

# being present to the opportunity

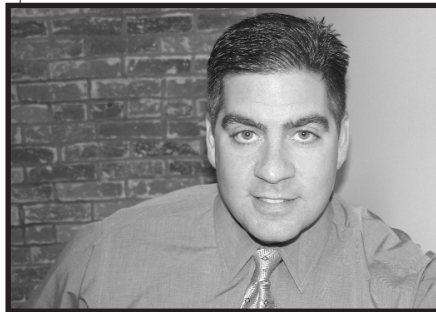
**ENROLL CLIENTS THROUGH PRESENCE, RAPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT.**

Last month we learned that 93% of communication is non-verbal. Our body language and tone of voice do most of the real communicating as we try to get beyond simply closing deals and work toward enrolling clients. Again, when you “close” a deal, you close the door – and then you are only as good as your last solution. But when you “enroll” clients in your vision and they enroll in yours, you are partnering for a longer term engagement. Within this context, there are certain dynamics needed to communicate to your prospects effectively. Outside of the verbal and non-verbal realm, communication comes down to effectively engaging your prospect. If you can’t engage your prospect, you can never successfully enroll them. (However, you can probably close them.) There are two main elements to engaging a prospect: First, you must be present, and second, you must begin developing rapport. We will deal with each of these in turn, but let’s first look at engagement a little closer.

If you want to enroll clients in your solution, your product or your service (and your vision of how it should be for them) you must first engage them, meaning that you must occupy their focus and/or attention. One recurring theme that salespeople find again and again is that potential clients, whether on the phone or in person, are difficult to engage, meaning that it is difficult to get the prospect to simply focus on the solution that you’re trying to produce for them. Everyone is busy and there’s a lot of noise and a lot of competition. So how do you get them to focus only on you? First, you must be present in the conversation. Simple? Yes. Critical? Yes.

Being present means shifting your focus completely to the other person. That may sound simple, but for many of us – especially in sales where many people succeed based on their own ego-strength – it is very difficult to consciously shift our attention away from ourselves and completely to the other person. Think about it. How often are you really present for someone? Maybe when someone tells you about a death in the family? How often do you interact with someone and he or she feels like they are the only other person in the universe for that

moment? More often than not, we are the antithesis of present. We are preoccupied, and so are they. More often than not, we are not present for the people who we are trying to enroll in our vision – our potential clients. We are not even listening – we are waiting to speak. And because of that, we often miss the greatest opportunities to help them meet their challenges. We go in with an agenda – something that we must communicate and something in mind that we must come away with. We walk in, do most of the talking,



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establish the need that we (think we) know they have and close the deal. But what kinds of opportunities would your clients present you with if you were simply 100% present for them? In order to engage someone – to make that person present for you – you must be present for him or her. Rapport then becomes the bridge between two people who are on the same wavelength.

Rapport is simply finding a common ground with your prospect – a space where each person feels comfortable in communicating and sharing information. Too many sales professionals assume rapport and lose the ability to enroll their prospects.

Creating and staying in rapport with potential clients means getting beyond yourself, your needs and your goals in order to determine what is most important to the person with whom you’re interacting. What are they trying to communicate to you, and how are they communicating with you? How do they like to be communicated with? Do they drive their point exhaustively? Are they subdued, meticulously analyzing the

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situation and calmly, rationally coming to conclusions? Do they see the exchange you’re having as a relationship to be formed, or a task to be performed? Creating and staying in rapport with someone is more than matching or mirroring someone’s behavior. In fact, it may even be the opposite. Someone who is high strung and under the stress of a deadline may react very well to someone that presents himself or herself as grounded and able to manage the details with quiet confidence. So creating rapport hinges on knowing what parts of your personality to present in a given situation, and that requires being present.

The really interesting thing is that two people can be completely disengaged from each other, totally preoccupied with their own thoughts and goals, and at the same time be in perfect rapport with each other. In this case, both parties are present to the fact that neither is (or wants to be) present, and are simply going through the motions to close the deal. But when that deliverable is done, so is the relationship, because it was transactional. Enrollers create a long-term relationship by being present to the outcome that the other person is trying to reach, staying in rapport and engaging that person’s attention to the solution in which they are both now invested.

Next month we will look at the process to create lasting rapport and ensure genuine communications with your prospects and clients. In the meantime, remember the three biggest lessons of communicating effectively: Focus on how you say something, not what you say; always be present in your communications, not preoccupied; and constantly focus on developing genuine rapport because enrollment is impossible without it.

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