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6 Basic Steps to Landing a Sale



To say that making a sale is important to business is like saying oxygen is a vital component in breathing. Sales is the crux of business whatever its size and scope -- unless perhaps you're a mammoth social media website with zero revenue and millions in angel investor cash, and even then your day reckoning will come eventually.

My current model is business-to-business, making [steel material handling containers for industrial clients](#). I also worked for several years selling in the business-to-consumer market when I owned a burglar alarm business. What I realized is that whatever the product, making the sale takes six essential steps.

1. Figure out what the customer's biggest problems are.

Sometimes the customer can't even identify them himself. But if you can deduce what they are and devise a solution, you're probably halfway toward landing a sale. For example, if a wholesale customer had huge amounts of cash tied up in inventory, offer them financing for a year. That would help solve their biggest problem and they would be likely to give you more opportunities as a result. If cash wasn't an issue, however, then offering them financing wouldn't be such an inducement and you'd have to find some other hook. The key is to identify what causes heartburn for your client and to help remedy it.

2. Talk to the right person.

You can understand why the car dealer is happier when spouses are both on the lot car-shopping together: It is a waste of time to spend too much time selling to someone who's not in position to make the buying decision. You can shoot too high: Sometimes, I'll be conversing with the CEO of a company and after several minutes, if I'm aiming to sell something, I may realize I'd be happiest if they point me in the direction of their person actually in charge of the area where I'm trying to offer a solution. Especially in B-to-B, people have different roles in the purchasing process. Typically, the "specifier" details what's needed in a particular contract. The "sentinel" is tasked with reaching out to prospective suppliers. And the "qualifier" checks the veracity of the suppliers. You need to talk to the right person in the right situation.

3. Coax out objections

When you get to that right person in a position to purchase, and have learned their needs and described your offer, it's essential to find out if they have any objections keeping you from agreement on a possible deal. Coax out every objection they have until the well is dry and address every single one. "Except for these three (or four or five) objections, if we can iron these out, do we have a deal?" This is important: You're not there to belittle or diminish their concerns. You're there to tackle them. R-E-S-P-E-C-T the objections.

4. Benefits over features

Focus more on the potential benefits of what you're selling, not on the specific features. Buyers don't care as much about what your product does. You need to emphasize how it'll help them do what *they* want to do.

5. Don't forget to close

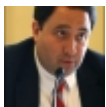
This may sound like utter common sense, but you'd be surprised how many people forget to do this step: You have to ask for the order. The old joke about voting is a truism when it comes to selling: Close early and close often.

6. Seal with a shake

And in America, typically, a nice, crisp handshake signals a done deal and the end of negotiations. No more jockeying. And you don't have to be face-to-face necessarily. In this age of cell phones and text messaging, sometimes I'll communicate with someone far away, "If I could shake your hand now, I would." That's the cue: Do we have a deal?

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<http://www.inc.com/drew-greenblatt/6-steps-to-landing-a-sale.html>



***Drew Greenblatt** is the president of **Marlin Steel**, a U.S.-based manufacturer of wire baskets and sheet-metal fabrications. Marlin has grown 25% over the past three years and has a record of 1,422 days without a safety problem.*

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