

# Impact Selling for Trusted Advisors

**In a world where “sameness” abounds, “HOW” you sell matters**

Joe Gregory presented four typical sales traps that we tend to fall in as trusted advisors:

- 1) We think, “I’m not in sales.” There’s much head trash about sales and selling and we are too smart. We tend to try to use our knowledge to convince prospective customers they need to hire us instead of engaging in a productive buying conversation.
- 2) We are too smart. We tend to try to use our knowledge to convince prospective customers they need to hire us instead of engaging in a productive buying conversation. Because we’re smart, we try to fix it. We briefly listen to our prospective customer’s problem and then immediately try to offer solutions, thinking our prowess will be impressive and the prospect will become a loyal customer. What would happen if we simply said, “I’m curious, tell me more about that”? Probing is a lost art, and most sales professionals do it well.
- 3) We try to use logic. Because we are so smart, and we know how to fix problems, we tend to use logic in discussions with prospective customers and never get to the most critical emotion that motivates people to buy. If you simply ask how different problems make your prospect feel, you will elicit powerful emotions that will energize their buying decision.
- 4) We have enough business from referrals. While it is great to get referrals; and one of our aims belonging to STAR-Denver is to get referrals; we need to have highly capable sales skills to appear competent to a prospect that has been referred to you by a colleague. Otherwise, your referrals will stop.

After a brief introduction to common sales traps, Joe had a volunteer from each table participate in a Reverse Roleplay. The way the Reverse Roleplay works is that Joe will listen to a common block one of our STAR-Denver members is experiencing; and then talk about how to overcome that block. In some cases, Joe will act as the sales person while the member will act as the prospective member who has the objection. This process was quite powerful in learning some amazing objection handling techniques in a short time frame.

Situation #1: A human resources consultant is calling on a company with over 150 employees. The company executive claims they have no problems with human resources. The consultant knows there is no way this executive doesn’t have problems with people. How can he pull out these problems, if the prospective customer won’t cooperate?

Joe’s advice: Many prospective customers are either subconsciously or consciously delusional about their problems. They may not want to state their problems because they don’t want to work on them; or they are not actively aware of their problems. A tactic to pull these problems to the surface is to list some typical problems that organizations of their size have and then say,

“My guess is that your organization is not experiencing any of those... right?” You are not offending the prospect, you are merely trying to affirm their belief. If one of the items on your list strikes a chord, they will most likely want to discuss that issue with you further. If not, on to the next client who has issues that you can help with.

Situation #2: A banker with a commercial bank has difficulties getting customers to refer new prospects.

Joe’s advice: First of all, it is preferable to call these ‘introductions’ instead of ‘referrals’. Many lay people don’t know what a referral is; and they don’t like referring you to their friends. They are okay introducing you, if there is a good reason. One way to ask is to say, “Would it be okay, and only if it’s okay, if I were to ask you, who do you know that I might be able to help like I’ve helped you?” This statement allows them to think of someone you can help. Then you can ask, “Would you mind introducing me to them?”

Another tactic to get referrals is to look at connections you have on LinkedIn. Find a prospect who you would like to do business with on their contact list in LinkedIn and ask your contact if they can introduce you to that LinkedIn contact of theirs.

Situation #3: An accountant who is trying to grow their service offering to business consulting and coaching is not able to get people to respond to ongoing requests for communication once they show initial interest. The prospective client is ‘going dark’ and not returning emails, phone calls or other attempts at communication.

Joe’s advice: The key is to set up a next step when you have your first meeting. Rather than exchanging pleasantries and hoping to get a next meeting; set a date on a calendar for a call or personal meeting. Make sure that you have a reason to meet; and you have ensured your prospect you won’t waste their time. This commitment will make it difficult for someone to blow you off for the next meeting.

Situation #4: The consultant is getting plenty of opportunities in a small market, but would like to get referred to larger prospective clients. Tired of playing small ball.

Joe’s advice: It starts with marketing. Pick the ideal client you want. Understand some clear and defining characteristics about that desired target client. Then specifically ask your current clients to refer you to prospective clients that match your target. Use words they understand so that they clearly understand what is a good referral (or introduction) for you.

Situation #5: An online media consultant has difficulty stating a clear elevator speech that resonates with two distinct customer segments. One customer segment is people who want to create videos to help market their company, products or services. The other customer segment is the video makers who are looking for companies who need online video services.

Joe’s advice: Rather than telling either customer segment what you do, tell them the outcome you will help them gain. Most buyers don’t particularly care about your business as much as

they want to know how your business can help them in some way. If you start telling them what you do, they are liable to lose interest or become confused. If you tell them a typical problem they have and an outcome that you provide; they will be able to know if you can or cannot help them in some way.

---

STAR-Denver members had the opportunity to watch Joe Gregory address all five situations live and give all of us a clear understanding of how to be better sales people as we try to serve our clients in the marketplace.

This material is for STAR members only and not to be circulated or distributed to others without Joe's consent.