



U S Chemical

Providing Exceptional Quality Since 1962

Selling

The Proud Profession



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Selling is a proud profession. If you stop to think about the dynamics of how our economic world works, literally nothing happens until something is sold. It is axiomatic that the most highly compensated individuals are not doctors or lawyers, but sales people. Only a very few achieve this level, because great sales people have to be greatly self-motivated, willing and able to learn, full of energy and well organized. It is our hope that "Selling The Proud Profession" will help the reader in each of these areas.

THE PROUD PROFESSION

Why do we refer to selling as a "proud profession"? Very simply, it is the one type of job held by the most people with little or no formal education on the subject. Mentally review the educational background of the movers and shakers in nearly any organization.

First, of course, is the president, CEO, general manager or comparable title. In all likelihood, this individual has degrees in one or more business management disciplines, probably at the graduate level. This position is usually surrounded by specialists, such as the VP of Finance (Accounting, CPA), VP Marketing (Marketing Degree(s) and VP Operations (Engineering, Manufacturing). Each has a significant education focused upon the area of control. The exception is the VP of Sales/Sales Manager. Look long and hard, but you will never find a degree on anyone's wall that says that they have graduated in SALES. This profession comes only with experience. While there are many seminars and instructional/motivational sales gurus, there is simply no corollary in sales education comparable to finance, accounting or operations.

What's the point? Simply put, the most critical function for most organizations is handled by personnel with no formal education in that profession. Pretty scary, right? Suppose for a moment that you have never made a sales call in your entire life. What steps, advice, tips, directions or road map would you seek to help you in this adventure?

The balance of this brochure is dedicated to providing the reader with those steps, etc. It is liberally laced with information, advice and anecdotes, presented in a down to earth style for easy reading and understanding. The focus topic is selling in the institutional warewash and laundry chemical business, but it is likely that most of this applies to nearly every sales/service type business.

THE TWELVE CRITICAL STEPS TO MAKING A SALE

1. BE PREPARED TO SELL

First and foremost, this means you must know your products. Read everything you can get your hands on about them. If appropriate, take some home and use them. Learn how a product works, looks, smells and every other relevant detail. Compare it to other products of the same type as well as competitive products.

Second, practice selling the product or system. You can do this in front of a mirror or another person. Be sure that the first time you present it to a prospect you are not simply hoping that whatever tumbles out of your mouth will be right.

If you're going to do a demonstration, practice ahead of time. A classic example is demonstrating how to clean a grill. Most people find the task somewhat startling the first time. If the prospect sees you jump back when you apply the grill cleaner to the grill, how professional will you appear?

Finally, know the language of the industry. For example, recognize the difference between a guest, resident and patient. They are all people, but are found in a hotel, nursing home and hospital respectively. If you take no interest whatsoever in the business of your prospect, your chances to create a customer are slim.

2. KEEP AN ACTIVE PROSPECT LIST

There is no better way to focus your attention on the type of customer you would covet than to keep and maintain an active prospect list. If one drops off the list, hopefully because you sold it, add another. Not all sales happen on the first or second call. A prospect who is perfectly happy with a competitor today may well become disenchanted at a later time. In selling, persistence counts!

If you would like to build your personal reputation within your company, here is a surefire method. Study the potential accounts in your territory, and find the biggest, most reputable, highly visible account that you don't have. Then, using the steps presented herein, get the account. This will be noticed, and having this account as a "testimonial" will help you close others.

Who is your best prospect for incremental sales? It is your best customer. If there is a customer you sell and service that really likes you, be sure you have all the available business. If you don't, go get it. This should be the easiest place for you to sell.

3. MAKE A POSITIVE FIRST IMPRESSION

There is an old saying that goes, “You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.” Old sayings don’t get much more truthful than this one. Here are a few tips for calling on someone for the first time:

- Dress appropriately. A golf shirt never favorably impresses the prospect wearing a 3-piece suit. However, it is perfectly acceptable at the country club call. Many, if not most, businesses have gone to a “business casual” dress code, but remember that does not equate to jeans and a tee shirt.
- Shake hands firmly, look the prospect in the eye and smile. The majority of people generally dislike extreme handshakes (“limp banana peel” or “knuckle buster”). Not looking someone in the eye is generally considered a sign of someone who is not trust worthy or with something to hide. It creates a poor first impression.
- Finally, smile as if you are happy to be there and to meet the prospect. If you hand the prospect a business card, do so with your left hand, with the card facing the prospect for easy reading. With a bit of practice, these things become very natural and will help your first impressions be first class.

4. USE “TRUST BUILDING” COMMENTS TO PUT YOURSELF IN CONTEXT QUICKLY

The first two questions in a prospect’s mind are “Who are you?” and “What do you want?”. The faster these questions are answered, the better you will be perceived. Once again, practice your introduction, don’t just hope you will say the right thing. Here is a good example:

“Hi! I’m John Doe from the chemical/beverage department of ABC Distributing. I service Harry’s Restaurant just down the street, and Harry suggested you might be interested in our warewash program. Would this be a good time to get together for a few minutes?”

There it is—who, what, where, when, why and how long, all in one concise statement.

Selling is most simply described as an “exchange of trust.” After all, you wouldn’t buy something from someone you didn’t trust. People tend to trust people with common interests. Pay attention to the geography surrounding the prospect. For example, there are a dozen pictures of fish on the office walls, you may find a common interest if you are a fisherman. Look for these common interests, but don’t try to fake them.

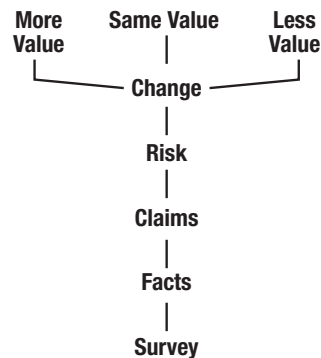
5. LEARN WHEN TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS

Remember that time is money! A conversation about a common interest can only last just so long. Obvious body language signals, such as the prospect repeatedly looking at a clock or watch,

means it is time to get down to business. People vary, and some will enjoy chatting for awhile. Others won’t, so develop a feel for the personality traits of the prospect.

6. ASK FOR PERMISSION TO DO A SURVEY, AND TO MEET AFTERWARDS TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

In the institutional business, as in most service related industries, the ability to sell successfully begins with a thorough understanding of the existing conditions at the prospective facility. Here is a graphic that defines the need to survey: What is it that you want the prospect to do? The answer is “**change**” from his current supplier to you. Now, we all know **change** is bad, because it entails **risk**. Therefore, change will only happen if you can offer **more value**, or what is called a “value proposition.” If the prospect refuses to buy because of **risk**, sales people often try to overcome objections by making **claims**. However, **claims** that aren’t supported by **FACTS** are generally regarded to be without foundation. You get the **facts** by performing a **survey**.



This **survey** gives you **facts** to support and make credible your **claims**, reducing or eliminating the perceived **risk** and determining what is important to the prospect, representing **more value** to him and leading to a **change**.

7. DO THE SURVEY RIGHT

Once again, selling is an exchange of trust. Would you buy something from someone you didn’t trust? Probably not, and most people won’t. There are three important reasons for conducting a proper survey as follows:

A. Make Unknowns Known

You cannot make any intelligent determination of what products or equipment are appropriate for an account without doing a survey. At the very least, you must investigate the five key variables of the environment; Procedures, Water Quality, Equipment, Nature of Soil and Nature of Substrate.

B. Build Personal Credibility

If you conduct the survey properly, and can speak to the prospect with the confidence of knowledge, your personal credibility rises. Generally, people trust those who do what they say they are going

to do. By asking for permission to do a survey and then doing it, you will have begun to build trust by doing what you said you would do.

C. Qualify the Account

In a rush to sell an account, don't lose sight of the relationship between time and money. If you invest hundreds of dollars of equipment and dedicate regular service time at an account, you must have corresponding sales to justify these costs. During a survey, determine what the account is worth in sales per month. If it is below your target level minimum, (and it goes without saying that you must have a target level minimum), the investment won't return a profit. Profit is what business is all about.

These three reasons support conducting a proper survey at any prospective facility. Enclosed in our Technical Resource and Training Manual are survey directions and a survey form which will help you in the mechanics of conducting a survey. These forms have been designed to follow the format of our computer survey programs. These computer programs are available to U S Chemical distributors as a tool to help in the pursuit of high quality end user business.

8. AFTER COMPLETING THE SURVEY, GO BACK AND ASK QUESTIONS

Once again, do what you said you were going to do. There are always questions you will want to ask to complete your survey. In our training class, we do an exercise to develop questions that may be appropriate. Remember that this is your second meeting with the decision-maker. Ask questions to:

- Be sure you are meeting with the decision-maker.
- Make sure you fully understand the operation at the facility.
- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the current supplier.
- Find out what is important to the prospect.
- Learn who else may be affected by a change, and make it your business to see them.
- Look for ways to close the sale. See the sections that follow (9, 10, 11 and 12).

9. LOOK FOR WAYS TO POSITION YOURSELF

It is critical at this point in the selling process that you are certain that you know what is important to the prospect. Use this information to "position" yourself to close the sale. For example, a foodservice establishment that is struggling because their help is not properly trained might respond positively to this statement:

"If we could provide you with regular in-service training, would you be willing to make us your supplier?"

The key here is the "if we could, would you" statement. A "no" answer merely means that your value proposition isn't quite right, but the "no" is not a dead end.

10. CREATE AND PRESENT THE PROPOSAL

Most of the time, you won't sell an account on the first call. When the survey is completed and you have had your question and answer meeting with the prospect, it is time to prepare the proposal. Do so in the most professional way available to you. Remember that the computer survey programs may be of great help to you in this effort. Include whatever details you expect to cover when you meet the next time. Service frequency (as appropriate for the size of the account), delivery, emergency service, in-service training, pricing, product information and overall performance are some things that belong in the proposal.

Once completed, make another appointment to see the prospect. This needs to happen very soon after the survey is completed. Assume your competitor will find out that you were there. Give him as little time as possible to correct any deficiencies. If it takes a long time to get back to the prospect, the perception may be that you aren't really interested.

11. GAIN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF KEY ADVANTAGES/BENEFITS

Proposal in hand, you return to the prospect to discuss the business. As you present your proposal, be sure to point out why features of your program are benefits to the potential customer. Gain acknowledgment of the value of the benefits. If a prospect perceives no value in something you offer, it moves him no closer to a change.

Here is an example:

YOU: I see that you receive orders monthly, we have weekly delivery.
PROSPECT: Hmm...Four times as many truck deliveries, invoices, and checks to cut. Why would I like that?

Here is a different version:

YOU: I see that you receive orders monthly. We can continue that for you; however, many of our customers prefer a weekly delivery. This reduces your investment in inventory and lowers space requirements. Which might you prefer?
PROSPECT: More truck deliveries, more invoices, but less cash tied up in inventory. And space is a problem. I think we'll try the weekly delivery.

Do you see the difference? By pointing out the benefit this feature provides to the prospect, and offering a choice, you have moved directly to a trial close. More about closing the sale is in the following section.

12. CLOSE THE SALE

At some point in the sales proposal presentation, and perhaps at many points, you should try to close the sale. Trial closes are often preferred, such as the discussion in #9, because you aren't faced with a definitive "no." There are many theories on how to close business, but they all have one thing in common. At some point you have to ask the prospect to make a decision and still be prepared to move ahead if the decision isn't favorable.

U S Chemical has an extensive Audio Visual Library that contains a number of CD's/DVD's that talk about selling and techniques for closing sales. These may be of great help to you in developing professional closing techniques. Since there is no cost to U S Chemical customers to use the AV Library, you can't beat the price for giving these resources a try.

There is an axiom that says "good selling starts with the first no." This means that until you reach an objection, and answer it, you're presenting, not selling. A sales professional will come to realize that there are four times to answer an objection:

BEFORE by performing a good survey, you learn that the prospect is concerned about emergency service, particularly when you are on vacation. In your proposal, you place emphasis on how this is handled by your company. By doing so, you have answered this objection before it arises.

AT THE TIME it is most common to answer an objection when it is stated. For example, you have proposed products packaged in 5-gallon pails. The prospect objects to the package, stating that the disposal of the pails is becoming a problem. One answer to the objection might be:

"If we could provide you a complete lineup of products in alternative packaging, would you be willing to make a change?"

This not only answers the objection but moves you closer to the sale.

LATER some prospects ask questions about things that will become apparent but require a bit of discussion before answering. Price is almost always this type of objection. Your competitor's product is \$50 and is used at 1 oz/gal. Your product is \$100, but used at 1 oz/4 gal. Until you are able to describe the real value and low use cost of your product, don't answer the question, "What's your price?"

NEVER. Occasionally, a prospect will offer an objection that is clearly ridiculous. Chances are he knows it and just wants to see what you'll do with it. One true-life example was the objection given by a prospect that he "would do business with you as long

as you don't deliver products on those ugly orange trucks." Pass by this type of objection, because taking it seriously is a waste of time. Put it off and never come back to it.

Another key to selling is professionally handling a "no."

The following is perhaps the best technique for handling a "no" answer that we have even seen or used. To give credit where due, it came from a sales training program presented by Steven Brown. He is a professional in the area of sales and selling techniques. Follow along with these techniques and commentary:

You: So now that you've had a chance to learn about what we have to offer, do you feel you would be interested in our program?

[Comment: This is simply a summary trial closing technique to test where the prospect's interest level is.]

Prospect: No, not really.

[Comment: This isn't the answer you were after!]

You: Apparently, you have some reason for feeling this way. May I ask what it is?

[Comment: This is the first step in professionally handling a "no" answer.]

Prospect: Sure, your product costs too much.

[Comment: This is a common objection, but usually not the real one.]

You: If product cost was not a concern, then do you feel our program is what you are looking for?

[Comment: By putting the cost issue aside, you determine if that is the real objection or not.]

Prospect: Yes.

[Comment: In this case, you now can believe that you have the real objective.]

You: I can understand how you feel, others have felt this way until they found what we could do for them.

[Comment: This is our "empathy cushion." At this point your position is that you simply haven't explained or sold the value proposition. Get to work!]

You: Now do you feel our program is what you are looking for?

[Comment: Go back to the beginning. If the answer isn't "yes," you haven't answered the objection or there is another one you need to find in the same way as before.]

Prospect: Yes.

[Comment: That's the right answer!]

Be assured that this technique must be done sincerely and naturally. If it sounds like you're reading it from a 3 x 5 card, you probably won't be successful. Go back and re-read #1 Be Prepared To Sell. Practice makes perfect!

The bottom line to these "Twelve Critical Steps to Making a Sale," is that selling, like any profession, requires dedication, practice, effort and some proven techniques to ensure acceptable performance. There are three categories of sales people:

Commercial Visitors: They show up, take orders.

Problem Solvers: They solve their customer's problems and are trusted.

Problem Preventers: They keep customers from having problems, and are viewed as valuable non-salaried members of the customers company. The truly successful sales person will be a Problem Preventer.

SALES TIPS

1. Can you articulate to a customer/prospect the mission of your company and why it is in business? If not, make it your business to learn this. Most people are more comfortable buying from someone whose company is dedicated to serving their needs.

2. There is no more important tool in your arsenal than the Total Test Kit. Don't leave home without it. You cannot do a survey, service call or trouble call without it.

3. Unless you are contractually bound to a monthly service schedule, take the word "monthly" out of your vocabulary. When promising service, the better choice is "regularly scheduled", "routine" or "preventative maintenance." In today's economy, accounts must be serviced as appropriate for their size.

4. Get organized. During our training class, we provide class participants with an organizational route book. The easiest day to begin using it (or your own company's version of it), is today.

5. There are only two ways to grow your business; new accounts and new products at existing accounts. If you don't make a conscious plan to call on new accounts, (see #2 – Keep an Active Prospect List), you'll never have time to do it. This will ensure poor performance.

If you make just one more call a day, and close only 20%, you'll have 50 new accounts in a year. Remember the Champion Creed:

I am not judged by the number of times I fail, but by the number of times I succeed, and the number of times I succeed is in direct proportion to the number of times I can fail and still keep trying.

6. Use thank you notes or letters! If you have made an important call or had a critical meeting with a prospect or customer, drop them a short note of appreciation. It's rare today for anyone to get a handwritten note, therefore all the more meaningful.

7. Don't fail to ask customers for referrals or testimonials. If you ask, they usually respond, but you will wait forever for them to offer. Try a simple question such as:
"Do you know anyone else in this area who might have an interest in our program?"

8. Always call an account before responding to an emergency service call. Just about once in your life you will take a fifty mile drive to put a fresh capsule of detergent in a dispenser. Call first!

9. Be sure the prospects you call on can be customers. If the decision is "corporate," don't waste a lot of time trying to sell a multi-unit account on a local basis. However, franchise owners can, by law, buy from whomever they wish. Don't let the "we have a contract" objection stop you. The key is knowing who the real decision-maker is and if the accounts can make a decision in your favor.

10. Remember, practice your demonstrations!

11. Accept the fact you may lose an account for a reason that isn't (in your opinion) fair. Professionals will try to have an "exit interview." Find out the reason for the change and don't burn the bridge. If the account was happy with some or all of what you provided, put it on your active prospect list. The new supplier may not perform to expectations. Your continued interest will keep those expectations very high. If the account was worth having originally, it's worth getting back. Pick up any dispensing equipment you had in use at the account!

12. U S Chemical offers a wide variety of sales and educational materials. Use these to support your selling and ongoing in-service training efforts. While they won't do the selling job for you, they will help you.

We hope you found this brochure helpful and take the information to heart.

