



Clean Sheet Marketing

When a new sales opportunity comes along, many sales people make the mistake of telling and not asking. In many cases, the glossy brochures are brought out to explain the great features of the product or the position of the company. It is all about: my company, my products, my services, and the many fine benefits my company or product provides. They think that telling is selling. Have you ever heard someone say: “Wow you are very charismatic; you can tell a great story, you should be in sales.”

The fact is that customers do not buy products and services. They buy solutions to meet their needs and their agendas. It is the prospective customer’s agenda that is important. There is only one way to discover this person’s needs. Ask questions. Easy to say; however, not so easy to do.



Keep the brochures and the PowerPoint slides close to you. You may need them later, but not at first. Replace the brochure with a clean sheet of paper. You could title the clean sheet of paper *Customer’s Needs and Agenda*. This is a great reminder to fill that paper with the customer’s needs, criteria, expectations, concerns, time table, etc. You must ask questions and you must listen.

As sales people, we are resource brokers. At our disposal, is a resource closet with a vast array of potentially powerful features such as: multiple products, service, pricing, partners, allowances, exclusive technology, training, and delivery to name a few. In other words we have a lot that may impress our customers. The key word here is “*May*”. Any of this stuff *MAY* or *MAY NOT* impress our customers. The trick is to know what *WILL* impress your customers. The only way to find out is to ask questions. Let’s take a look at two things real quick to demonstrate this.

1. A house with a swimming pool
2. A car with a standard 5-speed transmission

For one customer a house with a swimming pool could be the differentiating feature that makes it irresistible. For another it could be a deal breaker. Same with the car, for one driving enthusiast the manual transmission could be a requirement. For another driver with a 40-mile commute at the height of stop and go traffic it could be a show stopper. It all depends upon the customer and their needs.

By using Clean Sheet Marketing, successful sales people pull out the resources when they are needed. They match selected resources with the customer’s stated needs. They develop and present a customer-centered solution.

The next tip — on or about March 15 — Listening

[For more tips visit our web site at salesconcepts.com](http://salesconcepts.com)