



The Baron
Group, Inc.

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Selling without a Product

This week's tip asks you to be a bit speculative. We are asking you to think of a somewhat hypothetical situation that could yield new insights to the sales process.

Every now and again, we believe that you should visit your clients with the intent of strictly reviewing and enhancing your understanding of their situation. That's right; we are suggesting that you make sales calls on your prospects and retentive clients as if you did not have a product to sell.

It's an interesting way to approach a sales call. Assume that your bag is empty and quite simply that you are selling without a product. Of course, this is fictitious and hopefully inconceivable, but it is a terrific way to approach calls with clients every now and again.

If you don't have a product to sell all you can do in this meeting is to get the client talking. They can talk about themselves, talk about their business, talk about their needs, talk about their problems and talk about their opportunities. The operative word is talk—and the client is doing virtually all the talking.

Selling without a product demands better planning. There is no way to conduct that kind of meeting without serious thought to your objectives, the agenda, how you would prepare the client for questioning, and of course the questions you would ask and the pre-question statements and clusters of questions that need attention.

We often discuss the importance of pre-call planning. We are all guilty of not doing enough of that. But if don't have a product to sell, you would do much more of this. And quite often the difference between a good and very good, or a very good and excellent sales call, is the result of effective planning.

So, is all this hypothetical? Sure, we do have products and services to sell. But approaching sales calls as if we didn't have a product to sell frees us to do many of the things that make us more successful in building relationships and determining needs.

And with that in mind, try doing this every so often. Make a call on a prospect during which all you do is gather information, determine needs, enhance the relationship, and learn more about the client. Try it one of these days and see what happens. You may be surprised at how much more you know after the call than you did before.

Don't jump too quickly to solutions. You can already anticipate the results...