

TRUST.

THE ONLY SALES PROCESS THAT WORKS



by **Gregory Hahn**

Cover design by Jeremy Piontek

T.R.U.S.T.

Tell Your Story Rapport Understand Solution Time

The only sales process that works

INTRODUCTION

Sales is NOT about relationships. If you want referrals or long-term business then relationships are a MUST. But how are relationships built? TRUST.

SALES IS ABOUT TRUST.

Trust is the glue that binds a relationship.

A MESSAGE TO SALES EXECUTIVES AND LEADERS:

Let's look at the success of the Boston Red Sox and the Chicago Cubs:

Theo Epstein, currently serving as the President of Baseball Operations for the Chicago Cubs, was instrumental in helping the Red Sox and the Chicago Cubs win a World Series. In 2004, he ended the “**Curse of the Bambino**” and now with the Cubs winning the World Series in 2016, he ended the longest drought in professional sports (in fact 108 years). Just how did he do it? Listen to what Cubs owner **Tom Ricketts** said about Theo: “He made sure I knew right away it wasn't about one **person**. It was about the **organization**. We talked about how you **treat people** and the **right people** will create **success**. It takes **time**. It won't come overnight. He's **honest** with everybody everywhere he goes.” It's all about the organization and people. Can you imagine the Red Sox or Cubs parting ways with Theo after 1 year or even 3 years of hiring him?

So here are 5 tips that will help your organization become more successful:

1. Hire the Right People

Having the right team is the foundation to any successful organization. I realize you're not going to always hire the right people, but have a solid process in place. Look to improve or tweak your process. Again, it's all about **building a team**. You're not always going to have “A” players, but you can have an “A” **Team**. Set the expectations at the very beginning. Look to hire character and focus on the soft skills—skills can be acquired while personalities cannot. Have the candidate interview you. After all, it should be a great fit for both sides. It's all about **attitude**.

2. Provide Quality Training & Up-to-date Resources

Once you hire, make sure that their training is meaningful. Investing in quality training is paramount to your sales team's success. Your training should promote engagement—showing and not telling. Although most companies have an initial on-boarding program, training is an on-going process—not a one-time event. If your training program is 10 or even 20 years old, dust it off and revise it. Your training will be beneficial if it is always fresh with new ideas with new market research.

3. Listen to Sales and Trust Your Sales Leadership

This goes back to hiring the right person for the position and setting clear expectations right from the beginning. Goals and objectives shouldn't be a topic of conversation 6 months into the job. A sales leader's role should be able to provide their team the necessary tools and resources as well as the ability to remove any obstacles in order to make their team successful. Trust your sales leadership team. Listen to their suggestions and ideas. The marketplace and America's work force has evolved. Control leads to compliance; autonomy leads to engagement.

4. Customer & Sales Feedback

If you get offended because a customer is dissatisfied with your product and service, then you need to reevaluate why you are in business. Products and services always need improvement. Listen to your customers and most importantly listen to your sales force if they provide product enhancements or suggestions on how to make the company even better. Act accordingly to make improvements. By listening to your team, it will provide a sense of empowerment thus increasing their engagement with their customer base—not to mention increasing client retention. I'm sure you've seen this quote from Tim McClure: "The biggest concern for any organization should be when their most passionate people become quiet." If you're focused on your bottom line, then keep your existing customers happy. It costs more to obtain new customers.

“Control leads to compliance;
AUTONOMY leads to
ENGAGEMENT.”

5. Allow Time for Results

We live in an instant gratification society. We want results now! When did this utopian world start to exist? If you really want to eat and enjoy a great meal, then you take time to prepare it and cook it. We are still people—not robots. Stop looking just at numbers. The numbers will take care of themselves if you invest in your people. It takes time. The Red Sox didn't win the World Series until four years after Theo arrived in Boston. Remember, the Cubs finished in last place in the National League Central for the first three years of Epstein's presidency; however 5 years later, they are now World Series champions.

So in conclusion, follow this sales leader's proven advice. As a result, you will create the culture and a positive work environment that is necessary to produce results. If you follow these steps, you will have less turnover, a results-driven sales force, and

top talent wanting to join and stay with your company. So, **HIRE** the right people, provide quality **TRAINING**, **LISTEN** to your sales team and customers, **TRUST** your sales leadership, and be **PATIENT**. **Leadership is about making others BETTER as a result of your PRESENCE and making sure that impact lasts in your ABSENCE.**

A MESSAGE TO SALES PROFESSIONALS:

When talking about sales performance, you've probably heard the saying "Will or Skill." I've heard it time and time again, and at one point in my career, I adopted this principle. Although there is some truth to this, I believe it comes down to something more. Let me explain.

The Will or Skill principle is a belief that a sales manager would rather have a sales person on their team who is putting in the effort—the will—to achieve their goals as long as they are "coachable" to obtain the skills necessary rather than having a sales person on their team who has all the talent and skill set but lack the initiative (or the will) to meet or even exceed their objectives. So, it's either the will or skill issue if you as a sales rep is struggling, right?

"I believe that the success of any individual in any line of work can be attributed to one key trait: **ATTITUDE.**"

In my experience, good attitudes produce positive performance and a positive **team environment** while bad attitudes cause poor performance and a negative culture. Here are just a couple of reasons why I believe in attitude over skill set. This study was conducted by **hr.com**. They found that 46% of new hires fail within the first 18 months of employment. 89% of these new hires were fired due to attitude vs only 11% on skill set. How can that be? The number one reason is that we tend to focus more on skill set rather than attitude. Think about most job descriptions and interviews conducted. They tend to focus on the skill set rather than attitude. Why? Because it's easier to assess skill set. The study continues to answer the question: Are technical and soft skills less important than attitude?

It's not that technical skills aren't important, but they're much easier to assess (that's why attitude, not skills, is the top predictor of a new hire's success or failure). Virtually every job (from neurosurgeon to engineer to cashier) has tests that can assess technical proficiency. But what those tests don't assess is attitude; whether a candidate is

motivated to learn new skills, think innovatively, cope with failure, assimilate feedback and coaching, collaborate with teammates, and so forth.

Soft skills are the capabilities that attitude can enhance or undermine. For example, a newly hired executive may have the intelligence, business experience and financial acumen to fit well in a new role. But if that same executive has an authoritarian, hard-driving style, and they're being hired into a social culture where happiness and camaraderie are paramount, that combination is unlikely to work

Here are the characteristics of ATTITUDE:

Accountability—they don't place blame. They're responsible for their own success

Timeliness—they are always on time for meetings and appointments. Early is on time and on time is late.

Targeted Focus—they make sure their goals are specific, achievable, yet challenging.

Initiative—they don't wait for orders. They are proactive and take matters into their own hands.

Tenacity—they respond well to rejection and objections. They don't waiver under pressure.

Understanding—Not only do they understand their own personal goals, but they also understand their customer's goals, questions, concerns, and vision.

Desire—they are always getting better with their craft. They have the desire to improve. Always asking their managers for feedback knowing that it will benefit them.

Effort—they have a solid work ethic. They don't create shortcuts. They do things right.

So, as a sales leader, I would rather have a person on my team with a positive attitude because good attitudes always lead to good results. How's your attitude?



TELL YOUR STORY

When it comes to your competition, how do you handle yourself during a sales call? Have you bashed them? Do you exaggerate your company? Do you argue or debate with a prospect why they should do business with your company rather than your competitor?

Unfortunately, if you've gone down this road, your emotions got the best of you, and you probably didn't earn the customer's trust or respect.

We all want to aggressively compete, but "mudslinging" your competition is not the right approach. So, how should you properly address the competition? Simple. **Tell YOUR company's story.**

First of all, a successful sales person will understand the competitive landscape in their industry. They will highlight what makes their company unique and special. They will not allow themselves to be trapped into a negative conversation during a sales call. You're not supposed to be the subject-matter-expert with your competition; however, you must be the silver-tongued orator of your company.

“The elevator pitch focuses on **WHAT** you do instead of the **WHY** you do it. It's time for companies to ditch the **WHAT** and explain the **WHY**.”

Focus on the value that your company provides to the industry. Explain or show why your product or service is superior. Clearly discuss what makes you different. Keep the customer engaged with your solution. In order to accomplish this make sure you understand your customer's [questions, goals, and vision](#).

As a sales person, become a resource. Bring value to your customer. Learn the new [ABC's of selling](#): Attunement, Buoyancy, and Clarity. Become a subject matter expert. Approach your customer as a consultant. Provide a service as opposed to a product dump.

Let's talk about the "elevator pitch" for a minute.

We've all experienced small talk while riding an elevator. In an elevator, you're focused on your destination. Should someone start an awkward conversation, the tiny box that you're suddenly in seems smaller, and the door to freedom cannot open fast enough.

The same can be said during an initial sales encounter. Some customers have that same awkward feeling when they hear a sales pitch.

The elevator pitch is still present in most sales training today. In fact, I've been part of training programs where an elevator pitch is role played and rehearsed in order to "graduate."

So what is an elevator pitch?

el-e-va-tor pitch: a succinct and persuasive sales pitch.

First of all as a sales leader, I have never liked the word "pitch." And second, I've always struggled with the concept of memorizing scripts—and role playing until it's perfect. On the other hand, I do believe there are formulas to follow for success. The key is to teach these formulas without changing the person's personality.

So here's the problem with the elevator pitch: The elevator pitch focuses on WHAT you do instead of the WHY you do it. It's time for companies to ditch the WHAT and explain the WHY.

Why explains purpose. Why defines who you are and your beliefs. WHY inspires.

Most elevator pitches start with WHAT and end with HOW. Right now, think of your elevator pitch. Does it start with WHAT and end with HOW? Try starting with WHY, then HOW, then WHAT. People buy WHY not WHAT.

So, ditch your elevator pitch. Start with WHY. What's your WHY?

In conclusion, how do you address the competition during a sales call? Tell your customer the story that no one else can tell. Focus on what your company does best. When you do that, you won't go wrong.

R RAPPORT

Whether you're in retail or outside sales, your customers/prospects go through an internal process during a sales encounter. As you present your product or service to your customer, they are observing your body language, communication style, listening skills (or lack of), knowledge of what you're selling, and most importantly how your product/service will make their lives better.

“If people like you, they will listen to you. If they **TRUST** you, they will buy from you.”

Sometimes we as sales people are not as prepared as we should be or we start shooting from the hip if we don't know the answer. Falling into the trap of not listening or asking questions we already know the answers to is another buzz killer during the sales call. So here are **3 internal questions customers ask themselves during your sales encounter:**

1. “Do I trust this person?”

Listen, sales is all about building relationships, and people usually buy from people whom they “trust.” How do you gain their trust? Well, are you prepared? Do you understand the marketplace and the solution your product/service solves? Are you credible? Have you established rapport? **If people like you, they will listen to you. If they trust you, they will buy from you.** So, know your product/service, continue to be up-to-date with your industry, receive proper training, be prepared, and if you don't know the answer to a question, it's ok to say “that's a great question. I don't know the answer, but I'll find out.” If you can't pass the first question, then the other two questions are tossed out the window.

2. “Is your company credible?”

Once a customer trusts you, they will then ask the second question: “Is your company credible?” Your customer already has their own perception about your company—whether it's right or wrong, positive or negative. Now, what can you say or do to make sure your customer fully understands the company you're working for? **What makes your company different than the**

competition who is offering the same product/service? Tell stories (if applicable) that ties your company to your product or service.

3. “Will your product/service make my life better?”

So, the customer likes you and likes your company. The last question is how will your product/service improve their life? Remember, you’re the subject matter expert. In retail the customer walks into your store. In outside sales you approach them knowing that you can stand by your product/service. Put everything together. **Explain the why instead of the what.** Recap, summarize, and recommend your product/service.

By answering these 3 internal questions customers ask will not only help enhance the customer’s experience, but it will also improve your sales.



Today, customers have information overload. Skill set today is to make sense of all this information. As a sales professional, you need to understand a customer's perspective. If I could narrow it down to one skill set that needs to be honed in today it would be the ability to LISTEN. You see, sales people have a difficult time listening to their customers/prospects. Why? They have pressure every single day from their manager and company to “close” a deal. The culture in most sales organizations is “What have you done for me lately?”

We need to listen to UNDERSTAND instead of listening to RESPOND.

“Is there a coincidence that **SILENT** and **LISTEN** have the same letters?”

Communication is an instrumental part in our life. But we don't just communicate with our mouth. Active listening is necessary on how effective we communicate—not only in sales but also in life. Even though our ears are capable of picking up so many words, our brain doesn't necessarily process all of them. In fact, most people usually only remember about 17% to 25% of the things they listen to.

When talking with a customer or prospect, put yourself in the lower power position instead of a higher position. This allows you to enhance your ability to understand where your customer is coming from. Listening is a skill. It's a lost art. But if one can hone in on this skill, one will instill trust, build relationships, and in the end increase sales performance. Listening helps us better understand the customer. Here are my 5 rules of active listening:

1. **Maintain Eye Contact**

In the science of nonverbal communication, the most crucial portion of the body is the face. And the most important part of the face are the eyes. When maintaining eye contact, you have no choice but to pay attention—just don't stare. Some **studies** show that words only convey about 7% of what people are trying to say. The other 93% is communicated through facial expressions and the tone of their voice.

2. Don't Interrupt. Be SILENT

Is there a coincidence that SILENT and LISTEN have the same letters? Don't act too soon with a solution. Often times, we as sales professionals, go into a sales encounter acting like a superhero—we're here to fix the problem without listening to the customer. There's a video out there called, "It's Not About the Nail." If you haven't seen this video, it's quite funny. The video depicts a husband and wife who are sitting on a couch. The wife has a nail stuck in her forehead. She informs her husband the discomfort she is feeling along with the constant pressure that she feels because of this nail in her forehead. Of course the husband has the solution and tries to fix the problem: Just remove the nail—duh! Well, the wife doesn't want him to fix the problem. She simply wants him to listen. The important lesson in this humorous video is just listen—don't interrupt. In sales, sometimes the customer isn't ready to address or fix the problem. Sometimes they just need someone to listen. Don't try to fix it. You just need to listen.

“We need to listen to
UNDERSTAND instead of
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3. Take Notes

The [Association of Psychological Science](#) reported that students who physically took notes received a memory boost. You retain more information if you write it down. It also shows a customer that you're an active listener.

4. Summarize What You Heard

By summarizing and recapping your conversation eliminates any miscommunication. It allows you and the customer to be on the same page and come to an agreement of how to move forward along with proper expectations.

5. Pay Attention to Body Language

You've heard the old saying "Actions speak louder than words." The eyes are the most expressive, but so are other parts of the body. Facial expressions, voice tone and loudness, hand gestures, and posture are all signs of communication. By understanding body language more effectively, we can decrease our chances of being misunderstood.

So in conclusion, work on active listening by following these simple rules. Become a consultant, and don't cut corners. Know your product/service. Present your solution and come to an agreement with your customer that makes business sense. Ask the

right questions. If you do, you will instill trust, build relationships, and in the end increase sales performance. And most importantly, listen to UNDERSTAND instead of to RESPOND.



If a customer already knows they have a problem before you walk in the door what makes you think they're going to fix it just because you showed up? On the other hand, if you uncover a problem that the customer didn't know they had during your meeting, how much more value did you just bring to the table? We need to focus on *problem-finding* instead of *problem-solving*.

Here's an example why this is so important...

Well, you're at pricing. You've presented your product/solution. You've discussed the pricing and terms when you hear the infamous saying: "let me think about it." As a sales professional, you know how this feels when those words come out of a prospect's mouth. I believe that objections can be summarized into two categories: **Usage** and **Value** (but that's another topic for another time). But you know what? In my experience the "Let me think about it" is only a bad thing if it happens on every sales call. Some people really do have to think about it. Let's dive in further.

Normally this response occurs if you, the sales professional, do not listen to the customer or if you don't ask the right questions (see the previous chapter on Understanding). This response shouldn't be the norm. But what should you do if you're in this situation? Slashing price is usually the default mode; however, don't negotiate too soon. Here are some things to consider before negotiating.

“We need to focus on
PROBLEM-FINDING instead of
problem-solving.”

First, make sure you are their #1 choice prior to any negotiation. Second, find out what the customer wants. What features or extras do they value, and what are their priorities—price, service, or delivery? And third, assess the value of your offering to the customer: what is the BENEFIT to them, what SOLUTION does it provide for them, and what ALTERNATIVES does it replace.

Here are 7 negotiation don'ts:

1. **DON'T** negotiate with non-decision makers
2. **DON'T** start negotiating too soon—champion your initial recommendation
3. **DON'T** negotiate if you don't have to
4. **DON'T** negotiate unless you know what the prospects wants
5. **DON'T** be unprofessional
6. **DON'T** write down anything you can't live with or follow-through on
7. **DON'T** be afraid to walk away

The last one is probably the hardest one out of them all. What? Walk away? Yes. Learn from your experience and move on. You're not going to "sell" everyone. People don't like to be sold. As we discussed in the first chapter on Tell Your Story, people buy the WHY and not the WHAT. Be the subject-matter expert and make sound recommendations. And finally, become a *problem-finder* rather than a *problem-solver*.

T TIME

The market and economy has drastically changed since the 70's & 80's (especially after the recession). Here are just a few reasons how the market is impacting sales teams:

1. Sales cycles require more contact to get meetings even with your better clients.
2. Today's customers are less loyal than in the past.
3. Clients have a decreasing willingness to try new products/services early in the product/service life cycle.

The famous phrase "Always Be Closing" doesn't apply any more. "Coffee is for Closers" has been the montage of the hunter's society for decades. To my surprise, the term hunter is still a qualification in the majority of sales job descriptions. While the hunter approach worked several decades ago, the sales hunter approach no longer works today. When it does work, it's for the short-term or for that matter a quick sale. I'm sure this chapter will cause debate (which is great). So let's dive in.

Let's call it like it is: HUNTER = sales person PREY = customer.

A hunter is great at preparing for the sales call. They know their prey (I mean prospect). They get up early and dress up in camouflage. While out in the field, they stalk their prey (I mean prospect). Hunters use sales tactics to deceive their prey by emulating the environment of the hunted (whether by scent, certain sounds/calls, or blending in with the environment). Did I mention that hunters are terrible at asking questions? They usually shoot first. If the game is worth bragging about, hunters mount their trophy on a wall—so much for customer retention!

**“TRUST is the glue that binds a
RELATIONSHIP.”**

Some of you may be thinking that in sales, you always need to be cold calling, hitting the streets, generating a full pipeline, and of course closing. Companies that embrace hunters don't have patience. They want immediate results. It's all about the numbers, numbers, numbers. They don't have patience for farmers, and they think farmers are lazy. These companies truly believe that in order to be successful in sales, one needs to be a hunter. Um, no you don't. It's not always about the sales profession. Customers

are involved. To be successful in sales, you need to understand that Trust takes time. And the rewards are fulfilling.

To revisit what I mentioned in the introduction of this book, Theo Epstein, currently serving as the President of Baseball Operations for the Chicago Cubs, was instrumental in helping the Red Sox and the Chicago Cubs win a World Series. In 2004, he ended the “**Curse of the Bambino**” and now with the Cubs winning the World Series in 2016, he ended the longest drought in professional sports (in fact 108 years). Just how did he do it? Listen to what Cubs owner **Tom Ricketts** said about Theo: “He made sure I knew right away it wasn’t about **one person**. It was about the **organization**. We talked about how you **treat people** and the **right people** will create success. It takes **time**. It won’t come overnight. He’s **honest** with everybody everywhere he goes.” As we read that statement again, if more companies adopted Ricketts’ philosophy and vision, sales organizations and their people would not only be more successful and profitable, but also, it would be more gratifying.

Can you imagine the Red Sox or Cubs parting ways with Theo after 1 year or even 3 years of hiring him?

So what do you do if you find yourself working in an “Always Be Closing” company? The only solution is establish TRUST! TELL your story. Establish RAPPORT. UNDERSTAND your customer. Provide a SOLUTION. And most importantly, TIME. If you follow this formula, you will not only increase your sales, but you will also develop long-term relationships with your customers which improves client retention.

TRUST is the glue that binds a relationship.