

the dynamics of communication

It's not what you say - it's how you say it.

We've covered a lot of ground regarding our philosophy on sales and the psychological differences that separate good salespeople from great salespeople. With that foundation under us, we want to begin exploring the dynamics (or the process) of sales. If you've been following along from month to month, you know that our basic sales principle is "mindset first, process second." This doesn't mean that process is unimportant; it simply means that it needs to have a strong mindset to support it. Now that we have created a winning mindset, the first piece of process we want to explore is the dynamics of effective communication.

In 1967, a Stanford University researcher by the name of Dr. Moravian performed a now famous study on the elements of communication. His work centered on the idea that communication comes in three forms: words (the actual words we speak or write), voice quality (the tone, volume, inflection, etc., of our voice) and body language (the position and movement of our bodies).

Which aspect do you believe is most important in sales? Well, most of the salespeople that participate in our courses would tell you that it's the words: They are well-armed with call scripts, elevator pitches, brochures, stock e-mails and rebuttals to known objections. Ironically, marketing departments will spend countless hours and seemingly limitless dollars to find the right vehicle to carry the message (the words), but how much credence is given to how the sales and marketing people are carrying themselves?

Dr. Moravian discovered that words are only 7% of communication. That's right. Just 7%. So what makes up the rest? Voice quality accounts for 38%, and, believe it or not, 55% of communication is body language. Add up the importance of the quality of your voice and the importance of your body language and you will find that an astounding 93% of all communication is nonverbal. So, your mother was right: "It's not what you say - it's how you say it."

Think about this: The last time you were at a party, someone was telling a joke, and that person was the center of attention - he was holding people in rapture, telling (showing really) how the penguin waddled into the bar and ordered a... And sometime later

you wanted to relate that joke to a friend. You remember it all and can get through it pretty well, but without the same effect. "But oh, it was funny. The guy could really tell a joke," you say. Even though you used the same words, the difference was the delivery - the nonverbal aspects of the communication.

Now, put that in a sales environment. You're at a networking event and hear someone going on about, say a new piece of marketing technology. The person is really excit-



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ed about it, talking a blue streak, telling anyone who will listen how this is going to change everything. You don't know what he's talking about (and he might not either) but the excitement is contagious. His tone of voice and body language are sending signals to everyone around him that are saying, "Listen to me." Because of that, you tune in to the words (the 7% of his communication that will describe the value proposition, features and benefits) that he is saying.

Now contrast that with someone who clearly knows every feature and benefit of the product or service and every possible if/then situation into which the product or service might be brought to market, but who doesn't have the nonverbal skills to generate interest or excitement. You (the prospect) desperately try to find a way to get out of this conversation, and no matter what this person says, you would not trust him to lead you out of a paper bag, never mind lead you to a buying decision.

It's as simple as this little maxim:

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Ignorance on fire is stronger than knowledge on ice. And knowledge on fire is unstoppable.

Disseminating your knowledge with confidence in both voice and body language is not an accident. It is the natural result of a good mindset - and as we learned over the last several months, mindset is a choice. You can choose how you are moving, what you are saying, and what you are focusing on to right your mindset. That will affect your communication - and most importantly, your results.

If this article is sinking in, then you should be having a couple of serious "Aha!" moments right about now regarding prospecting for new clients:

E-mail is the worst form of communication for prospecting. (It completely depends on only 7% of the entire communication paradigm and is the least effective and most used tool in selling.)

The phone is a much better tool - tried and true. You can control your tone, voice quality and body language (including your movement and focus while on the phone) - and what you say. Most sales professionals ignore their body language on the phone and are compromising 55% of their effectiveness.

Face-to-face is still the best way to prospect (and now we know why), because you can control your words, your tone and your body language. In short, you control the message. That's what outstanding sales professionals strive to do.

When you're not getting the results you want, don't get into analysis paralysis on what you're saying. Instead, zero in on and make changes to the 93% of your communication that is determining how you're saying it. Change your nonverbal communication and you'll change your results.

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