

The Skills™ -- Table of Contents & Summaries

1A Pre-Approach

The pre-approach prepares you for your sales call. Every impression you make in a sales call is the result of the attitudes you've developed, the product knowledge you've acquired, the skills you've sharpened, the information you've gathered on your client, the appearance you've planned and how you feel about yourself. In this program we'll touch on a few of the basics in preparing to make your sales calls. In selling the most intangible of intangibles, **you** make the difference. You must do everything possible to put the selling odds in your favor.

- Do Your Homework
- Developing Product Knowledge
- Selling Attitudes
- The Commitment Objective

2A The Approach

In this session, we'll discuss the two basic goals of your approach calls: 1) to create a favorable client or selling relationship and 2) to generate client interest to move the sales process forward. The thoughts we will share are not all-inclusive. You will add to these suggestions as you develop your own selling style. It is important to remember that maintaining a favorable selling relationship and a healthy client interest is an ongoing process you must work at constantly. While sales fundamentals will be used in your early get acquainted calls, they will be valid servants on all your future sales calls. We will present the early approach commitment objectives separately in order to examine the process and develop the skills required.

- Creating a Favorable Client Relationship
- Generating Client Interest
- Client Indifference
- Hunger Statements and Questions
- Your Station Story and Sales System

2B The Approach-Making the Sales Call

The question most often asked by beginners is: "Exactly what do I say on the first few client calls?" There is no way to tell you exactly what to do and say. Every client, every circumstance is different. Your homework is probably most helpful in your early calls. If you know something about the client, you feel more comfortable going in. As you approach your clients, experiment a little. When you find a phrase or a question that seems to work, keep using it. You may find it helpful to rehearse your opening remarks. Visualize your call with your client in a face-to-face selling situation. When you actually make the call, you'll feel more comfortable.

- The Typical Sales Call
- The Selling Bridge
- Sensitivity
- Helpful Do's and Don'ts

3A Exploring for Opportunities

Exploring effectively, asking the right questions, is a skill that can be developed with practice and purpose. Asking the right questions is the most powerful of all the selling skills. Exploring uncovers client needs, exposes client concerns, and reveals client attitudes and beliefs. The client's answers to your questions will help you develop solutions to your client's needs. The old stereotypical salesman was viewed as a talker, a joke teller, a back slapper, and the life of the party. Today, being an articulate storyteller and an outgoing person aren't enough. Today, we also need to be sensitive, interested, empathetic, and good listeners. That's what exploring is all about.

- Explore for Opportunities
- Explore with Purpose

4A Confirming Client Needs

In this session we will focus on confirming client needs that our product can satisfy. You will understand the necessity for confirming opportunities as client needs. When you present solutions to opportunities you may be wasting your time and your client's. Before you present solutions you must first be assured that you are addressing an advertising problem or concern that your client considers important enough to spend money to resolve. It is a simple but basic truth, your client buys solutions to his advertising and promotional needs. When you confirm client needs you know you are on target. Your solutions will receive careful consideration. Your presentation of solutions will more likely lead to a client commitment to buy.

5A Solution/Advantage Selling

Up to this point we have explored for and confirmed client needs. We will now examine how to proceed once you have uncovered a need. We are always looking for client needs, wants, goals, desires, dreams, and wishes. Your client is looking for a problem solver, someone who can help him move toward his goals. He is looking for solutions. In this session you will be introduced to the solution/advantage statement and the part it plays in the sales process.

- Solution/Advantage Selling
- The Acknowledgment
- The Solution/Advantage
- Solution/Advantage -Now or Later?

5B Feature/Benefit Selling

In this session, we'll focus on the difference between feature/benefit selling and solution/advantage selling. As you gain an understanding of the difference and you begin to move toward solution/advantage selling, you'll see your client's attitudes toward you change. You will encounter greater client receptivity and less indifference and rejection. While features and benefits are important in some selling situations, you will see why

solution/advantage selling is the strongest selling position.

- Difference between Feature/Benefit & Solution/Advantage Selling
- Feature/Benefit Selling is "We-Us" Oriented
- Feature/Benefit Selling May Not Include a Solution
- Feature/Benefit Selling Appeals to Logic
- Feature/Benefit Selling...Effectively

6A The Commitment to Buy

The sales process is a series of client commitments. In this session, we will address the client's commitment to buy and how you can make that commitment easier to reach throughout the sales process. The more commitments you get from your client along the way, the more likely you'll get the final commitment to buy. The better you can visualize the intermediate commitments you'll need from your client, the more effective you will be at obtaining a favorable conclusion. This need not be done through manipulative and tricky closing techniques. Instead, it should be a natural and mutually-satisfying experience for you and your client.

- You Make the Decisions
- The Commitment to Buy
- Look for a Buying Signal
- Solution/Advantage Summary
- Plan of Action
- Ask, Assume, Assure
- Cancellation: Regaining Commitment

7A Attitudes and Beliefs

Throughout your selling career, you will be dealing with client attitudes and beliefs. Your skill in recognizing and handling these will determine your effectiveness in the sales process. Since your product is so intangible, it defies concrete proofs. For this reason, most of the decisions made concerning the use of your product will be based on faith, promises of satisfaction, beliefs and common sense. The skill of uncovering negative client attitudes and beliefs about your product, determining the underlying causes and changing them to positive attitudes and beliefs is a learned skill.

8A Indifference

The attitude of indifference is a very normal attitude of a client in your "get acquainted" calls. Your client has probably been doing business without you for years or perhaps has used your product with unsatisfactory results. Your attitude must be one of patience in turning this client around. You should say to yourself, *"If this client knew what I know about what we can do for him, he would be buying my product. It's up to me to help my client see."*

- Client Indifference
- Exploring for Unrecognized Needs
- Overcoming Indifference - Summary

9A Skepticism

Skepticism indicates some client interest in your product. As buyers, we usually don't question or look for "proof" of a product benefit unless we are somewhat interested. Whether skepticism is positive or negative may be determined by how you handle it. If skepticism is handled confidently and professionally, it can enhance the selling atmosphere. If it is handled poorly, you may lose some credibility.

10A Concerns

In The Skills program, we use "concerns" rather than "objections". The reason for this is the picture or feeling one gets when confronted with a client objection versus a client concern. An "objection" feels like a brick wall, something we must overcome. A "concern" feels softer and is not as threatening. Client concerns are usually a positive in the sales process. They are especially positive if you handle them well. Enjoy client concerns. It means you are making progress toward a commitment.

11A Dissatisfaction

In this segment we will cover your procedure for handling client dissatisfaction resulting from the use of your product, advertising, radio advertising and your station. Client dissatisfactions must be resolved properly to maintain the relationship. Client dissatisfaction, properly handled, can 1) keep the client sold on you and your station, and 2) strengthen your relationship. Improperly handled, client dissatisfaction may damage your relationship and end in cancellation.

- Cancellation-the Ultimate Dissatisfaction
- Preventing Cancellation

12A The Stall

The stall is a difficult client action to deal with. Your client seems accepting of you and your station, yet doesn't want the sales process to begin now. Your client says yes, for next spring. When you return to the station and your sales manager asks about how you did with your new client you say, *"Great! We're going to get started next spring."* But you must ask, *"Why is the client putting me off? Does the client really intend to get serious next spring? Do I just leave the client alone (as he requested) 'til next spring? Should I just ignore the client's request and keep selling?"*

12B Rejection

Rejection is a part of the everyday life of a sales rep. The client faces many business pressures every day that may trigger fear, frustration, hopelessness, doubt, anger and many other negative emotions. If you happen on the scene at the wrong time, you may have one or more shots aimed at you just because you're there. Your best offense against client rejection is to prevent it with your own attitude. If you enter a client's business expecting acceptance, warmth, friendliness, you'll probably get it. But then there are times when you get just the opposite and that's what this session is all about.