

Use Social Dynamics to Control Sales Appointments

Many areas of selling that I've studied and taught to others are rarely, if ever, known and used in the world of professional selling. One of those is the science of social dynamics – before I ever began learning it myself and including it in my training, I'd never before seen it used in sales.

Social dynamics is the science of using nonverbal sub-communication to influence others. What does this include? The primary elements of our nonverbal sub-communication are body language, vocal tone, inflection and volume, eye contact, movement and carriage of the body, and other subtle but important elements.

The consequences of not using proper social dynamics in your sales interactions are severe, and most of us don't even know we're doing anything wrong because we haven't been taught. The situation is much like cold calling – salespeople who cold call only do so because they don't know any alternatives. However, by not paying attention to our social dynamics, we unknowingly give our power away to prospects, let them have control of sales appointments, create an impression that we are not successful, give prospects the "gut feeling" that they should not buy from us ... all unknowingly.

So, that said, what can we do to make sure we don't short-circuit all of our efforts by using improper social dynamics? Following is a brief and very basic – but highly effective – checklist of things you need to watch out for while selling:

1. Body language. (This isn't easy to explain without pictures so bear with me!) Be careful not to lean in to prospects when talking with them. Leaning in sub-communicates weakness and submission. Lean back when you are in front of prospects. This sub-communicates that you are the leader, are in control, and will cause prospects to be more willing to follow your lead and buy. In addition, you should never face a prospect more than they are facing you. In other words, if a prospect is not facing you straight-on while sitting or standing, you should be turned away just a degree more than the prospect is turned away from you. It is okay to face a prospect straight-on only after they

have fully turned to face you directly. If you face them directly before they do so to you, you are sub-communicating neediness and submission. However, by allowing the prospect to do so first, they are automatically placed in the submissive role and will be much easier to close.

Frank J. Rumbauskas, Jr.
FJR ADVISORS, LLC
5000 Birch Street, Suite 3000
Newport Beach, California 92660

www.FrankRumbauskas.com

2. If you cannot hear a prospect, never lean in directly when they repeat themselves. Instead, turn sideways, so that your ear is facing the prospect, but your face is turned away. This allows you to hear the prospect better but without taking a weak stance.

3. Your voice. The single most important thing you can do to be a more effective salesperson is to have a powerful, commanding voice. Like a firm handshake, an impressive vocal presence sub-communicates power and leadership and will cause prospects to be much more willing to buy from you. Practice speaking louder in your everyday communications. You don't want to yell or strain; instead, focus on speaking from your core, your abdomen, which will result in the commanding voice you need to have to be effective.

Imagine a general who speaks powerfully, but without yelling or straining. This is what you should strive for. I achieved this by simply talking that way all the time. An added benefit is that you will automatically become an excellent public speaker by having this talent, which you can then leverage into more sales by volunteering to speak at networking events, chamber of commerce meetings, and other "target-rich" environments. It will also be a necessary skill should you wish to go into sales training or public speaking later in your career, a choice that is available to all successful salespeople.

4. Your presence. This is closely related to body language, but has more to do with posture than with positioning yourself in front of prospects. For example, weak people are afraid of infringing on others' personal space, so they keep a small presence. Avoid this by standing with your feet at least a foot apart, leaning back slightly, and having your shoulders back and chin up. This is a powerful stance that sub-communicates leadership and confidence. The same rules hold true while sitting – keep your feet flat on the floor (no crossed legs), with your arms

Frank J. Rumbauskas Jr.
www.FrankRumbauskas.com

spread wide rather than holding them close together. Unless you are sitting with your arms on the desk, lean back in your chair while speaking. Again, you're demonstrating command of the situation by doing so.

Frank J. Rumbauskas, Jr.
FJR ADVISORS, LLC
5000 Birch Street, Suite 3000
Newport Beach, California 92660

www.FrankRumbauskas.com

What about pacing the movements of your prospect? Don't do it. This is one of those "old, right answers" from the old school of selling that is now wrong. Most prospects can pick up on this because it's been done to them so many times before, and, what's worse, why would you want to pace your prospects' mannerisms when you run the risk of reflecting their own weak body language? In addition, it shows a lack of independence, which is the biggest killer of the powerful, confident persona you want to demonstrate in appointments.

Finally, remember that this is not a competition. These suggestions are not given with the intent to rule your prospects. They simply allow you to present yourself as a powerful leader whose advice should be taken, and the end result is that prospects will feel extremely comfortable with entrusting their business to you. Follow these tips, and your close rates will suddenly explode!

Frank J. Rumbauskas Jr. is a New York Times bestselling author who redefined selling, and who now uses his expertise in the Science of Social Dynamics to unleash unstoppable people and organizations!

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