

Flexibility in Sales & Training

by Terry "TJ" Wisner

Have you seen the MasterCard commercial where everything is flowing precisely as plan in the florist shop, until some jerk tries to pay with that cumbersome old means of exchange...CASH? As soon as he pulls out the currency...everything screeches to a halt. The system is smooth, but can't handle any variables. There is NO flexibility.

Over the years, I have had many opportunities to observe professional trainers and sales people. They often offer their information to their clients in a "canned" or scripted format. Take for instance the technical trainer who presented his program, exactly the same way, every time. It didn't matter to him whether the participants were new-hires or experienced learners. The delivery was the same every time. Unfortunately, the program was aimed at the more talented technicians and therefore it imparted little or no knowledge to the attendees. By the way, they also said the class was a "boring waste of time."

Each of us has been approached by the sales person that delivers a scripted message. They give the obligatory greeting to make us think they care. Then they ask a probing question to lead us into their sales pitch. Finally they dump all the features and benefits they can muster. Fortunately, most sales people like this, don't ever ask for the sale. So it's up to you...the buyer. Do you want it or not?

Here's the point: Whether you are a trainer or a sales person, you must be flexible in your approach.

Consider this tip: Content Transfer is king! Don't let the content of your sales or training presentation drive the exchange. In order to transfer knowledge and wisdom to your client(s), you must be sure to listen to the client and make the content fit their needs. Recently, Lynne and I were dining in one of our favorite establishments and the server informed us of a new dessert menu. She went on to tell us of a contest wherein the server selling the most desserts in July would be awarded a bonus. Rarely am I motivated to purchase anything simply because the sales person could win something. How about you? Had she told me about the decadent warm chocolate cake with a hot fudge center and a scoop of cold French vanilla ice cream that everyone raves about...she would have sold us.

Being flexible in your presentation in the classroom or a selling transaction is most important. The client or customer, learner or participant needs to know, only what they need to know to perform the job or make the purchase decision. Don't get wrapped up in your "canned" presentation. Identify your clients or participants needs from the product or training you offer. Then be flexible in the way you deliver the presentation. Make the presentation fit their needs and answer their problems. That is how you will share your knowledge and help your client buy your product or learn from your training.

Every sales and training professional is consistently makes the necessary changes to improve their performance. Developing a "Flexible" style will ad not only to your professionalism but it will also enhance your results.

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