The following are five free sales training activities we have used for more than a decade with clients during our sales training courses.

We frequently receive requests for sales training ideas from organizations wishing to develop their own sales training programs. In the interest of improving sales skills, we are sharing these activities for use by others.

- You are welcome to incorporate them into your sales training courses.
- You may also link to them.
- However, we request that you not publish them in a printed guide, online guide, or otherwise without our permission.

Each of the activities listed requires knowledge of sales. While we are happy to answer questions about the mechanics of the games and activities, we request that you do your own research on questions related to content.

For more information about onsite customer service workshops and seminars for your group, please contact us at: info@businesstrainingworks.com or 301-934-3250.

Kind regards,

Kate Zabriskie
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Ask or Tell?

Purpose:
To illustrate the importance of discovering needs before launching into a sales speech.

*Note: This activity can easily be used as a sales training icebreaker.*

Goal:
To remind salespeople that selling is not about the product or service. It is about how products and services can solve problems for customers.

Materials Needed:
Object available in the training room

Directions:
Ask the participants to find a partner and then decide who will play the role of the buyer and who will play the role of the seller. Once the decision is made, instruct the sellers to sell an item in the room to the buyers. Next, while the activity is in progress, take two to three minutes to walk around the room and listen in on the conversations. Take note of which sellers are discovering needs versus those who are pushing the features of the objects they've selected. End the activity after four or five minutes.

Debrief:
Ask the buyers if they were asked questions to determine needs or if their sellers immediately launched into pushing the features of their items. If buyers report that they were sold features without discovering or confirming need, make the point that even seasoned salespeople can fall into this trap. If nobody failed to discover needs, congratulate the group for their good work.

The pacing of this activity should be fast. Most salespeople have little interest in games for the sake of games. It is critical that you tie activities back to actions that they can take for improvement and better results back in the field.

Time:
5 Minutes
Your Order, Please

Purpose:
To teach participants how to uncover a buyer’s priorities.

Goal:
To emphasize identifying priorities as part of the sales process.

Materials Needed:
Pen and paper

Directions:
This activity can be run by choosing two people to interact in front of the larger group or in groups of two run concurrently. Where you insert this activity in your training and the activities and exercises that surround this one should determine the format you choose.

After deciding on a format, tell the group that the role of the seller is to determine the buyer’s priorities.

Next, share the fact that the seller represents an art warehouse that carries a wide range of products. The buyer represents a hotel undergoing a major renovation. The buyer must prioritize several attributes: price, quality, delivery dates, product originality, and payment terms. Then by asking questions, the seller must discover the buyer’s priorities.

The buyer should write the priorities for the hotel on a sheet of paper. The buyer should also determine the particulars of the hotel. For example, the hotel may be a high-end property, or it may be a budget location. During the conversation with the seller, the buyer should reveal information when asked. The seller should make a written list of the buyer’s priorities in order.

Allow between five to ten minutes for dialogue.

Note: You can adjust the scenario to your industry if desired.

Debrief:

When the questioning is complete, ask the buyer and seller to compare lists. If they match, congratulate the seller. If they don’t, ask what happened. With either outcome, ask the group to talk about the value of discovering priorities. Next, ask them how much time they typically devote to this part of the process. Do they feel they invest enough effort?

Time:
20 – 25 Minutes
Mr. Parker Schroeder

Purpose:
To show the value of doing sales research.

Goal:
To increase participant awareness of the resources available for researching people and organizations.

Materials Needed:
Flipchart and marker

Directions:
Divide the group into teams of four or five people. Next, tell each team that they will be sending a representative to meet with Mr. Parker Schroeder, the CFO of Gapland Industries.

Gapland Industries manufactures high-end equipment used in hospitals. You are there to sell leasing financing services that Gapland can offer its customers. (If this scenario does not fit the group you are working with, you should rewrite it.)

Ask each group to list all of the places they would go to research Mr. Schroeder and Gapland Industries.

Debrief:
Each group should come up with multiple places to look for information. Here are a few of our favorites:

1. The company’s website
2. Wayback Machine at the Internet Archive for older site information.
3. Manta
4. Hoovers
5. LinkedIn
6. Facebook
7. MySpace (A lot of people have old accounts that they have never canceled.)
8. Google
9. Google News
10. www.fec.gov (This website allows you to research political contributions.)

Ask the participants how much time they devote to research. Make the point that it is no longer acceptable to show up not knowing publically available information. People expect you to do your homework.

Time:
15 Minutes
So What’s My Line?

Purpose:
To demonstrate the importance of establishing rapport with those you have researched.

Goal:
To encourage salespeople to plan for their sales calls.

Materials Needed:
Pen and paper for each participant.

Directions:
Explain to the group that they must each develop one or two conversation starters and a list of topics that might be better left for self-disclosure. As with the last activity, this game focuses on Mr. Parker Schroeder and Gapland Industries. The participants have done a good job of researching Mr. Schroeder and have learned the following:

- Mr. Schroeder earned a BS in finance from UCLA and an MBA from Rice University.
- He is divorced from his first wife with whom he had two kids.
- He remarried two years ago.
- He is on the board of the city’s art museum.
- He is on the board of the city’s Humane Society.
- He enjoys skiing, science fiction, and golf.
- He has worked for Gapland industries for six years.
- He recently bought a house.
- He was sued by a neighbor.
- He donates to Republican candidates.

Debrief:
After reviewing the conversation starters and lists of inappropriate topics, make any suggestions for improvement. Then close the activity by summarizing how to be informed without appearing to be a stalker.

Time:
15 Minutes
Seat 4C

Purpose:
To demonstrate to participants that they should always be prepared to make a new business contact.

Goal:
To encourage participants to be ready to meet new prospects anywhere.

Materials Needed: None

Directions:
Explain to the group that they are traveling for work and have just received a first-class upgrade. When the lady in seat 4D sits down, you see from her reading material that she works for an organization you are planning to approach for business. When the pretzels come out, conversation starts. The lady in 4D asks, “So what do you do?” In this activity each participant must craft an answer. Once they are done, have them share their answers with a partner and then with the larger group.

Debrief:
After listening to each answer, you will probably discover that some are much better than others. You should encourage those with responses needing work to put some additional effort into introducing themselves. You should also make the point that introductions can get stale and should be updated from time to time. Finally, you never know where the next deal is sitting!

Time:
20 Minutes
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