

Build a Better Sales Presentation

Two suggestions that will make a world of difference in presenting to your customers

One of the constants I hear when working with distributor reps is “We all carry the same products. How do I stand out and make myself more valuable to my clients?”



By Patrick T. Malone

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While there are many answers to that question, I have recently come across two suggestions that are easy to implement and effective when executed properly.

And they both came from the unlikelyst of sources.

Emphasis on eye contact

An article from the May 28 edition of the *Wall Street Journal* dealt with the importance of making eye contact anytime you are face to face with others. While our electronic devices have made our lives easier, they are also creating

barriers to building relationships that are integral to our success.

For example, you’re at a party speaking with someone when they glance down at their smartphone or glance over your shoulder. How does that make you feel? Compare that to others with whom you are engaged that make you feel like you are the only person in the room. In the latter case you are at the top of their priority list at that moment in time, while in the former you are somewhere down their list.

Checking your smartphone or looking around during a sales presentation will put you back among the also-rans as just another distributor rep. Being present and giving your customer your undivided attention will help you build a unique relationship that distinguishes you from the others clamoring for their business. Remember, your best customers bought you first and then your products and services.

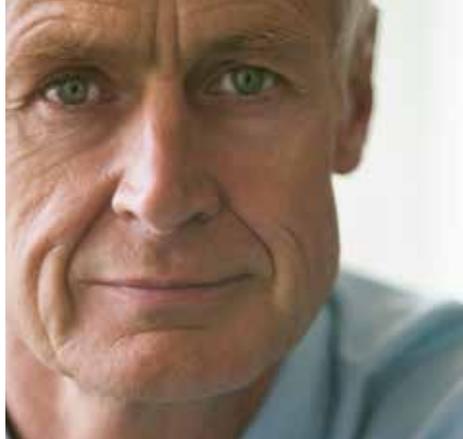
So here are some guidelines that will help you use eye contact to your advantage.

1. Adult Americans make eye contact 20-50 percent of the time during a conversation. The lower percentage is especially prevalent among 20-somethings who apparently find multitasking culturally acceptable.



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2. Studies indicate 60-70 percent eye contact is required to build the emotional connection that leads to quality relationships.
3. Overdoing it can be just as bad as not doing it. In 1-on-1 conversations, eye contact of 7 - 10 seconds segments is considered effective. Any longer can seem aggressive, empty, inauthentic or even “creepy.”



Eye contact can be a tool for influencing others because it conveys confidence and respect. Prolonged eye contact during a debate or disagreement can signal you’re standing your ground. Some would also suggest that it indicates your place on the food chain, as high-status individuals tend to look longer at people they’re talking to, compared with others.

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Keywords

The second suggestion comes from a *Harvard Business Review* article from November 2012 and offered ways to make your presentation more memorable by including these types of sound bites in your presentation:

1. **Rhythmic repetition.** Repeat a key word or phrase at the beginning, middle, or end of sentences. Use this rhetorical device throughout the presentation and people will walk away remembering that word or phrase.
2. **Concrete comparison.** Use a simile or metaphor to help your audience understand your message and recall it later.
3. **Slogan.** Deliver a concise statement that’s easy to remember.

It occurred to me that the *HBR* sound bites could be easily accomplished through the use of *Vet Advantage’s* SoundBytes. Here are some examples:

- In Merial’s Previcox SoundByte, the phrase “dog designed formula” is an example of rhythmic repetition. Emphasizing that phrase at least three times will cause your customers to remember it.
- In Welch Allyn’s SoundByte for the Green Series Medical Exam Lights, the phrase “5,500°K LEDs – very similar to the sun’s color temperature” is an excellent example of a concrete comparison, using a simple simile to explain the benefit of a feature in everyday terms.
- In Merck’s Mometamax & Posatex SoundByte, the phrase “A World of Otic Experience” fits the criteria of a concise, easy-to-remember statement.

Upon reviewing the last year of *Vet-Advantage* SoundBytes, each has examples of the *Harvard Business Review’s* suggestions to make sales presentations more memorable. So pick the one that best suits the product you are presenting, and the customer you are presenting to, and make yourself and your presentation more memorable.

Remember that SoundBytes are a simple tool (feature), designed to increase the value of your dialogue with customers (function), which increases your sales success rate (benefit). Use them to your advantage.

So two simple suggestions – more eye contact and more memorable sales presentations – designed to help you build better sales presentations. Two suggestions that you can implement immediately. What are you waiting for? ■