

# Everything must go

## The cheat-sheet for sales professionals

Whenever I'm trapped in a traffic signal, immediately I find one poor face around my car trying to attract my attention to get some monetary help. I'm sure most of you have experienced this too. What do you do in that situation? Do you help everyone or some particular ones? Even though we've money in our pocket, we don't help each and every one. We try to judge whether that poor fellow really need our help or not. Unless s/he can convince us fully, we don't bother to help him or her. Don't take it otherwise, but some of them do know how to convince us and get the money out of our pocket. Not all the sales professionals earn good money, but some do. They always win by applying their own techniques, by playing their strengths.

Last week, I was conducting a training session for a group of marketing executives of a corporate and I asked them about the most important criterion for a good salesperson. Some of them said "communication skills" and "presentation skills", while others mentioned "persuasion skill". Yes, these three are of course needed. However, the

most important aspect is to be a 'likeable personality'. If your potential customer does not like you as a person, s/he would never buy anything from you. We had three grocery shops in front our apartment when my family used to live in old Dhaka. I never bought from the middle one just because I did not like that shop keeper. It is true for everyone. We buy things from the people because we like them and rely on them, not necessarily because they offer lesser price.

Zig Zigler, the 'salesman's salesman', while conducting a session on sales techniques once said "Selling is something you do FOR somebody, not TO somebody". Few weeks back, I got a phone call from a marketing executive of a Banking institution. She was requesting me to keep fixed deposit in that Bank. When I asked why I should change my Bank, her reply was "Sir, I have a target to fulfill and it will be really helpful for me if you transfer your fund here." Come on! Why should I bother about her target? She should have told me the benefits and advantages instead. What do customers care about most? Right! Themselves. Therefore, you need to present

your product or service in a way that benefits the customer, not you. You should never try to sell something just because you would get sales commission or your promotion would be ensured. If you do well for your customer, it will do good for you eventually.

Another important aspect is to know about your product or service inside and out. Whether you are selling a laptop or an insurance policy or a needle, you need to find out the advantages of your product or service. You need to have a good understanding of similar products or services offered by the competitors so that you can answer all the queries of your customers. Unless you yourself are convinced and confident about what you are selling is the best in the market, you cannot convince your customer and neither can you sell. Your body language also plays a big part while you give presentation or demonstrate your product and answer the queries. Positive body language always makes a big difference.

The last point that I would like to discuss is that when you talk to the potential customer, talk about the benefits, not the



technical terms. For example, instead of saying that your product is having extra 2 GB space, you can say it can store

600 mp3 songs more than any other products. Most of the customers do not understand technical terms; you need to

simplify those for them. I remember once I was asking one of the electrical service providers to fix some wiring

problems in my office. Before leaving, the head electrician came to me and suggested to buy an electrical item. When I asked why, he told lots of things but I could not understand most of them and I was not convinced. I wrote down the name of that item and told him that I would think about it and let him know later on. I did not buy. Few weeks back, I was calling another electrical service provider to fix another problem. Once they were done, the head electrician suggested me to buy the same item that the earlier guy insisted. When I asked why, he explained me how it will protect our PCs and ACs and also would reduce electricity bill by 20%. He could convince me because he talked about the benefits, not the technical terms.

Everyone wants to buy the best solution. So, put yourself in the customer's shoe and try to understand their point of views. You can definitely SELL MORE.

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## NEWS

### Career building in Radiology & Imaging

Medical Technology is an emerging field for career building across the world. In Europe and USA, it is considered as one of the most competitive field of career building, and getting oneself admitted in to a medical technology institute is associated with stiff competition.

According to the office bearers of Bangladesh Association of Radiological and Imaging Technologists (BART), presently there are only 2500 radiological technologists in this sector which is very inadequate for the country. The Upazila hospitals have X-ray machines but not quite adequate technologists. There are about 250 CT machines and 80 MRI machines in this country the number is increasing every day. The government target is to equip all Upazila Health Complex with CT/MRI machines in near future. There are many such medical devices being installed every day, which require skilled medical technologists to operate. But do we have enough technologists?

An institute for Radiology and Imaging was launched on December 2nd at Dhaka, initiated by the Government of Japan, where doctors and medical technologists will receive skill improvement training from Japanese and Bangladeshi instructors characterized by introducing its cutting edge medical device and technology.

Dr. Sheikh Aleemuzzaman, a Japan expatriate doctor, presently assigned in Bangladesh as the advisor of Medical Excellence Japan, a project of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Japan (METI) expressed his view as follows. "I have been working in Bangladesh for the past two years to introduce the advanced Japanese Health Care System, along with its cutting edge medical technology and device. The basic problem here is lack of team therapy concept of modern day health care, characterized by lack of balance in formation of the health care team. For example in advanced countries, for one doctor there are 3 nurses and 5 paramedics including medical technologists. However, in Bangladesh medical colleges are sprouting across the country, while there is extreme shortage of nursing and medical technologist institutes. The outcome is disappointing, since in Bangladesh for one doctor we have only 0.5 nurses and 0.1 paramedics. With imbalance in ratio, team therapy cannot be established. Consequently, thousands of patients in this country has lack of confidence in the local system and are going to Thailand, Singapore and other countries for treatment. The situation needs to be changed with initiatives to be taken to increase the numbers of nurses and medical technologists and establish the balance of team therapy."

### Wanted: Curious employee

Sometimes, in order to make your employees something better, allow them to ask questions and find it out for themselves rather than directly placing the answers on their plate. Here are some ways you can get your employees to ask more questions:

#### i. Hold weekly question rounds

Like every week's regular team meetings, hold a regular only-question session. Give your employees the floor to ask questions about anything- could be as silly as where to file the new document. Just ensure the questions are not offending to others or isn't criticized by others. It may take up a few hours, but the outcome can be overwhelming. Employees feel like a part of the organization.

#### ii. Introduce topics that interest them

True, in a workplace, the questions are expected to be office-centric. However, during

question every week.

#### iv. Question all solutions

Though it is an all-question session, it's pointless asking them without having any answers to it. While anyone or you suggest an answer, question that solution. Let them ask you how feasible it is or how long it would take to achieve it and suchlike.

Most of all, it's always needed to minimize communication noise. There's plenty of space to misunderstand a simple rule as each and every individual perceives a message in



the questioning session introduce topics that the employees care about. It could be regarding their motivation, pay raise or team building- anything! They would be able to relate to the topics presented and would be motivated to raise meaningful questions.

#### iii. Acknowledge the best question

Face it, you cannot expect anyone to put all their efforts for something they gain nothing from. You need to reward them for coming up with a round of different questions every week. While you encourage everyone to ask questions, acknowledge the best question of the week. Maybe have a badge or a certificate to reward the group/individual with the best

his/her unique way. We avoid asking questions in offices because we were never encouraged to ask questions, or it might make us look stupid. Well, that's not the case. As an employer, one should always encourage question sessions so that the employees are least confused. After all, best communication within the organization will only make you look stronger from the outside. You want flawless work; get your team to ask questions.

The writer is a Career Services Officer at BRAC University.

RAKSHINDA HUQ

### Glitch in the system

Lack of coordination can turn into a selection process blunder for HR

It was not like any other day. A cross functional qualified and experienced assessor's gathered early morning to kick off the day's session filled with multiple exercises consisting of group discussions, fact finding exercises, individual presentation and strategy planning meeting. As usual, the Talent Manager ensured everyone knew detail of the day's agenda e.g. who goes to which room at what time slot, who observes and assesses which candidate in which exercise etc. and was also coordinating the day's activities. Briefing was also carried out to all the candidates the day before in the head office to ensure that even the candidates are fully on board with the daylong assessment center proceedings planned at an off-site location.

I was one of the assessors and was supposed to join during the second half due to some other urgent work back at office while someone else was giving proxy on my behalf in the first half. Just after the lunch, I rushed straight in the individual presentation session where another colleague was waiting. While we were trying to align ourselves a candidate peeps through the door and greeted us. We immediately welcomed him and asked his name to confirm if he was the right candidate. At that the candidate nodded and we asked him to start his presentation by taking his acetate sheets from the table beside the overhead projector. The candidate grabbed the sheets and started the presentation.

From the very beginning, the delivery of the presentation was poor and he was just reading out the slide contents as if someone else prepared them. We were getting very disappointed and stopped him when he finally got stuck with a particular word and said he wasn't sure about the meaning of the word. The obvious reaction from us was "if you did not know the meaning of the word than why did you write it?" The candidate then said what was extremely difficult for us to accept. He said that the slides were neither prepared by him nor he was the person we were expecting.

Moment later we all realized that we made a big blunder which we were carrying on unknowingly for some time before putting an end to this snafu. Small error in coordination led to this unexpected situation which could have been avoided. It was one of the biggest learning in my HR career.

The writer is currently the Head of Human Resources of Nestlé Bangladesh.

AKHTERUDDIN MAHMOOD

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