

Selling Like a Marine: Improvise-Adapt-Overcome

by Terry "TJ" Wisner

IMPROVISE – ADAPT – OVERCOME

This famous United States Marine Corps slogan reminds me of the technique many sales people use to make their sales calls. In the *Sales-Don't Just Do It!* Seminars offered by *The CPO Institute*, we have found that most sales people do not pre-call plan. All too often, salespeople fail in this very important step in the selling process. Pre-call planning will insure you are prepared to "make the sale." The BYOCPO process helps sales people become more effective by focusing on improving one particular element of their selling process, like pre-call planning, to increase sales. So how does one sell like a Marine?

IMPROVISE

The American Heritage Dictionary defines improvise as "to make or provide from available materials, or perform with little or no preparation". Many sales people go into the call with minimal preparation. They generally know what they want to accomplish but have no clearly defined plan of how to get there. The more complete and comprehensive the pre-call plan, the less improvisation needs to take place. True sales professionals can improvise with the best, but they don't do it very often because they follow their plan.

ADAPT

To adapt means "to adjust or conform; to make suitable to or fit for a specific use or situation". It is widely known that effective sales people only need to offer 3 or 4 features and benefits to satisfy their customer's needs. The trick, however, is to hit the "relevant" F&B's. In your pre-call planning, you will predict which product or service features will most likely motivate the customer to make a purchase. However, as the customer answers your professional probing questions, new needs may be uncovered and the sales person must adapt. As the client's needs are revealed, the relevancy of the F&B's may change. Clearly understanding the needs of your customer will help you adapt the portfolio of products and services of your company, into unique, satisfying solutions.

OVERCOME

The meaning of overcome is very simple. It simply means to prevail over or conquer. Sales professionals need to overcome every customer concern in the sales process. All too often, sales people answer the first "no" then go for the "close". For many salespeople, if the customer makes any sort of purchase the sales call is done. Being approachable and overcoming customer objections by correcting any misunderstandings, questions, or concerns will lead to greater customer satisfaction.

However, if the customer is not totally satisfied, they will never grow into the loyal, dedicated customer we all need and want. Overcoming EVERY customer concern is the "mission" for all quality salespeople.

Effective sales people improvise very little. They do, however, adapt their style and features and benefits to fit each specific customer. By anticipating and asking questions, they can overcome, and even prevent most customer concerns. If you want to improvise less, adapt to the customer needs, and overcome all customer concerns, Don't Just Do It! Be Your Own Chief Performance Officer.

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