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WHY POWERPOINT SALES PRESENTATIONS

By Kim Mitterling (published September 19, 2004, at www.PinnaclePerformers.com)

“The presentation setting will speak volumes about you, your team and your company.”

First impressions DO COUNT! Perhaps you have heard “You never get a *second* chance to make a first impression,” this statement is very relevant in the sales world. Every new customer contact results in a FIRST IMPRESSION. Making positive impressions every time can be challenging - but is imperative!

The speed of business is dictating that professionals in every department find creative and efficient ways of communicating. The CXOs of all organizations view their time selfishly. Many organizations are using the presentation setting to get the most people together to hear and see the information ONCE. A vendor Bake Off day provides the customer an opportunity to decide both ‘who can we do business with’ as well as ‘who *don’t* we want to do business with.’

The presentation environment will speak volumes about you, your team and your company. When you professionally demonstrate *how* your solution contributes to their business plan, and the customer *sees* your value, you will have positioned them to see the logic for paying a PREMIUM.

In order to prepare for a Bake Off Team PPT presentation, let’s put the ‘shoe on your foot.’ I want you to think like a customer.

Here are three questions you might ask yourself as you listen.

- 1) **Do they care about my getting my business?** *“I don’t care how much you know until I know how much you care.”*

If you, as the customer say, “YES”, the sales team probably invested time to understand your business. They asked you and your colleagues’ insightful questions that paved a way for you to look at your situation and possible solution through a different set of lenses. They did their research and it showed in their presentation. The sales team probably took the care to outline their understanding of your industry and your unique business challenges and confirmed their understanding during the session. I bet the sales team put your company’s name on all the slides. Each presenter probably linked their information to your specifics with illustrations and demonstrations. Their presentation felt like it was created specifically for you.

If they did not, then the sales team probably presented their company’s BOILER PLATE PPT that focused on their products and services and did not link the information to your business environment and industry. If the team did not customize the presentation, if they used cliché clip art, animation and or sound effects that are annoying and, if it felt off-the shelf – you may feel their solution is also ‘off-the self.’ Therefore, ‘no sale’ because this team clearly did not show they cared about getting your business!

2. Do I want to work with these people? Are they professionals?

Was the team always on time? Did they respect my time? Did they respect my people? Did they return all our calls? Were they prepared every meeting? Did they work as a team? Was the presentation professionally designed and delivered?

If they did, they made a big impression on me. I prefer to do business with professionals who prepare for all contingencies, with professionals who take the care to “dot the ‘i’s and cross the ‘t’s.” I want to do business with people who will make my life easy – who will make me look good to my management.

If not, then somewhere during their sales process they gave you a glimpse to what the future may hold – a future that might include late installations, unreturned calls, no service and you will surely say ‘no sale.’

And if the presentation setting was not managed professionally, if it was clear the team had not practiced together, if their slides were rife with text and difficult to read, if each presenter read the slides to you suggesting they had not prepared, and if their colleagues sat in the back having their own sidebars or answering email on their Blackberrys – you will surely say ‘no sale.’

3. Are they problem solvers and able to figure out what's most important?

If they are, I felt impressed and excited because of their clear and compelling message resonated with everyone in the room.

You were pleased with their ability to synthesize all your information and issues – beyond the parameters of the product decision – and recognize and made tangible the impact those were having on your ability to achieve your revenue goals for the year. A team who can think beyond the product/services aspect the sale tells you that they are professionals with the ability to see the big picture. And they have taken the care to dissect and propose ways of not only solving the technology targets, but make tangible how those decisions might impact your business goals as a whole.

If the team merely presented to you a cursory recap of your industry’s generic technology drivers, leading into a lengthy product/service dump, and finally followed by a back slapping motivational litany of their company’s attributes...my guess is you are asleep! And so is the rest of your team.

Bottom line, everything counts! Make every contact with a customer a positive one. If the sales process ends in a presentation to a Selection Committee, understand the point of view they will have as listeners – do they care about us, are they professionals, and can they think out of the box? If you can answer those three questions in your final presentation you will move them closer to a premium “YES.”

