

From: Scott, Shawn [mailto:SScott@medline.com]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 9:24 AM
To: John Hirth's commentary on sales...
Subject: RE: John Hirth's commentary on sales...

John,

The day this email came out I was on one of O'Hare's famous delayed flights sitting on the runway to the big town of Little Rock, Arkansas. The gentleman next to

me started up the conversation of – "are you heading home or out for business?" that of course then lead to the next line of "what line of work are you in?" Thanks to

the email I had my message already crafted and told him that I "help Long Term Care Facilities improve their overall financial performance and patient care". He took

the bait hook line and sinker and as it turned out he was the CEO from a hospital chain with LTACH that was coming back from a conference in Florida.

I have appointments for my rep to go see him this week.

All the best,

Shawn Scott

Medline HealthCare

VP HealthCare Corporate Sales

847-643-4892

sscott@medline.com

From: bounce-133008@emailenfuego.net [mailto:bounce-133008@emailenfuego.net] On Behalf Of John Hirth's commentary on sales...
Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2007 7:17 AM
To: Scott, Shawn
Subject: John Hirth's commentary on sales...

John Hirth's commentary on sales...

"Do you have a good "airplane speech"...?

Posted: 24 Apr 2007 03:14 PM CDT

I was on an airplane the other day coming home from a program in Las Vegas. I had upgraded to first class (something I always try to do, good contacts in my

business fly first class) and was sitting next to a well dressed professional looking man. We started a conversation and I found out that he was the general manager of

a Mid-level manufacturing company. I asked about his business and suggested that the improving economy must have been a boost to his business. He offered "I

wish" and I asked him to tell me more. It wasn't long, however until the inevitable question came "...what do you do?".

The answer to this question is what I like to refer to as my "airplane speech" (now you understand the reference). You may have heard this called an "elevator

speech" or "initial value statement". Your response is important and will determine whether or not a potential "prospect" will want to continue the conversation. Your

answer needs to be well crafted and keyed to the value that you bring to your clients/customers but not so specific that you create objections or dis-interest.

We spend a lot of time with our clients "crafting" messages. Sometimes, people say too much or make statements that can be mis-constructed or are received by

the target (prospect) with a different "frame of reference" or definition. All too often messages get sent that are not appropriate and end up with a poor response. (Allow

me to use my profession as an example)

I've learned in my business that when asked the question "what do you do?" responding with "sales training" leads to either misunderstanding or "objections" that

will need to be overcome. Most people and companies do some type of "sales training" but it usually focuses on products or services offered and is really not "sales

process training". That is a textbook example of creating misunderstanding. When pressed and asked to be specific they usually define product or service training.

Now I have the job of convincing them that what I do is "different" and worse suggesting that what they do is really not sales training... telling a prospect they are

confused or "wrong" is not a good plan!

I've learned to respond with something that is somewhat vague and non-specific but that does a good job of creating interest and starting a conversation. When

asked "what do you do..." I usually respond with:

"It's a little difficult to explain but I guess the best description of what I do is I help companies make money".

Now, that response usually leads to another question;

"what do you mean (interest)"...

to which I can now say;

"we help companies make money by increasing revenue (prospecting, new account acquisition), increasing profitability (selling for higher prices by creating

difference and value) and lowering cost of sales (selling with fewer selling resources, shortening the selling process).

These statements usually drive a questions like;

"well what do you mean?"

to which I can respond with "of those issues would be most important to you. Now, I've created interest and started to get information that will help me control the

conversation and maybe create an opportunity.

I've put in parenthesis the feature that the statement is keyed to. Crafting your message involves knowing your features or benefits and then communicating them

in the form of questions that are difficult to say "no" to and also keep you from sounding like you are selling (helps to eliminate defensiveness). It is the beginning of

what we refer to as the "discovery process" and will help you identify the most important issues that are less likely to be confusing or that could drive an objection.

Real professional sales people work hard at "crafting" the right messages that lead to more productive conversations. Have you done that in your business?

Action Step: Take your features and benefits and ask "what do people really get when they buy from us?". The answer to that question will form the basis of your

"airplane speech".

You are subscribed to email updates from John Hirth's commentary on sales...

To stop receiving these emails, you may unsubscribe now.

Email Delivery powered by FeedBurner

If you prefer to unsubscribe via postal mail, write to: John Hirth's commentary on sales..., c/o FeedBurner, 549 W Randolph, Chicago IL USA 60661