



# **7** WAYS TO BE A **SALES LEADER**

James McNamara

# 7 WAYS TO BE A SALES LEADER

By James McNamara

"My weekly net income increased by 100% in 120 days thanks to James McNamara, and I did it without spending any more money on advertising. What's more he knew nothing about my industry prior to working with me!"

**D. Cooke, Digitech (QLD)**

"Our sales people respond to you very positively in both group training and one-on-one coaching situations. Your credibility is very high due to your experience. Your knowledge of communication skills, sales processes and effective sales systems is fantastic and you make it easy for people to understand. You provide great motivation to inspire people to action."

**Andrew Robertson, Worldwide Online Printing Spring Hill  
(2007 FCA National Franchisee of the Year)**

## **Legal Notice**

The Publisher has strived to be as accurate and complete as possible in the creation of this e-book. While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, the Publisher assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions, or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein. Any perceived slights of specific persons, peoples, or organizations are unintentional. In practical advice books, like anything else in life, there are no guarantees of income made. Readers are cautioned to reply on their own judgment about their individual circumstances to act accordingly.

Copyright © 2011

The copyright of and title to this document belongs to James McNamara. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the rights holders. Please contact [james@jamesmcnamara.com.au](mailto:james@jamesmcnamara.com.au) for reprint or any further requests.

# ABOUT JAMES MCNAMARA



James McNamara's mission is to *"inspire and educate people to become contributing leaders"*. James achieves this by working with managers to improve their leadership effectiveness and by helping business owners to increase their net profits, free up their time and have a lifestyle in business.

James is an experienced group facilitator, keynote presenter and one on one coach. He has a detailed working knowledge of the leadership and communication skills which will influence people to follow your lead *willingly*. Whether it's leading a team, selling a product or service or managing a difficult behaviour, James provides unique and practical insights on how to improve your results. Here's what some participants have said about James's work...

"What a fantastic session! We all learned so much today from James, plus had an opportunity to open up and express any concerns, issues or ongoing problems at work and personal that we can address and work on to improve as people. Go for it, you've got everything to learn about yourself and the people you work with – It's all really positive information."

**Darcy Power, Manager URSA Metropolis**



"Fantastic presentation! A must for leaders! Exceeded expectations!  
Great for any leader in any organisation!"

**Debra Campbell, Qld Police Service**

"Well presented with excellent information."

**Anastasios Geongas**

"Excellent presenter. Very practical and valuable session."

**Howard Kemp, Qld Police Service**

"Great, energetic and full of useful material – great!"

**Peter Sith**

"Book him for at least 1 day. 1-2 hours was too short. One of the best  
session of the course."

**Chris Cove**

"Fantastic workshop following massive change. Creates reassurance  
and the ability to believe there is hope in bringing others/team along  
on the journey."

**Nikki Clements**

"He's fab – brilliant – great and inspiring!"

**Worldwide Online Printing**

"Worth its weight in gold."

**Paul Strother, Cairns Regional Council**

"Excellent presentation! James was knowledgeable and gave relevant  
examples and tips."

**Amy Ross-Reid**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Legal Notice	2
About James McNamara	3
Here's why you should forget selling and start leading your customers	6
Know Your Customer's Goals	8
Understand the Customer's IDEAS	10
Be an Active and Involved Listener	15
Understand Your Customer's Personality	18
Write Compelling Proposals	21
Know Your Numbers	23
Operate at Level 5	25
Conclusion	27

# Here's Why You Should Forget Selling and Start Leading

**Your ability to generate a consistent flow of profitable sales is one of the only differences between you struggling in business and you having a surplus of time and money *and* an envious lifestyle as a business owner.**

If you're frustrated by low enquiries, poor sales and nowhere near enough profits in your business then this dynamic approach to sales leadership will provide the fresh insights that you've been looking for. If you believe that it's time to replace the worn out sales model of 'power presentations' and 'overcoming objections' with a genuine approach to serving the customer's best interests, then a sales leadership approach is right for you.



**Forget the tired old myths of "you have to be a born sales person" or "you have to be able to sell ice to Eskimo's"... rubbish!**

Anybody who's motivated to succeed in business can learn the advanced communication and influence skills needed to fill their order book with profitable sales from quality clients.

Here are some of the winning strategies that sales leadership can teach you...

- **How to relate to different (and difficult) personalities that you encounter in building your business**
- **How to *inoculate against objections*, rather than overcoming them**
- **How to write winning proposals and make more sales with less effort**
- **How to turn price shoppers and tyre kickers into profitable sales**
- **How to develop confidence, motivation and certainty in yourself as a Sales Leader**

There are many strategies that you could employ to improve your sales. The seven sales leadership strategies outlined below will give you great leverage in bigger sales where the customer has more at stake. These sales leadership strategies are...

- 1 Know your customer's goals**
- 2 Understand your customer's IDEAS**
- 3 Be an active and involved listener**
- 4 Understand your customer's personality**
- 5 Write compelling proposals**
- 6 Know Your Numbers**
- 7 Operate at Level 5**

People only buy for *their* own reasons. The sales leader needs to know exactly what these reasons are! This means that the sales leader must become an excellent listener. This theme will come through loud and clear in the pages that follow.

# ONE

## KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER'S GOALS

**The essence of leadership is to influence people to willingly follow your lead. As sales people we want customers to follow us and our sales recommendations willingly.**

The essence of leadership is to influence people to *willingly* follow your lead. As sales people we want customers to follow us and our sales recommendations willingly.

To get people to follow you willingly, they must want to go where we are leading them. To the sales leader this means understanding the customer's goals in great detail. Eliciting the customer's vision and desires gives the sales leader great insight into how to best influence that individual.

This is a different approach based on empathy and leadership. Most sales people seem to take an approach based on convincing and overcoming. Most salespeople treat sales communication as a *"competitive exercise in which the first person to draw breath is declared the listener"*. Such a competitive approach to sales communication does nothing to build the customer's trust. In fact it raises more apprehension and objections than it solves.



If you have ever had a customer say *“Yes, but our situation is different”*, this is a sure fire sign that you didn’t draw out the customer’s goals before you started into your sales presentation. Remember that customers will only buy for their own reasons i.e. to satisfy their goals.

It is not uncommon to encounter customers who do not have clearly defined goals. These types of customers can end up frustrating the salesperson and ultimately being given the unsavoury label of “tyre kicker”. They are frustrating because they take up time and don’t buy. They don’t buy because they don’t have clear goals for the future. Without clear goals, the customer won’t have enough desire to take buying action.

Therefore a key part of the Sales Leader’s role is to help the customer develop their vision and goals. It is best to do this gently with ‘loose’ questions such as, *“Generally speaking, what would you ideally like to achieve?”*.

It is important to step gently through this stage as people can find specific and targeted questions about their goals very confronting... particularly if they have not formed specific goals. During this stage resist the temptation to jump into a product explanation, otherwise you will quickly undo any rapport that you have built so far. (There is more on listening later in this e-book.)

Once you have a clear understanding of the customer’s future goals, it is time to understand their current situation in detail. This is how you ‘bookend’ the customer’s situation, i.e. where do they want to be and where are they now?

# TWO

## UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMER'S IDEAS

**Sales people often say that it's important to identify the customer's *need*. Sales leaders understand that a customer's need is *a feeling of dissatisfaction coupled with a desire for a solution*.**

Unless a sales person can identify and understand both strong dissatisfaction *and* desire for a solution from the customer, their sales results will be hampered considerably.

If understanding the customer's goals is the starting point, then the IDEAS formula extends the process. The IDEAS formula is a progressive guide for the type of questions that you can ask a customer to elicit their real needs and emotional reasons to buy.

BE WARNED though. Your questioning can quickly become uncomfortable probing in your customer's mind. Think of it as a recipe comprising a handful of carefully worded questions combined with lashings of active listening. Advising (aka your solution recommendation) becomes the icing on the cake. That means it is applied LAST!

**Research has shown that top performing sales people spend 69% of their time seeking information and only 31% of their time giving information.**



The IDEAS formula starts off with **I**nformation questions. These are basic questions about the customer. These are 'get to know you' style questions such as...

- "Tell me about your business?"
- "How many people work here?"
- "What type of procurement software do you use?"

Top performing sales people don't spend a lot of time here and move onto **D**issatisfaction questions. These top performers understand that asking too many situation questions will be seen by the customer as wasting time. In fact research has shown that customers respect sales people who use well thought out dissatisfaction questions as a way of understanding the problem.

Dissatisfaction questions elicit the customer's problem, frustrations, difficulties and dissatisfactions with their current situation. It is important to explore the customer's dissatisfaction in some detail by using active listening and appropriate follow-up questions.

Once again, BE WARNED, the customer's answers to dissatisfaction questions aren't strong enough buying signals for you to launch into your sales presentation. You must keep exploring the problem. One of my good friends, Greg, uses the simple little question *"Is there anything else?"* as a way to encourage the customer to unfold more information about their problem and frustrations.

Some example dissatisfaction questions are;

- **"What would you like to change about what you've got?"**
- **"Is it difficult to process peak loads with your current system?"**
- **"Does this old machine give you reliability problems?"**

By taking the time to understand the customer's dissatisfaction, in detail and without advising, the Sales Leader builds up a bank of trust with the customer. From there, it's time to find out just how bad their level of dissatisfaction is. The Sales Leader wants to know if the customer is experiencing enough pain to take action towards a solution. This is not a manipulative tactic, quite the contrary, it is a genuine display of empathy since you are trying to *"put yourself in the customer's shoes"*.

The way to explore the customer's level of pain is with **E**ffects questions. Once again, now is not the time to start touting your solution (even if you are convinced that you have the right one). Some sample effects questions include;

- **"How does this effect you?" ... "Is there anything else?"**
- **"I can see how sending work out must also increase your costs, but is that the only effect? Is the quality of the work suffering, for example?"**
- **"But your car must be at least 7 years old, does this mean that you can't claim any depreciation on it for business use?"**
- **"Is it important to you to solve this problem?"**

- “Can you see how a solution to this would be useful to you?”
- “Is there any other way this could help you?”

Having understood the effects on the customer, the Sales Leader begins to understand the Advantages to the customer of a solution. This tells the sales person if there is a strong desire for a solution. Remember without both strong dissatisfaction *and* strong desire, it is unlikely that the customer will take buying action.

Some sample advantages questions include;

- “So would you be interested in a way to reduce your STD phone charges?”
- “What if we could help you reduce long distance calls to only authorised persons?”
- “Suppose you had an alloy that was easier for your people to handle, would that help?”
- “Would cost be the most important benefit for your section?”

Notice how these are ‘leading’ questions. These are only used after considerable time and effort has been put in to understand the customer. In fact it is almost impossible to use this type of question without gaining a solid understanding of the customer’s problem and pain... you would be shooting blind. For this reason these types of questions raise suspicion when used early in the sales process. Using these questions too early tells the customer that you are not really interested in them and only interested in ‘banging on’ about your product or service.

Once the customer has outlined to you that they have strong desire for a solution, it’s time to Sell your solution. (Finally!... bet you thought we’d never get there.)

The reason for leaving your sales presentation until this point is because you are now in the best position to present the most powerful and specific benefits to your particular customer. You will know exactly what they want the outcome to be, where their pain points are. This means that you have all of the customer specific information that you need to write powerful proposals and make a very compelling presentation.

After summarising your understanding of the customer's Goals and IDEA you can transition to your sales presentation with phrases such as;

- **"We can certainly help you to achieve [your goal] and eliminate [your pain]. Let me show you the process from here..."**
- **"Do you need to know anything else, or are you happy to proceed?"**
- **"Do you need to know anything else or are you happy to talk about solutions?"**



# THREE

## BE AN ACTIVE AND INVOLVED LISTENER

**Successfully implementing the IDEAS process is based more on your listening (or drawing out) skills than questioning skills.**

Remember that IDEAS is a handful of carefully constructed questions that get the customer talking. Active listening uncovers the real gold.

Let's explore active listening in more detail...

Most of us (unless trained in listening) listen autobiographically (from the perspective of our own paradigms). This means when listening to the information given by another, we tend to respond in one of four ways;

- We evaluate
- We probe
- We advise
- We interpret

These responses do very little towards building the customer's trust in you. They also make it practically impossible to see things from the customer's perspective. It's difficult to solve a problem, to the customer's level of satisfaction, when you are only seeing half the picture (your perspective). This is why your customer won't trust you if you launch into explaining your product/service too early. They simply won't believe that you *understand them well enough to recommend* the right solution for them.

The only way that a customer has any evidence that you *understand their individual* situation is if you've proven it through your active listening.



**Until your customer knows that you fully and genuinely understand them, they are unlikely to trust or even listen to your recommendations.**

Active listening is perceived as trustworthy behaviour by the customer. It lets the customer know that their situation is important to you. It shows that you are accepting (not judgemental) of their thoughts and desires. It is also one of the best antidotes for the apprehension that many customers bring with them to the sales process. This is because you are **diagnosing before you prescribe**, not just pushing the latest snake oil.

The key word here is 'active'. **Active** listening is more than just hearing what the customer is saying. It is feeding back *your understanding* of what the customer means. When you try to understand you get involved with the customer. When you feedback (or check) your understanding to the customer, your listening becomes involved or active.

This approach communicates that you are interested *and* that the customer's situation is important to you. It is also a wonderful help to the customer as they try to articulate their problem, goals and desires to you.

Since active listening responses are about checking your understanding of what the customer is telling you, they are delivered in a slightly tentative way. This prevents you from being perceived as judgemental and leaves room for the customer to confirm your understanding or add more information. When done well, active listening allows the customer to **move forward at their own pace**, rather than feel 'pushed' by the sales person.

Some example ways of beginning an active listening response include;

- "You ...?"
- "You feel..."
- "Sounds like you're...?"
- "From your point of view...?"
- "It seems to you that...?"
- "As you see it...?"
- "What I understand you saying is...?"
- "When that happened, you felt...?"
- "So what's happening for you is...?"

Effective active listening requires you to take a genuine interest in the customer and their situation. You will also need to be patient and disciplined enough not to jump in with a solution. You need to get all of the buying signals from all stages of the Goals and IDEAS process. The information that you can glean from using active listening is worth its weight in gold!

# FOUR

## UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMER'S PERSONALITY

**Each of us wears a pair of *personality coloured glasses*. These glasses affect the way we interpret information, make decisions and chose our actions.**

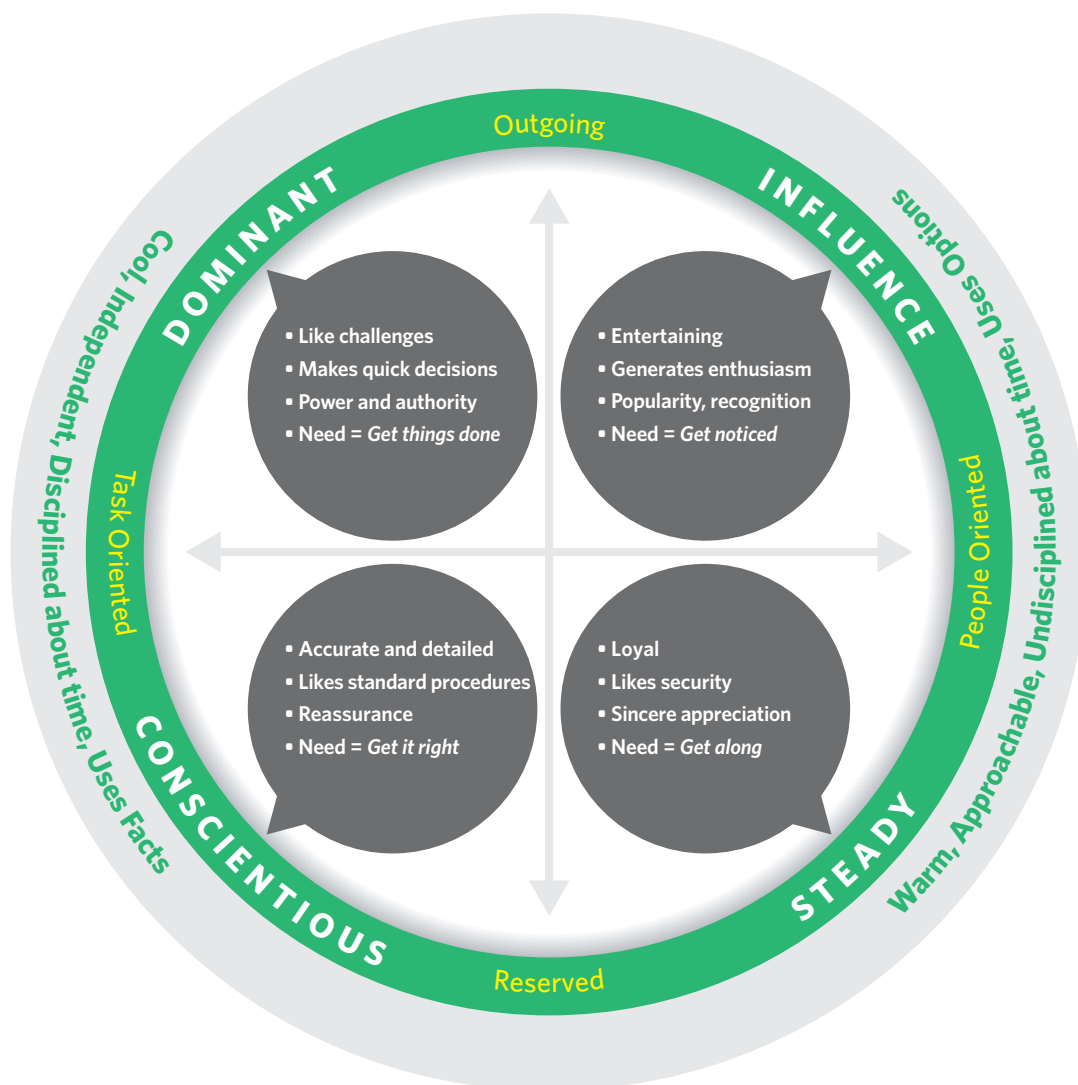
By understanding the personality of your customer you can dramatically improve your sales results.

Your customer's personality is the primary driver of their behaviour. A customer's behaviour is observable. It is therefore easy enough (through careful observation) to understand your customer's personality. This is not intended to mean that you can become a mind reader. You will however be able to pick up important clues to help you structure and deliver your sales message in a way that best influences and builds rapport with your customer.

When observing and interpreting a customer's behaviour it is best to consider two questions. Firstly, does the person (in the main) seem outgoing or reserved? Secondly, does the person (in the main) appear to be focused on people or focused on task?

With your answers to these two questions you can tell a lot about your customer. More importantly you will put yourself in the best position to build rapport with that customer and enter into meaningful two-way communication. After all meaningful two-way communication is the only way to truly get to know and understand your customer and their perspective on the problem.

The DISC model, developed by William Moulton Marston many decades ago, is an extremely accurate and simple way of interpreting a customers' behaviour. DISC represents our behavioural styles - **D**ominant, **I**nfluence, **S**teady and **C**onscientious. See the graph below...



### **Dominant style**

People with a dominant style tend to be decisive in their actions and prefer to be in control of their situation. They enjoy challenges and prefer to work independently, thriving on competition. These individuals are concerned about results and usually possess strong leadership skills. They tend to be single-minded about achieving their goals. They enjoy variety, maintain a fast pace and are unafraid to take risks.

### **Influence Style**

People with an influential style tend to be outgoing, friendly and enthusiastic. They prefer being with and around others. They enjoy being in the limelight. Generally they are fast-paced enjoying variety and excitement. These individuals are concerned about communication. They are optimistic, charming, and charismatic. They like people and want to be liked in return. They trust people and enjoy bringing out their best.

### **Steady Style**

People who are steady types are concerned about relationships and process. They tend to be loyal, sympathetic, patient and supportive. They are good listeners and team players. They genuinely enjoy helping people. They tend to prefer stability and consistency and avoid sudden change where possible.

### **Conscientious Style**

People who are conscientious tend to be systematic and objective in their approach to work. They are concerned about quality and accuracy. They want to be right. They research every aspect of a situation and consider every eventuality before making a decision. They tend to be rules-oriented and work persistently towards their goals.



# FIVE

## WRITE COMPELLING PROPOSALS

**Sales people often use quotations instead of proposals. Quotes are Ok for long term loyal customers who simply need to confirm a price and specifications before raising a purchase order.**

**They are sales suicide for new customers!**

A quote does nothing other than focus the customer's eyes onto the bottom right hand corner of the page... the price. The solution is to replace your quotes with compelling proposals.

The body of a compelling proposal mimics the Goals and IDEAS process outlined above. By following this process and using excellent active listening, you will have ample information to develop a compelling, even mouth watering, proposal.

Some sample heading that match the Goals and IDEAS process are;

- **Background**
- **Desired Outcomes**
- **Situation Appraisal**
- **Values to [Company]**
- **Solution (or Approach or Methodology)**
- **Investment**
- **Signatures of Approval**

A winning proposal should also contain other compelling information pages such as;

- **7 Reasons to Choose [Your Company]**
- **Customer Satisfaction Guarantee**
- **Testimonials**
- **Our Code of Ethics**
- **Terms and Conditions**

A proposal of this structure shows that you understand the customer, that you have the best solution for them and that you are a solid and reputable company.

# SIX

## KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

**Successfully converting a sale comes from a series of successful mini-conversions.**

For example;

- Converting appointment setting calls into appointments
- Converting appointments into clearly defined needs (dissatisfaction and desire)
- Converting proposals into sales

Take Fred for example. Fred was a great prospector. He would prospect every day and set lots of appointments. He was also churning out lots of quotes as a result of his appointments.

Unfortunately though, Fred's sales results were terrible. Fred started to record his mini-conversion ratios. This helped Fred realise where he could get some significant and quick improvements.

Fred started by improving his *appointment to clearly defined needs* ratio. He got much better at identifying the customer's need. This meant that he was quoting to an actual need, not just presenting the customer with lots of options and hoping for the best. His results improved.

From there he started working on replacing his quotes with proposals. This yielded even further improvement in Fred's sales.

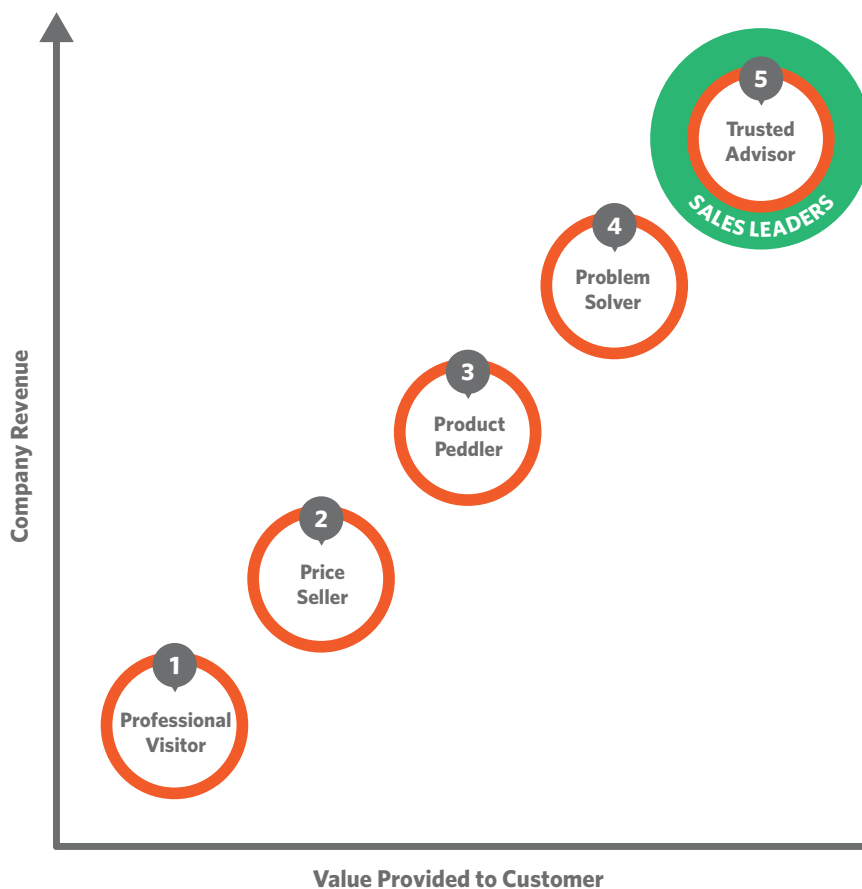
Fred was like many sales people, he had established a pattern that he was comfortable with and kept using the same sales process over and over again. While this is good for the sales strategies that worked for him, like prospecting, it also meant that he repeated many sales mistakes over and over again.

The Sales Leader, on the other hand, keeps a close eye on their sales ratios to identify where they can achieve regular small improvements... which add up to big increases in sales results.

# SEVEN

## OPERATE AT LEVEL 5

Sales Leader's focus on creating revenue for their company and value for their customer. The chart below outlines five levels of sales behaviour. Only Trusted Advisors lead their customers, the others contribute little in terms of company revenue or value to the customer.



Some of the identifying characteristics of each of these levels of sales person include;

### **The Professional Visitor**

Calls on customers regularly and likes it; has no trouble setting appointments and talking to customers; is polite, professional and never pushy; is not proactive and discussions about product/service are usually instigated by the customer; does not uncover the customer's real dissatisfaction or desire.

### **Order Taker**

Doesn't like calling on customers and would prefer the customer to come to them; will answer the phone if it rings but shy's away from making proactive outbound sales calls; works best with a 'low price' strategy; doesn't handle objections well; waits for the customer to ask and then writes up the order.

### **Product Peddler**

The most common type of sales person; are either price or product focused; *"Look at the great specials we have at the moment"*, or *"Look at what my widget does"*; have good product knowledge and confidence; severely lack people skills; asks leading questions designed to lead onto product explanations or price comparisons; tells doesn't sell; focus almost totally on their need to make a sale and not the customers need for a solution – for this reason they are often perceived as 'pushy'.

### **Problem Solver**

Diagnoses before they prescribe; listens well and builds great rapport; gives superb advice on solutions and discusses alternatives; is more of a 'product expert' than a leader; has difficulty asking for the business allowing the now educated customer to shop the solution around town to the Order Taker with the lowest price.



## Trusted Advisor

Has great posture; establishes exactly what the customer's goals are and seeks to understand the customer's dissatisfaction with their current situation; focuses on adding value to the client by relieving their pain and helping them achieve their goals; uncovers every opportunity; prevents objections by identifying the real reasons why the customer wants to buy and present the exact benefits needed to achieve the customer's goals; becomes the customers sole source of advice on their particular product.

# CONCLUSION

When you start work tomorrow, think of yourself as a leader. When you are talking to your first customer of the day, ask yourself "how do I best lead this person from a place of dissatisfaction to a place of comfort and satisfaction.

Listen more than you tell... **remember the 69%:31% ratio.**

When you take this genuine approach to understanding the customer you'll discover mountains of invaluable information. This includes those who don't qualify to buy, allowing you to allocate your precious time to those customers who want first rate solutions and are prepared to pay for it.

Here's to your newfound success as a Sales Leader!

James McNamara  
[www.jamesmcnamara.com.au](http://www.jamesmcnamara.com.au)  
[james@jamesmcnamara.com.au](mailto:james@jamesmcnamara.com.au)  
+61 408 762 584