

Making a Commitment to Success

Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes...

—Peter Drucker

Deciding to Move Forward

When we decide to move forward with our goal to improve our performance, our lives will eventually change. If you adopt the principles in this book, you will be able to create organized, colorful, and memorable presentations filled with anecdotes and humor. You will be able to implement many of the sales and closing techniques that you have *learned* but have never quite made *work*. More importantly, you will have an improved level of success selling your ideas or your company's products. (I have seen many people com-

plete my seminars and wind up having significantly improved career opportunities.)

I'm certain you are about to become more motivated because you will feel as though you have control over the results of your efforts. In a sales presentation there are some things you can't change, but there are many things you can—if you learn how. Your arguments will be convincing, you will have better stories and anecdotes, and you will have more fun!

We address all of the techniques you will need to learn to take your clients from mere interest to closing the sale. *New Sales Speak* will be your guide in an exciting learning process that will produce unlimited benefits for you, your family, your employer, and your clients. So let's make a commitment right now to achieve that goal.

Decide to Become a Great Presenter

In order to become a dazzling presenter and more effective salesperson, there are several things you will likely have to overcome. The biggest one is fear. Consider the following report from an article in the *Washington Business Journal*. In its September 10, 2004, issue, the *Journal* says, "According to Gallup, the fear of public speaking has been at or near the top of its annual poll of 'things Americans fear most' for years. Public speaking, at least for some, is more fearsome than heights, claustrophobia, spiders, needles, mice, crowds, thunderstorms and even flying." I will share with you ideas on how to channel your fear into energy through identifying its causes, and how to use it to work *for* you rather than *against* you.

If you already have been giving presentations, you may have to overcome a few bad habits that are deeply ingrained. Relinquishing these can be difficult when we perceive them as part of our personalities. To improve our presentation means that we must set higher goals for ourselves. We must give up our comfortable attitude of just getting by.

Commit to Doing a Little More Work

Consider that you always remember the great presenter, and you never forget the terrible presenter. Who is it that we *do* forget? We quickly forget the person who gives a mediocre or average presentation. Giving a solid, persuasive talk is challenging. If it were easy, everyone would be doing it. One reason why it can be so rewarding is that everyone is *not* doing it, and we can shine by comparison. So we must overcome the inertia keeping us from accomplishing what is admittedly a challenge but is also a simple fact of life on the road to self-improvement.

Commit to Doing a Little More Work

People sometimes ask me what the difference is between someone who closes a lot of sales and someone who just barely gets by, when both individuals appear similarly competent. I answer by saying it is generally a person's ability to analyze the audience, match a delivery style with audience preferences, and build content that meets their needs.

It helps to know your audience. Is it a group of teachers from Dubuque, or a team of biologists from the Department of Agriculture whose specialty is crop tolerance of salinity levels in river water? You have to know. In short, you have to do your homework. We will discuss the audience more thoroughly later in the book, but it is important to understand that to give a great presentation requires making the extra effort necessary to customize your talk and meet the needs of the individual or group who will hear it. It is an important part of making your presentation unique and memorable.

In order to have a persuasive presentation, you will need to have completed some homework about your audience. You must be able to offer them a presentation customized to their needs, beliefs, and style. This takes preparation and requires doing the work necessary to find out something about your listeners beforehand. Unfortunately, this isn't always possible. When it isn't, you have to use your standard

presentation found through experience to work most often on the majority of listeners.

Decide to Be Entertaining!

When I have people present in front of a video camera during my training sessions, the first reaction they often have after seeing the playback is one of shock.

“Terri, I didn’t realize how boring I sound!”

Yes, and sadly they are boring. Why? Typically because they have never listened to themselves speak while imagining what it would be like to sit in the audience. Would you like to listen to *you*? Would you be persuaded by *you*? Would you buy from *you*? Another reason people aren’t interesting is they often think it doesn’t matter if they are boring.

Some people assume because they work for a large company that the firm’s name alone will sell the product. Some people believe (inaccurately) that their job is only to deliver brochures and answer questions. To be effective, they must do much more; they must be entertaining and worth listening to. *Never let a great product or a great company get in the way of a great presentation.*

Commit to Keeping Your Presentation Fresh

Whether or not we accept it, times change, economies change, and businesses change. Your presentation will constantly change and evolve based on the changing needs of your marketplace and your audience as well as what’s happening in terms of the culture of the times. If you don’t constantly monitor changes and adapt your presentation to the changing marketplace, you will miss opportunities. Whether or not we like it, if we fail to keep up with change, we tend to slide backward. The marketplace today is very different from that of the past, and the sales professional needs different strategies to compete successfully. Salespeople need polished, believable, and highly persuasive pre-

sentations if they expect clients in the coming decades to give them their business.

Commit to Delivering with More Impact— Not More Information

Ben Franklin said that something is innovative if it is only 10 percent new. Today there are new ways to deliver a presentation that make it refreshing, innovative, and different. I feel one of the problems in sales training today may be overemphasis on and misinterpretation of two forms or approaches to selling—consultative selling and value-added selling. Consultative selling is a process whereby you act as a consultant while walking a person through the selling process. Value-added selling is offering additional features or services to your product in order to make it more desirable.

The problem is that many people think it means you have to put even more information into your presentation than you did previously. Salespeople generally don't have time to educate clients for two or three hours on why they should do something. This book is designed to help you meet the challenge of how to take all the necessary material, refine it, and then present it to meet the very strict time parameters imposed by your client or decision-maker. Suzette Haden Elgin, in her book *The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense at Work*, suggests that "no speech or presentation should ever last more than 20 minutes," because that is the average attention span of a listener. Of course there are a number of exceptions depending on the selling cycle and selling environment, but it is something to consider when you are building your next presentation.

As we step into the "how-to" of creating a memorable presentation, we hope you are committed to the foregoing six principles, which are:

1. Move forward.
2. Become a great presenter and face your fears.

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3. Do a little more work.
4. Be entertaining.
5. Keep your presentation fresh.
6. Deliver with more impact—not more information.

So let's jump in! In the following chapter, we will evaluate the difference between selling and speaking—and the relationship between the two.