

How well you build value impacts everything else that's going to happen in the sales process.

The four areas of building value that you need to focus your efforts on are:

1. Your salesperson

The salesperson is the most influential aspect of any sale. We might like to think it's the product or the price, but it is us, individually, utilizing the tools we have available in the most effective manner possible.

Whether we are asking for \$2,000 or \$200,000 for a product or project, we must first convince the prospect that we are a competent and valuable aspect of the sale.

The most important attribute we can bring is to care about the prospect and opportunity and treat both with respect. The adage that "no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care" is more critical than ever in high-value selling. People buy from people, so caring is a very powerful sales technique.

John Wooden, a successful basketball coach, only had three rules to be part of his championship teams:

1. Be on time.
2. Be neat and clean in appearance and speech.
3. Never criticize a teammate.

(For businesses, that means never criticize the competition.)

All three rules take effort and convey respect. I see these as the baseline of where we all begin.

2. Your company

You might assume the prospect knows about your company because of its longevity, marketing or social media; however, the healthiest attitude is to assume prospects

know nothing about your company. This assumption gives you a chance to tell them about it.

Approach each prospect this way: "Before we get started, let me tell you a few things about our company..." This is when you can state how long the company has been in business, the type of work it does, the awards it has earned and its dedication to the industry.

Most buyers, and competitors, want to commoditize the product or project. Instead, all these efforts are to build value beyond the price. A 120-second company credibility statement that is verbalized every time you speak to a potential client is possibly the strongest technique I've witnessed in 30 years in sales. It is also most likely the least adopted and used, so this is an opportunity.

3. Your product

A common mistake is to put a product first, when its position is third on influencing a sale. Yes, it's important, but the best product in the world doesn't stand a chance with a salesman or company that doesn't build the value of the entire purchase experience.

As you know your product, you're reinforcing your value, which sheds a favorable light on your company. These things build on each other to create the total value proposition of what the price represents.

I always advise that until you know your product very well and can be effective and persuasive with its information, don't concern yourself with the competition. Most salespeople I've met give too much credit to other products because they are not an expert about their own.

4. Your price

Price only becomes important in the absence of the other three. If there is no value in the salesperson, company or product, then price is the only thing one can consider. An anomaly that has struck me for over 30 years is that the highest volume and most

successful companies have the highest prices (and profits), which is supported by the value they create for more than the product.

Warren Buffett also said, "If the value of your product is the price, then you are selling a commodity." There is very little profit and very many struggles in selling commodities.

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