

# In the Beginning

**T**he opening of a sales call sets the tone for how the rest of the conversation is going to proceed, and often has a significant impact on the outcome. Knowing the most effective way to begin each call is critical to your success.

After the initial banter, when you are ready to get to the business of the call, there are three critical elements that must be present to create a common goal and set the stage for a productive call – your confidence, an invitation to neutral and an acknowledgment of the customer as the decision-maker.

## Confidence

Never discount the power of your own conviction. Your customers/followers are buying your confidence first and then buying your product, service or idea. So you must really believe in what you are advocating. The old adage “I can sell anything” may have been true at one time, but not today. Buyers have more information and are more sophisticated than ever before. They demand your confidence and more. When the conversation begins, your customer is thinking, “Why should I care?” or “what’s in it for me?” The sooner you answer those questions, the quicker the customer will focus on what you are saying. Here is an example:

*“I believe that (insert benefit to customer) by (insert product/service).”*

## An invitation to neutral

You can dream about your customers being ready to buy, but in today’s competitive environment the best you can hope for is the opportunity to make the case that your product, service

Creating a common goal for every call

or idea is worthy of their consideration. So the invitation to neutral might be:

*“Let me show you how (insert product or service) is designed to (restate benefit to customer).”*

## An acknowledgment of the customer as the decision-maker

For many reps, this last element will involve the greatest struggle. Your current mindset is focused on getting to “yes.” But if you focus on getting a “yes,” you have engaged in a win-lose game. Your customer wants to make a decision, and if your mission is to get a well-informed committed decision, then you both win regardless of the decision. So it could sound like:

*“Then you can determine if (insert your product/service) is right for your practice.”*

Now, put it all together and assume your next clinic has been experiencing vaccine reactions. You might start the business conversation by saying:

*“I believe that you can provide your clients with a safer vaccine alternative by switching to the XYZ line of canine vaccines. Let me show you how XYZ vaccines are designed to reduce the risk of reactions, then you can determine if it is right for your practice.”*

You will improve your success rate by establishing a good solid decision goal for every sales call. Try it and then decide if it will help you satisfy your customers while reaching and exceeding your quota every year. ■

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