

People before Products

The proper priority in a sales call

Riding along with sales reps, both distribution and manufacturer, can be extremely rewarding. Listening to their pre-call analysis, watching the execution of that call and then debriefing the outcome are at the core of successful coaching. During the drive to the next appointment, there is time to discover what is important to that individual rep.

Where those two conversations intersect is the secret to creating the sustainable motivation to grow and improve.

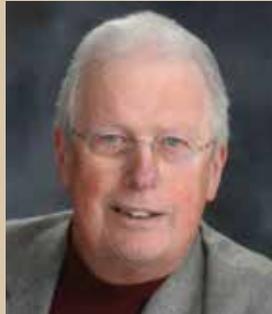
Unfortunately, ride-alongs can also be frustrating, especially with those reps focused only on the product. Those pre-call analyses are focused on product features and functions, which in turn creates a call that sounds like Pharmacology 101 and produces a debrief centered on “why didn’t they buy?”

Despite your extensive line of products/services, no rep ever achieves their full measure of success by marketing/selling products/services, because your customers do not care about product/services. The most successful reps care about people first – their needs, wants, desires and dreams. Then they care about the problems that are standing in the way of those dreams or the opportunities that could facilitate those dreams. Only then do reps introduce products/service that solve those problems or capture those opportunities.

Opening lines

How you start a business conversation could kill your chances for a sale almost immediately.

“Doctor, I’m excited about (product/service)...”



By Patrick T. Malone

The most successful reps care about people first – their needs, wants, desires and dreams.

“Doctor, (XYZ Company) has a new line of (product/service)...”

“Doctor, I have some great new marketing ideas for your practice...”

Why should the doctor care? Instead, start the conversation with:

“Doctor, you will increase customer compliance with (product/service)...”

“Doctor, you can minimize the reactive issues with the new line of (product/service)...”

“Doctor, you will grow your customer base or reduce your operating costs or increase your practice sale price with some new marketing ideas ...”

In the last three examples you have placed the people and their problems first and have earned the right to talk about the product/service. You have put the conversation in the right context to almost compel the sale.

Almost.

While the opening statement is important in establishing the context of the conversation, the rest of the conversation is what seals the deal. So it is important to remember the relative values of Feature, Function, and Benefit.

Feature: What it is

- This is the Heska Vet-IV 2.2 Infusion Pump.
- Eprinex pour-on for internal and external parasites.
- Flunazine is a non-narcotic, non-steroidal for fever common with swine respiratory disease.

Function/Functional Advantage: What it does or does better

- Calibrated for veterinary use.
- Effectively controls immature and adult worms.
- Proven to make swine feel better.

Benefit: What your customer will have

- Accurate +/-5% delivery for positive patient outcomes.
- Proven to increase milk production of your herd.
- Results in improved swine performance.

The only reason to mention a feature (what it is) or a function (what it does or does better) is to get to the benefit (what your customer will have). Customers do not buy features or functions. They buy benefits, so it is important that you briefly mention the feature and function and then really emphasize the benefit. In doing so, you will find yourself putting people and problems first.

Then your product/service will be seen as the way to help your customer deal with their challenges or achieve their dreams, and you will be the trusted advisor who guided them in that process.

In order to help distributor reps be more effective in opening sales conversations and more successful in selling benefits, *Vet-Advantage* created the Sound Byte program.

Each Sound Byte provides you with a specific opening statement that emphasizes benefits for each product/service featured. Sound Bytes also include very specific features, functions and benefits you can use as an aid in the continuing business conversation.

So, we put you first (distributor reps), and then your challenges (opening sales interactions/selling benefits) and only then did we talk about the product (Sound Bytes). We know that telling you something has a limited effect. We can increase that effect dramatically by being a living example of our own advice.

People believe our actions more than our words. So go forth and become more successful by putting people and problems ahead of products and services. ■