



The Baron
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March 2010

Let's not forget the importance of sensitivity

In our programs, we talk at length about why Buyers buy. We cite others' research and share our own when we provide Consultative Selling Skills training. Four key behaviors were discussed—Credibility, Empathy, Sensitivity and Trust.

Credibility is critical. People will not buy from people who don't know their products and services. If you don't consistently demonstrate your credibility to a client, it makes your job an order of magnitude more difficult.

And of course, empathy is also extraordinarily important. If you can't connect with someone or let them know you can see things from their perspective, you probably won't build much of a relationship. Research has shown that most buyers look for empathy from their salespeople above and beyond everything else.

Everybody talks about the importance of building trust. If your clients don't trust you they won't do business with you. We all know that.

So it is obvious to all of us that trustworthiness, credibility, and empathy are behaviors that we must demonstrate to our clients on a day-to-day basis. We know that.

It is the fourth behavior that gets less attention. And that is *sensitivity*.

Yes, sensitivity. This is something we need to demonstrate as well. Yet we have to be subtle about it. We don't just walk in the client's office and share that we cried when we saw *Bambi* the first time. It goes far beyond that.

We can be sensitive to the client's role in the organization, where they are in their career, how much time they have, how much pressure they are facing, their relationship with their manager and how they feel about their jobs. We can demonstrate sensitivity throughout the sales call. Here are a few examples:

It is how you ask questions—Questioning is such an important skill. It might be the most important skill. But sometimes we need to ask tough questions. That is why we believe that it is so important to let the client know the reason you are asking the question and/or what's in it for the client to answer. Remember, any question that starts with the word *why* probably needs to be asked with sensitivity.

The critical issue of time—We need to respect the client's time. We know that many clients believe that salespeople are not sensitive to their time. So do what you can to demonstrate otherwise. Confirm the "time contract," check in throughout the meeting

and be sure to end on time. Look at your watch every now and again and when you do that, let them know why.

Speak to everyone in the room—If there are several people in the meeting, be sure to speak with everyone. The tendency is to focus on the key people. That is bad form. If there are five people in the meeting, you need to engage with all five of them.

Be sensitive with your e-mails—We are all moving fast. We are sending e-mails on the fly with our Blackberries, Smart Phones and computers. When you send a client an e-mail take the time to read it as if you were the client. Be tough on yourself. Think about possible misinterpretations. Be clear and concise. Don't let insensitivity result in the client getting the wrong message.

So there you are. Some things to think about that relate to sensitivity. You have already thought of several more. That's great, because the more sensitive you are, the more your clients will appreciate you.