

## CHAPTER 12

---

# Developing Your Selling Skills

If you have only a few minutes to skim over this chapter, this is what you should focus on:

- Selling a new process through “emotional drivers”
- Selling by emotional drivers: how a car is sold
- Always pre-sell your proposals

### Selling a New Process through “Emotional Drivers”

---

Remember, nothing was ever sold by logic! You sell through *emotional drivers*. Remember your last car purchase? Many initiatives fail at this hurdle because we attempt to change the culture through selling logic, writing reports, and issuing commands via email! It does not work.

We need to radically alter the way we pitch a sale to the senior management team (SMT) and the board. We first have to make sure we have a good proposal with a sound focus on the emotional drivers that matter to them. In addition, all major projects need a public relations (PR) machine behind them. No presentation, email, memo, or paper related to a major change should go out unless it has been vetted by your PR expert. All your presentations should be road-tested in front of the PR expert. Your PR strategy should include selling to staff, budget holders, SMT, and the board.

## Selling by Emotional Drivers: How a Car Is Sold

Let us look at how a second-hand car salesperson sells cars using emotional drivers. Three customers arrive on the same day to look at the “car of the week” that has been featured in the local paper.

The first person is a young information technology guru, generation Y, with the latest designer gear, baggy trousers partway down exposing a designer label on his shorts. The salesperson slowly walks up, all the time assessing the emotional drivers of this potential buyer, looking for clues, such as clothing, the car he arrived in, and so on. The opening line could be, “I hope you have a clean license, as I will not let you out in this beast if you don’t. This car has 180 BHP, a twin turbo, and corners like it’s on railway tracks.” SOLD.

The second person could be me, with my gray hair. The salesperson would say, “This car is five-star rated for safety, with eight air bags, enough power to get you out of trouble, unbelievable braking when you have to avoid the idiots on the road, and tires that will never fail you.” SOLD.

The third person, with designer clothing and bag, is addressed with “This car has won many awards for its design. Sit in the driver’s seat and feel the quality of the finish. Everything is in the right place. I assure you that every time you drive this car you will feel like a million dollars!” SOLD.

## Always Pre-Sell Your Proposals

We then need to focus on selling to the “thought leader” on the SMT and board before we present the proposal. This may take months of informal meetings, sending copies of appropriate articles, telling better-practice stories, and so forth to awaken their interest.

It is worth noting that the thought leader of the SMT and the board may *not* be the CEO or chairperson, respectively. Having pre-sold the change to the thought leader, watch, after delivering your presentation, how the meeting turns to listen to the thought leader’s speech of support. Your proposal now has the best possible chance of a positive vote.

Risking a proposal on the whims of the decision makers on the day of the presentation is far too risky. If the proposal has been worth all the time you have put into it, make sure it has the maximum chance of success by pre-selling to the thought leader attending the meeting

One CFO explained in a course how he always pre-sold an idea to a board member before presenting the idea to the board for their approval. The pre-selling ensured that the relevant board member would be first to speak after his presentation and would make supportive comments, thus ensuring a positive reception to the concept.

## Selling Your Team to Your Peers

Why is it that many hardworking managers, who are dedicated to the organization, are ostracized by their fellow colleagues? Why is it that some hardworking teams are not understood and do not get the respect their efforts deserve? Reasons include that the team and their manager do not bother spending time selling their services and benefits to the rest of the organization, or that the team seldom takes time out to network within the organization.

If you are a manager of a team with these issues, there is time to change before it is too late. I suggest the following:

- Limit working hours of team members to no more than 50 hours a week so you all have to change your work habits.
- Ensure all staff in the team network with at least two of their peers and in-house clients, over a coffee each week for the next 12 weeks.
- Before embarking on a major project, speak to your mentor as you may well be going in the wrong direction.
- Have a makeover so you look and feel a million dollars.
- Ensure you talk positively to others (keep negative thoughts to yourself).
- Cut down the length of your reports; nothing was ever changed by a report—it was the follow-up action that made the change.
- No matter how much pressure there is, learn to smile every time someone comes to your desk (this needs plenty of practice).
- Learn to give recognitions more freely (see “Creating Winning Personal Habits,” Chapter 5).
- Reread Part One of this book and implement as much as you can.

