

## YOUR SELLING SUCCESS FORMULA

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Have you ever tried to sell your product and you couldn't establish a rapport with the customer? Have you ever emphasized something you thought important and your customer responded blankly? Do you find that some clients make slower (or faster) decisions than you think appropriate?

Answering yes to any of these situations means you've run across a customer whose buying style is different from your selling style. To be more successful you need to learn to adapt your selling style to fit your customer's buying style. By "reading" your clients behavioral style and appealing to that person in their terms, you can actually increase your sales dramatically.

In the early 1930s, a concept was developed by William Marston which was later elaborated upon by Dr. John Geier while he was Chairperson of the Behavioral Science Department at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. This concept divided people into four basic personality types. It's your understanding of these types that will allow you to sell more successfully. Many companies using this approach have increased sales from 10 percent to 30 percent because their sales people can now sell to customers that they previously did not understand how to approach.

There are three steps to this process. The first is discovering your own style. The second step is recognizing your customer's behavior style, and the final step is applying this information to effectively modify your present approach to selling.

### DETERMINING YOUR STYLE

There are four basic styles or behavior categories in which you could be placed. They are called: DOMINANCE (D); INFLUENCE (I); STEADINESS (S); and CONSCIENTIOUS(C). An important point to keep in mind is that no style is better than another; rather the key to being a successful salesperson *is* being able to adapt your selling style to fit your customer's buying style.

To determine your own style you'll need to answer the following questions. In selecting your answers it *is* important to focus on the behavior you do the most when you are wearing your "selling hat". Even though you may do parts of both questions, you will need to make a choice. Pick the answer that you do at least 51 percent of the time.

**QUESTION:** Is your selling behavior style more active and outgoing or more reserved?

If you answered active and outgoing, you are either a D (DOMINANCE) or an I (INFLUENCE) behavior style. If more reserved, you are either an S (STEADINESS) or a C (CONSCIENTIOUS) behavioral style.

That's the first step. Now to find out even more specifically what your style is, you'll need to answer one of the next questions:

### **D OR I QUESTION:**

If your first answer was that you were a D or an I, are you more concerned with directing of others or relating with others?

If you answered relating, then you are an I. If you answered directing, then you are a D.

## **S OR C QUESTION:**

For those whose first answer was an S or C, you need to answer the following questions:

Are you more concerned with accepting of others or with assessing or judging of others? If you are more concerned with accepting of others, then you are an S. If you are more concerned with assessing of others, then you are a C.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLES**

Now that you know which of the four styles you are, let's take a look at the characteristics of each of the styles.

If you are a D, Dominance style, you like getting immediate results, causing action, and accepting challenges. You prefer to make quick decisions to solve problems, and you enjoy taking charge.

If you are an I, Influence style, you enjoy contacting and entertaining people while making a favorable impression. You are very verbal. You like generating enthusiasm, and creating a motivational environment. You want to help others, and you enjoy participating in a group.

If you are an S, Steadiness style, you like staying in one place while concentrating on the task at hand. You are loyal and have tremendous patience which allows you to be a good listener in order to calm excited people.

If you are a C, Conscientious style, you prefer following standards and procedures, concentrating on details, and working under controlled circumstances. While you can be diplomatic with people, you like accuracy and will criticize someone's performance, if necessary. You are a critical thinker, and believe in authority.

## **YOUR CLIENT'S STYLE**

Now that you know a bit more about your style, let's explore your customer's style.

### **The Dominance Style**

If your customer is a D style, they are highly interested in seeing new and innovative products. They usually possess a fairly strong ego, and do not like to waste time. To sell these highly individualistic go-getters you need to get right to the bottom line. Don't waste their time with a lot of facts and figures. They just want to hear the high points of your presentation. They, in turn, will be loyal to you as long as you provide them with service.

The D style is more impressed with your efficient, no-nonsense business manner than any testimonials or data. They would rather leave detailed research about the product and the cost factors involved to you.

### **Do's and Don'ts Based on the Client's Buying Style**

There are several DO's and DON'Ts for each of the styles which are important to understand.

Here are the DO's for the D style client:

- DO to be efficient and omit giving the D client too many details
- DO be strictly businesslike as they will let you know if they want to chat
- DO stress how prestigious and efficient your product is.

- DO flatter their ego.
- DO make sure you give them direct answers.
- DO give them a short summary and close.

Here are the DON'T'S for the D client's buying style:

- DON'T explain too many details unless they ask for them.
- DON'T give your opinions rather give them plenty of options.
- DON'T be evasive or indecisive; just give them clear direct answers.

### **The Influence Style**

If your customer is an I style, they are the friendly, gregarious type who wants to talk and socialize. They make great salespeople themselves (they may even try and sell you something). They tell jokes and stories and are less concerned about business.

With an I style, spare them the details as they are not interested in them. They love new and innovative products. An I is fairly easy to sell if you are sociable with them. This also means they can easily wind up doing business with a competitor so give them plenty of follow-up service. Buy them lunch or simply a cup of coffee and closing will be easier.

Here are the DO's for the I-style buyer:

- DO let them talk, and give them compliments about their accomplishments.
- DO use their own words to direct the discussion back to the business you want to accomplish.
- DO use testimonials and name drop.
- DO be enthusiastic and friendly.
- DO give your sales summary by only focusing on the major selling points.

DON'Ts for an I buyer:

- DON'T give them a lot of facts (you'll create confusion).
- DON'T let there be so much chatter that you don't get around to selling them.

### **The Steadiness Style**

The S customer may be a bit shy, but does want to be your friend. These customers are not suspicious, but are slow to make changes. They need to feel they can trust you. When you show them products talk about how traditional, family oriented and safe the products are.

With an S customer, take it slow and easy as speed can lose the sale. They will want to see your entire line of products or services and they will want to think about it before they make a decision. To earn their trust and friendship, ask about their family and hobbies. Emphasize the traditional about your product or services during your reassuring follow-up calls.

Here are the DO's for the S buying style:

- DO be low key.
- DO keep your explanations quiet and simple, but loaded with details.
- DO involve the family in the decision.
- DO stress the safety of the products.
- DO provide them with a complete picture, including all hidden charges.
- DO assure them that their decision is right, and that there is no financial risk.

DON'Ts for an S:

DON'T go too fast or omit details.

DON'T get too friendly too quickly.

### **Consciousness Style**

The C customer will initially be suspicious of you. These individuals can become solidly faithful to you, but only after you have proven yourself to them. They are tough clients to get (and to lose, once you've got them). They are not great talkers or innovators.

With a C style, give them solid background information and convince them that you get results. Testimonials from other satisfied clients work well, especially if the testimonial is from another C. They need time to absorb details and digest the *facts* thoroughly before taking the next step. They will want to see the entire line of your products. They are suspicious of new and innovative designs.

Here are the DO's for the C buyer's style:

DO emphasize how they can minimize their financial risk.

DO stress the secure financial benefits they will achieve if they buy now and what they will lose if they wait.

DO be patient, answer their questions fully, and ask them "how" questions to get their opinion.

DO give a complete detailed financial picture.

DO be sure what you say to them is consistent with the written materials and your company's Web site.

DON'Ts for a C:

DON'T give the C customer a hard sell.

DON'T get personal about their family, if you don't know them well.

DON'T physically pat them on the back at the first meeting.

DON'T speak loudly like a carnival barker, or answer their objections lightly.

### **BLENDING WITH THE SELLER AND THE BUYER**

Now that you understand yourself and your customer more clearly, we need to put it all together. To be truly effective you'll need to blend your selling style with that of your customers. Your customer is not going to change their style to match yours. You will need to temporarily change your style to better match your client's buying style and meet their wants and needs.

### **BLENDING YOUR STYLE**

Let's now examine how you can go about blending your style to the different styles of your customers.

### **BLENDING FOR THE D SALESPERSON**

You're strong-minded and confident. You like to deal with new, innovative items, and you become bored with details.

To sell a D: Be yourself. One D communicates well with another.

To sell an I: Be a little friendlier than usual, not quite as businesslike. You should get along fairly easily with an I customer.

To sell an S: Slow down, give assurances, give more details, be friendlier, give them a chance to digest facts and don't overstress new or innovative aspects.

To sell a C: Present plenty of proof and facts, make sure all questions are answered, take it much slower than your usual pace, and don't be "pushy."

### **BLENDING FOR THE I SALESPERSON**

You're friendly and happy-go-lucky. You lack attention to details, become easily bored, and are very social and people oriented.

To sell a D: Don't joke or make small talk. Stay businesslike, and don't waste time.

To sell an I: No problem. Just remember to ask him or her for their commitment to buy.

To sell an S: Earn his or her trust before becoming too friendly. Stick to the facts and figures. Some socializing and small talk about their family or hobbies is acceptable. You will need to show a great deal of knowledge about the product.

To sell a C: He or she is probably your most difficult customer. They're not impressed by story-telling or socializing. Give them facts, figures, and proof. The best you can do is attempt to act like another C. It's won't be easy, but it is the only way to succeed with a C.

### **BLENDING FOR THE S SALESPERSON**

You're steady and dependable, but easily discouraged. You can lack confidence in your sales abilities when placed in new and difficult situations.

To sell a D: Assert more confidence, and don't be intimidated or scared off by the strong-willed and challenging D. Come back strongly with the answers they want.

To sell an I: You may not like their over-friendly, time-wasting but you should get along fairly well.

To sell an S: Like you, he or she will require lots of assurances. Watch what you say and how you say it.

To sell a C: You'll have a fine rapport as long as you can confidently answer all their questions and firmly present specific facts and figures. Don't be intimidated by their initial skepticism.

### **BLENDING FOR THE C SALESPERSON**

You're a well-organized facts-and-figures person who prefers selling established, time-proven products and services.

To sell a D: Be careful; don't overwhelm him or her with all your facts and figures. *Just* hit the high points. You'll need to muster enough courage to sell them those new and innovative products or services.

To sell an I: Again, resist the urge to lay out all the facts; just hit the high points, being as friendly as possible. Have a few good jokes ready to deliver. Try showing him or her new and innovative products or services.

To sell an S: Just don't talk too *fast* and you'll get along well. Give him or her plenty of time to digest the facts you present. Talk about their family a little, too.

To sell a C: This is your easiest sale. You'll see eye to eye with him or her from the start.

### **CONCLUSION**

While few of us are pure D, I, S, or C you will find that blending your style will be one of the most effective and successful sales techniques you can acquire. Companies that have used this concept have seen sales increase from 10 to 30 percent because their salespeople are now selling the styles they previously didn't know how to sell.

To help you develop your skills use the people in your office who are the other styles as a resource to

help you role play how to approach that tough customer more effectively. You'll find that the more you use these techniques, the easier it will be to identify clients, and the more sales you will be closing. Happy closings!

About the Author: Dr. Teplitz is an author, attorney and has a Ph.D. in Wholistic Health Sciences. He is author of *Managing Your Stress*, *Switched-On Living* and *Brain Gym for Business*. He speaks and consults on management, leadership, sales and personal development issues. Contact him at 800 77-RELAX (777-3529), Email [Info@Teplitz.com](mailto:Info@Teplitz.com) or go to [www.Teplitz.com](http://www.Teplitz.com).