

THE SALESPERSON'S **MANIFESTO**

Selling, in a world
inundated with
information,
products and sellers.



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A Salesperson's Dilemma and Thus This Manifesto

I am a salesperson.

And I am one of many dozens of salespeople and marketers vying for my prospect's time, attention and wallet-share.

Not that my prospect cares about me or my products. He's too busy trying to woo his own customers to care about me, or my kind.

Funny game this, huh? Cat chase mouse chasing mouse.

Not that my boss cares about the game. For my boss, it is all about the 'numbers'. Either I meet my 'numbers', or I get the boot. End of story.

So, now it's dog chase cat chasing mouse chasing mouse.

Complicated game, no?



Fortunately, for me...

I've learnt a few lessons in life that have stood me in good stead in many a sales interaction.

Here then is my nine-point manifesto.

It is the key to my sales success

1. My prospect - just like me - cares solely about his KPI achievement at work. So, I will 'talk' to what my prospect cares about

My prospect, like me, or any other human, is inherently self-centred (a few stray incidents of altruism notwithstanding).

What drives him at work are the achievement of his own KPIs or business goals.



Any means – for me as a seller that would mean the product or service that I offer – which will help him achieve his KPIs or goals better than what he is currently using to achieve these, he will be willing to discuss with me.

Everything else he will reject or relegate to the trash can.

If that be true, then I will always ask myself a few questions:

- 1 Which of my prospect's KPIs or goals does my offering help meet?
- 2 How does it do so?
- 3 How do I structure my prospect interactions and pitch to reflect this?

2. I'm one of several dozens of salespeople trying to vie for my prospect's time, attention and wallet share. So, I will try harder to stand apart

There are, at this point in time, several dozens of salespeople, selling several dozens of products, (and multiple sellers offering the same products) who are trying to gain my prospect's attention and wallet-share.

My prospect simply has no time - perhaps my prospect's scarcest resource - to allocate to every seller who comes knocking at his door.



My prospect will share his time and attention only with those salespeople who seem worth the trouble.






Also, in situations where there are multiple sources providing equally compelling messages, the source who is seen as being more trustworthy will obtain a seat at the table.

The rest will be left outside gnashing their teeth.



I will do whatever is in my power to stand apart from the crowd (of salespeople trying to woo my prospect) and build credibility and trust.

So, I will:

	Dress sharper than my competitors.
	Be immaculately groomed. Always.
	Learn as much as I can about my customer's industry and business. I will use this knowledge in my sales interactions.
	Remember that my body language could kill my sales message
	Make social selling and effective content marketing a part of my sales activities.

3. Disinterest is the default reaction that my prospect has to salespeople's offerings. I will never forget, or be offended by this

My product offering, I believe, is great; it will definitely benefit my prospect (like it has for my existing customers).

However, my prospect doesn't see it thus. At least, my prospect doesn't know this, yet.

Disinterest, then, is the default setting for my prospect. Even if he truly needs my product or service. Even if not buying my product can have serious ramifications for him and his work or business.

Hey, how often have we ignored something important till it became an unbearable pain that cried for our attention?

Yes, my prospect needs my product, but could simply be putting off thinking about this need as more urgent matters fill up his time.

I will remember that every time I interact with a new prospect. And I will not let his disinterest offend or put me off.

And, I will do my utmost to cut through the noise, distraction and disinterest to get my prospect's attention. That means really fine tuning my ability to show him how my product is best suited to help him meet his KPIs or goals.



4. I will remember that a one-pitch-fits-all approach to sales will backfire.




The 'situation' with different prospects vary. A one-pitch-fits-all approach is a fool's errand.

Disinterest.

Remember?



I will thus:

	Seek to fit my prospects into different 'buckets' relative to their 'situation'
	Customise my pitch for each 'bucket'
	Craft my proposal even – if prudent – basis the buckets'

5. I will perfect my 'How' messages

Moving my prospect from 'disinterest' to 'interest' mode requires me to communicate how my product helps them meet their KPIs better than they are currently doing. Only then will the sale advance.



I will also need to provide some proof of concept to back up my claims. Testimonials and case studies of clients having successfully met their KPIs using my product will be the tools I will deploy here.

(Telling them about how great a 'brand' I am is not the way to go; not unless they are at the stage where they are already interested in products like mine and are evaluating between different brands).

6. Simplicity is the name of the game

My message should be simple enough to understand. I will project the path to purchase and implementation of my product as being 'doable' enough to my prospect.

'Coz nothing kills a sale faster than complexity.



7. Interest, though, is insufficient; there exist many roadblocks to the purchase and implementation of my offering, which have to be dealt with

Interest by itself – even if it exists - is insufficient. There exist an entire range of roadblocks and reservations that various individuals in my prospect's organisation will have against the purchase and implementation of my product.

At each stage, and for every influencer in the sales process, I will proactively identify the reservation or doubt that can prevent the sale from moving to the next stage in the buyer decision journey. I will then actively seek to mitigate these.



I will advance the sale at all times, and not merely 'follow-up'.

(In fact, I've decided to ban the term 'follow-up' from my sales parlance. Instead, I will seek to advance the sale.)




8. Prospects haggle. I will ensure that I negotiate intelligently

Hey, who doesn't like a good bargain. I know I do. As does my prospect.

But I need to maintain my margins.

And my organisation's brand.

So, I will:

Prepare adequately for my negotiation discussions	
Draw the prospect's focus on to the price-value equation, and away from price alone	
Learn how to identify and deal with the dirty tricks prospects use in a negotiation	

9. The final purchase decision is a culmination of many related smaller decisions. I will only reach the desired end - the purchase order - by influencing these smaller decisions.

As a corollary to the earlier point, the final decision to make a purchase then is a culmination of many smaller decisions or agreements that the prospect, and others within the prospect's organisation, would make.

My focus then will be to identify what is the immediate next micro-decision that I want the prospect to make. Then I will chart a tactic to influence this. And then repeat this for the next micro-decision.

It is the only means to the end that I seek.



Here, in a nutshell then, is my manifesto:

I will:

1. make my sales interactions all about the prospect's KPIs
2. endeavour to stand apart from my competitors
3. try to break through my prospect's default 'disinterest' barrier
4. tailor my pitches to the 'bucket' that I have placed my prospect in
5. perfect my 'how message
6. eschew message complexity
7. advance the sale; stop merely 'following-up'
8. negotiate intelligently
9. remember that closing a sale is about influencing a series of micro-decisions



