

# Add Sales Triumphs To Your Selling Skills Repertoire



By Jack Singer, Ph.D.

**Active listening** will show customers that you truly care about their **business concerns**, **improving your chances** for future sales.

Susan has been doing well in her sales career for many years. She understands how to make cold calls, how to follow up on leads and referrals and how to provide excellent customer service. Yet, she's amazed at how much more successful her colleague, Michael, is, when she puts much more time and sweat into her work than Michael seems to. She wonders what is missing in her approach.

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The key difference between their approaches is the fact that Michael has trained himself to be an “active listener.” He uses the sales TRIUMPHS model to help him maximize his sales deals, and it works wonderfully for virtually any product or service. Even when he is not “selling” anything, it is a powerful technique that helps him communicate effectively with his colleagues and family.

Here are the components of the sales model TRIUMPHS:

**T: Treat your client/customer with respect and value.** Developing a good rapport with the prospective client/customer is a crucial first step. Smile, position yourself at the same level (sitting or standing, depending on what the client/customer is doing) and lean slightly toward him, maintaining eye contact. Make sure your cell phone is on silent and that you give your undivided attention to the customer.

Listen to what the prospective customer is saying, and don't shuffle papers or start thinking about your

response. Just listen to her. Regardless of what the person asks, don't fall into the trap of thinking you need to answer immediately. It's okay to say, “That's a great question. Give me a day or so to research our products to find the one that precisely addresses your question.” Some prospective customers can be long-winded, nervously asking a lot of questions, especially with expensive products. Cutting off a speaker may lose you the rapport you need to develop. Always give the speaker the courtesy of finishing a point before you interject yours. Again, take notes so you won't forget what you wanted to say.

**R: Reflect the meaning of what your client is telling you before you actually respond.** The best way to understand your prospective customer is to make sure you are listening carefully, and the best way to do that is to reflect or paraphrase what you heard him say *before* you comment on it. An example is, “What I'm hearing is that you are not certain that our product will serve your needs.”

**I: “I” statements are powerful.** As you paraphrase and reflect back what the buyer is saying, use “I” statements, which effectively show you're paying attention. For example, “I am getting the feeling that you are uncomfortable with this product and would like some other options.” For you to start with “You” would be much more threatening for the buyer, as in, “You don't like this product.”

It is important to realize that stating you understand what the listener is saying doesn't mean you necessarily agree with him. You are simply showing that you are hearing his concerns. “Fred, I hear you are concerned because of your last experience with a similar product. Let me get the information you need to make you feel better about this.”

# Studies point out that only a small percentage of what is “heard” by a listener are the words of the speaker.

Always acknowledge the speaker and his position before voicing your opinion.

**U: Understand the needs and goals of your client/customer.** If you are genuine and sell quality products that will truly satisfy your customer’s needs and desires, the customer will trust you. That includes not selling him the most expensive product if you believe it is not right for him. Nothing gains their trust more than you being honest with him.


**M: Monitor the tone and mannerisms of the prospective customer.** Body language is so important; studies point out that only a small percentage of what is “heard” by a listener are the words of the speaker. Most of what is “heard” by the listener is tone of voice, facial expressions, vocal inflections, etc. Watch for all of these indicators of your customer’s mood and attitude. You might even wait for a pause and make an interpretation of what you are sensing. An example is, “I am feeling as if you believe that I am trying to force you to buy this product. Is that what’s going on in your head, Alice?”

**P: Probe gently and with respect.** Your job is to try to understand what your prospective client/customer needs and how you can accommodate those needs. The only way to show people that you have exactly the product to satisfy

those needs is to ask gentle questions about their goals and hopes (related to your product). An example is, “If you could describe the ideal software to solve your business problems, what would you like it to do for you?”

**H: Help your client feel safe in the conversation.** For major purchases, clients need to feel safe discussing their specific money issues. Gently probing about personal and family situations that affect their pocketbook requires them being able to trust you. This entails ensuring confidentiality and showing genuine concern for their needs. If you expect them to share their biggest fears and insecurities, you must focus in on what they’re saying, be sensitive and assure them that you will help them to meet their goals.

**S: Summarize.** You’d be amazed at how much you show the speaker you are listening by frequently summarizing what you just heard. This will also help you to focus and remember what the speaker is telling you. If you have hit the key points in your summary, the speaker will feel validated and closer to you. If you missed any key points that he is trying to convey, he can inform you about that at this time. Practice this with friends and family. It’s easy to get the hang of it, and it really works!

Sticking to this sales TRIUMPHS model will surely bring you your share of triumphs over your competition! 



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is a professional speaker, trainer and practicing psychologist. He has been speaking for and training Fortune 1000 companies, associations, CEO’s, sales staffs and elite athletes for 34 years. He is a frequent guest on CNN, MSNBC, FOX SPORTS and countless radio talk shows across the U.S. and Canada. He is the author of *The Teacher’s Ultimate Stress Mastery Guide*. Visit online at: [www.drjacksinger.com](http://www.drjacksinger.com) or call (800) 497-9880.