



ODA / TOPLINE "Building Sales Capacity"

A Note From Joel

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Last month we listed Design, Behavior and Theme/Focus as three aspects of the Sales Call. Now, having prepared for the call it is time for the moment of truth, the actual sales call.

But before we embark on that call I want to share a key point. One of my mentors impressed on me the following.

We all know that on many calls there is no one home, your desired contact, even when you have an appointment, is not available. So, we might say: "It doesn't matter, my prospect won't be there, or will be busy." I will have to come back anyway, so why prepare, let's just shoot from the hip. I hope you can see the trap here.

Here is what I was taught: When entering the large central management tower at Ralston Purina, Checkerboard Square St Louis, Missouri, expect to run into the CEO of the corporation. He has his office in that building on the same floor as the VPs of engineering, purchasing and operations who I was visiting. I was taught to have something ready for him. Do you think he wanted a product catalog? Do you think he wanted to review one of my quotes? Of course not. But he was interested in the latest industry rumors and trends that I heard about? Sure. So, I had better have one ready.

How much time do you think I had? For him a few minutes. But I also had to prepare for the longer more detailed meetings I had with the VPs and Managers. For the VPs it was on time performance and new measurement systems, for the managers it was features, prices and delivery. They were all interested in new technology.

So, I designed my sales calls accordingly, so that my behavior would be professional. Effective sales behavior is a mix of preparation and performance.

Here is the secret, what I learned from these sales calls. You can fake it on some calls. You know more than they do and can respond and recover from a question. But when you run up against those customers at the top of the food chain guess what - they will see right through you and may not give you a second chance.

So, if you skip any of the steps in your carefully prepared sales pitch, you will not be rescued.

**Good Selling,
Joel McFadden**

