't want to buy at the moment" or "We're too expensive" then you'd better change your self-talk or change your job.

Start to believe in yourself and don't let things that are out with your control effect your attitude.

Avoid criticising, condemning and complaining and start spreading a little happiness.

Remember the saying of Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company - "If you believe you can do a thing, or if you believe you can't, in either case you're probably right."

2 - The packaging must grab attention

Like any other product we buy, the way the product is packaged and presented will influence the customer's decision to buy.

Everything about you needs to look good and you must dress appropriately for the occasion. And don't think that just because your customer dresses casually, that they expect you to dress the same way.

The style and colour of the clothes you wear, your spectacles, shoes, briefcase, watch, the pen you use, all make a statement about you.

3 - Smile

No need to get carried away, you don't need a big cheesy grin, just a pleasant open face that doesn't frighten people away.

4 - Use names

Use the customer's name as soon as you can but don't over do it. Business is less formal nowadays however be careful of using first names initially.

Make sure your customer knows yours and remembers it.

You can do the old repeat trick - "My name is Bond, James Bond" or "My name is James, James Bond"

5 - Watch the other person

What does their body language tell you? Are they comfortable with you or are they a bit nervous? Are they listening to you or are their eyes darting around the room. If they're not comfortable and not listening then there's no point telling them something important about your business.

Far better to make some small talk and more importantly - get them to talk about themselves.

It's best to go on the assumption that in the first few minutes of meeting someone new, they won't take in much of what you say. They're too busy analysing all the visual data they're taking in.

6 - Listen and look like you're listening.

Many people, particularly men, listen but don't show that they're listening. The other person can only go on what they see, not what's going on inside your head.

If they see a blank expression then they'll assume you're "out to lunch."

The trick is to do all the active listening things such as nodding your head, the occasional "UH-HUH" and the occasional question.

7 - Be interested

If you want to be INTERESTING then be INTERESTED. This really is the most important thing you can do to be successful at selling yourself.

The majority of people are very concerned about their self-image.

If they sense that you value them, that you feel they're important and worth listening to, then you effectively raise their self-image.

If you can help people to like themselves then they'll LOVE you.

Don't fall into the trap of flattering the other person, because most people will see right through you and they won't fall for it. Just show some genuine interest in the customer and their business and they'll be much more receptive to what you say.

8 - Talk positively

Don't say - "Isn't it a horrible day" or "Business is pretty tough at present" or any thing else that pulls the conversation down.

Say things like (and only the truth) - "I like the design of this office" or "I've heard some good reports about your new product."

9 - Mirror the other person

This doesn't mean mimicking the other person, it just means you speaking and behaving in a manner that is similar to the customer.

For example, if your customer speaks slowly or quietly, then you speak slowly or quietly. Remember people like people who are like themselves.

10 - Warm and friendly

If you look or sound stressed or aggressive then don't be surprised if the other person gets defensive and less than willing to co-operate.

If you look and sound warm and friendly, then you're more likely to get a positive response.

This isn't about being all nicey-nicey. It's about a pleasant open face or a warm tone over the telephone. Before we can get down to the process of selling our product, our service or our ideas then we need to be as sure that the customer has bought us and that we have their full attention.

** This article is contributed by Mr. Alan Fairweather - 'The Motivation Doctor', a professional speaker from U.K., he is also an Associate Consultant of d'Oz International Pte Ltd. Alan was last here in Singapore in July 2006 conducting a 3-hour talk on 'How to Motivate Your Team to Deliver Exceptional Customer Service using Feedback & Coaching'.*

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