

animal instincts

Enroll prospects faster by learning to understand what motivates them.

Prospective clients present themselves to us in different ways. Some prospects are high-energy, task-oriented achievers. Some are steadfast and seemingly ambivalent. Some want the facts, and just the facts. And some seem to just want to play. So why is it that some sales people seem to be able to enroll the prospect no matter how that client is presenting him- or herself?

The secret is that great salespeople understand who a prospect is, recognize what motivates his or her buying decision, and know enough to realize that you don't have to act like them – you just have to understand the behavior and respond accordingly. What we're talking about is understanding your prospective client's personality type and being able to present to that prospective client what they need in order to be enrolled in your solution. If you know what is important to a client, you can present it and forward the enrollment process faster and more efficiently.

There are a lot of personality profile tests on the market – some of them very good, in fact – that will give you a very accurate picture of a person's personality type. But try to get a prospective client to sit for a detailed test. Heck, you're just trying to keep them on the phone long enough to make an appointment. But it doesn't need to be that difficult. Sometimes knowing a little bit about their personality type from just what you learn in the first few minutes of the enrollment process, can be the difference between getting the sale or not.

Again, there are a lot of personality tests out there, but here's a fun and "sticky" way of remembering the four major personality types in business. Think of your prospects as: Sharks, Sea Urchins, Whales and Dolphins.

SHARKS

How many people have you met in your business life who love the thrill of the chase, can handle rejection after rejection, have a strong ego, and love to be recognized for what they do? In fact, it's probably why they do it. These are the Sharks, and it's no coincidence that many of them end up in sales. Sharks are hard-driving, in-your-face, results-oriented people. What primarily motivates them is money, recognition and significance.

SEA URCHINS

Sea Urchins want results, too. But they will typically gather the job in, collect all of the facts and do it themselves – that way they know it will be done correctly. Sea Urchins want information – all of the information. And once they have it,

they will organize it to their high standards and use it to get results. Sea Urchins are primarily motivated by facts and information.

WHALES

Whales typically want what is best for everyone. They will give themselves wholly to a cause. They will work hard and make sacrifices so that the greatest good is done for the greatest number, and so that the whole community (or whole company) moves forward. What primarily motivates Whales is helping others and making a difference.



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DOLPHINS

Dolphins just want to play. Work for them is play, too. They enjoy talking on the phone with clients, catching up with them, asking about their kids, talking about sports, and going to networking events and other business/social functions. Dolphins play and others want to be having as much fun as them. They are primarily motivated by enjoying the ride and having fun along the way.

Everyone has each personality in them. It's more a question of which type is dominant. Some have one category that is clearly dominant, where others have two or three that are close in dominance. To be a successful sales professional, you do not need to be a particular type, you just need to recognize what the types are and embrace them. Too many sales reps try to be something they are not (typically a Shark); and instead of being successful, they come off as incongruent and not genuine. Ask yourself, have you ever run into a salesperson who seems slippery? That person is not embracing his or her personality, and they are not noticing yours.

So, let's role play for a second. You're a Shark

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and you get a prospective client on the phone. You want an appointment, and you're not going to take no for an answer. The prospect wants to know how long your company has been in business, he wants to know if you have a Web site that he can look at and asks, "Can you send me your brochure?" But you're not having it. You ask him if you can mail him the trash can too, to throw the brochure in. He laughs and finally caves, and you have the appointment. (Note: You've closed them, but have not enrolled them. See my June article for more on closing versus enrolling.) You arrive 15 minutes early, schmooze the receptionist and are shown into the conference room where you fail miserably. That's because he really did want the details and you didn't prepare for that. Though you could have. The potential client was sending you Sea Urchin signals one after the other by asking for information and facts, but you weren't listening.

This is not to say that you have to mirror your client and, in effect, be them. Do not try to be them. Just know them, and present to them what they need to make a decision. The way you get to know them is to ask questions, beginning with "What are you trying to achieve?" If you ask questions and listen, your prospects will tell you what you need to present to them in order to be successful with them. For instance, what piece of marketing collateral – also known as a "driver" (See my September article.) – would that person want to see to warrant giving you an hour-long appointment? Is it an article about your company's success in the business news (Sea Urchin), the promise of lunch at a new restaurant (Dolphin), testimonials of how you've helped entire organizations (Whale), or is it how much money your product can add to their personal bottom line? (Shark) These are a few of the infinite number of possible drivers that will successfully enroll your prospects. Know their animal type and follow your natural instincts to endless and effortless enrollment.

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