

Media Selling, 4th Edition

By Charles Warner

Chapter 10 – Generating Solutions, Proposals, and Presentations

The third step in the solutions-selling process is *generating solutions*—the step in which you find an effective match between prospects’ problems/challenges and solutions that you can provide. Then, you have to present these solutions in an arresting, dramatic, and winning proposal or presentation. The generating-solutions step of selling implements all five of the primary sales strategies: (1) selling solutions to advertising and marketing problems, (2) reinforcing the value of advertising and your medium, (3) creating value for your product, (4) becoming the preferred supplier (because you have offered solutions, which your competitors probably haven’t), and (5) innovating (because you’ve come up with creative, unique solutions).

Generating Solutions

After you have identified a prospect’s problems/challenges, you have to *brainstorm* to come up solutions that are unique to your medium and to your media organization, and that take advantage of opportunities you can offer. The process of generating solutions is the most creative and satisfying step of selling and requires making innovative connections between a prospect’s advertising problems/challenges and solutions that are unique to your medium outlet.

Exhibit 8.9 in Chapter 8 featured a number of ideas for creating value, and all of these can be used to generate ideas for solutions, depending on your medium. Another way to come up with ideas is to brainstorm with people in your organization. You want a diversity of people at all levels to participate in brainstorming sessions. It is often a 19-year-old receptionist or a multiply-pierced, tattooed, green-haired production person who comes up with the best ideas. You want to brainstorm with other salespeople, management, and, especially, content people (programmers, editors, etc. who really understand your content), in fact, anyone who can help you come up with new, innovative, unique solutions that no other media or no other media outlet can provide. See Exhibit 10.1 for the Rules of Brainstorming.

Exhibit 10.1 Rules for Brainstorming

1. Everyone must contribute.
2. Let your imagination run wild. You're after quantity of ideas, not quality of ideas. Calm down, relax and let your brain run free. The more ideas you have the better. There is no such thing as a bad idea. Don't worry about being silly. Have fun, get crazy, produce ideas. Here are some techniques that will help you expand your thinking:
 - a. Think about the ideal or the perfect situation—suspend reality—think of the ultimate.
 - b. Think of the wildest thing in the world—expand.

3. Do not be judgmental at the beginning. Make absolutely no judgments about your own or anyone else's ideas or suggestions. There is no such thing as a bad idea. Do not challenge or criticize in any way anyone's idea. On the contrary, encourage people to come up with more and wilder ideas. During the idea-generation stage of brainstorming, it is imperative that practicality or feasibility be thrown to the winds--don't be concerned if it can't work, out with it! The more ideas the better.
 - a. Push extremes.
 - b. Look for opposites.
 - c. Utilize free-form word associations.
 - d. Go off on tangents.
4. Look for Combinations. Pause and look for combinations of words or ideas. Don't worry about whether the combinations make sense or are plausible yet. There is no such thing as a bad combination.
5. Make Connections. See if any ideas or combinations of ideas connect to another idea or combination of ideas. Do the ideas connect to anything you can possibly think of?
6. Modify. Become more judgmental. Can you modify an idea to make it more feasible.
7. Facilitator should write everything down so the team can see the whole list.
8. Select the best ideas.

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Creating Presentations and Proposals

In 1961, I was fortunate enough to have worked my way from being a rookie salesperson in Spartanburg, SC, to being an account executive for the number-one television station in the country – WCBS-TV, Channel 2, in New York. At the time the station was referred to as the “Big Deuce.” It was the Mecca for media salespeople because it was in the number-one media market, it was an owned station of the number-one television network, CBS (known as the “Tiffany Network” at the time), and it was, by far, the most dominant television station in New York City.

The General Sales Manager of WCBS-TV, Norm Walt, was notorious in the media and advertising community for insisting that all of his salesmen (there were no women salespeople at that time) create a written presentation for every submission. All of the Big Deuce’s business at the time came from advertising agencies, and agency buyers would call the salesman assigned to them and request avails for one of the agency’s accounts. Buyers just wanted to know what times were available on the station and prices for each avail. Other television stations’ salesmen (all men in those days) often did just that, submit a list of avails and prices and let buyers select what they wanted to buy. Not Big Deuce salesmen.

To buyers’ never-ending protestations, WCBS-TV salesmen would come in with thick presentations and proceed to go over every page. Salesmen who did not follow this procedure were fired by the flame-throwing Walt, so everyone slogged through their presentations. The presentations were proscribed to be comb-bound in white plastic, to

have a thick, clear plastic outer cover over a deep, heavy-stock yellow-gold cover page with the famous black CBS eye in the bottom right-hand corner with a tastefully large, white Helvetica-font number two over the eye. It was an impressive and tasteful package and it reeked of quality and importance, which, of course, is what Norm Walt wanted.

The presentations had to contain information about the Big Deuce's complete dominance in the market – 48 out the 50 top-ranked time-periods and commercial breaks in the market, for example. The presentations were designed to overwhelm buyers with WCBS-TV's dominance and make them feel they would be lucky to be able to get on the station. Salesmen were chosen for their ability to communicate an image of complete confidence and domination. Most of them crossed over to arrogance.

Salesmen did not offer a list of avails and prices; after creating value for the Big Deuce, they offered packages of spots. Buyers could not buy individual spots within a package; they had to buy the whole package. I offered a package to the buyer for Griffin Shoe Polish that consisted of two Early Morning News spots, seven Late-Late Show spots (after 1:00 A.M.), and one desirable spot, the "7:00 P.M. News with Robert Trout." When I presented the package, the buyer said, "You've got to be kidding! The only spot I want is the news spot. OK, I'll take it to get the news spot."

I jubilantly brought the order back to the station, showed it to Norm Walt who said, "Great order, Charlie. I can confirm all the spots but the 7:00 P.M. News. Go back and get the buyer to accept the change." That was the way it was back then and some salesmen were able to sell that way. I was not good at it.

WCBS-TV designed the whole system to create value and maximize revenue, and it did. But times have changed drastically as the television medium has been fragmented and no one station or network is dominant. Today, buyers are generally in the driver's seat, not stations or networks. However, the power of an excellent presentation has not diminished.

Proposals and Presentations

The topic of proposals and presentations brings up some questions. How excellent is excellent? What is the difference between a presentation and a proposal? How long should a presentation or proposal be?

First, how excellent is excellent? An excellent presentation is one that wins, that beats the competition. If your competitors regularly bring three-page proposals to buyers who have placed request for a proposal (RFP) or asked for avails, you should bring five-page proposals. If your biggest competitor regularly makes 50-page presentations to major accounts for large, year-long partnership deals, you create a dramatic 75-page presentation that blows away the competition.

Never deliver avails, a one-page proposal, or a rate card only, no matter what buyers ask for. You do not want to be merely a clerk who processes transactions. *Always* include qualitative information about your advantages over the competition, and your benefits. You must create a differential competitive advantage for yourself and your product in order to avoid, whenever possible, discounting your rates. Your proposals and presentations are major building blocks in creating a differential competitive advantage and creating value. Remember if you are merely a delivery person, you will be disintermediated by an automated buy-sell process such as Google's.

Game Theory

Game theory is currently a hot topic in economics, investing, politics, and international relations. The mathematical genius John von Neumann first developed game theory in 1928.¹ John Nash, the subject of the movie, “A Beautiful Mind,” won a Nobel Prize in Economics for his refinements to von Neumann’s theories. Watching players bluff in a poker game in 1928 inspired von Neumann – Godfather of the modern computer and one of the sharpest minds in the twentieth century – to construct game theory, a mathematical study of deception and competitive strategies.

At its most basic level, game theory posits that players of any game (Monopoly, poker, business, war, negotiating, or selling), should not make moves according to the probability of success, but based on the moves of their competitors. So, when you play poker, you do not play the odds of drawing a particular hand or card, but you play according to what the other players’ tendencies and moves are. An excellent example of the use of game theory principles was in Super Bowl XXXVII when John Gruden’s Tampa Bay Buccaneers whopped the Oakland Raiders. Gruden had been the coach of the Raiders the previous year and knew their tendencies. He knew that Raider quarterback, Rich Gannon, usually pumped one way and then threw the other way. Because the Buccaneers’ defensive backs knew Gannon’s tendencies, there were a record five interceptions. The Bucs played the game according to what moves they knew their competitor would make.

How excellent is excellent? Excellent is not an absolute term, it is a comparative term that measures how good you are compared to your competitors. So, excellent means excellent enough to win. There are never any excuses for not knowing what kind of proposals and presentations your competitors make, not knowing what kind of proposals your customers like, and, therefore, not doing better proposals and presentations than your competitors do.

Proposal or Presentation?

What is the difference between a presentation and a proposal? A *presentation* is a structured communication about the features, advantages, and benefits of any one or all of the following elements: your medium, your company, and your product. A presentation can be verbal, written, or computerized (i.e. PowerPoint). It can be a simple two-minute elevator pitch, a brief e-mail, or it can be a 200-slide PowerPoint presentation accompanied by a 300 page, leather-bound printed book. Presentations can range from a general presentation (GP) that is an introduction to a medium and a company, to a customized, solutions-based recommendation for a partnership deal.

A *proposal* is a formal offer of available inventory (space, time, or banner slots) and corresponding prices. A proposal certifies that at the time the offer is made, the inventory is available at the price indicated.

Therefore, a presentation may or may not include a proposal. Generally, the first presentation you make to a prospect would be a GP and not include a proposal. The purpose of the initial GP is primarily to create value for your medium, your company, and your product. Subsequent presentations might include proposals, but *all* of them must include some creating value elements. To view a well-structured, thorough, informative GP, look at the AOL General Presentation (GP), 2000, at

www.mediaselling.us/downloads.html. Even though the AOL GP from 2000 is out of date, you can learn a lot about how to structure and format a presentation.

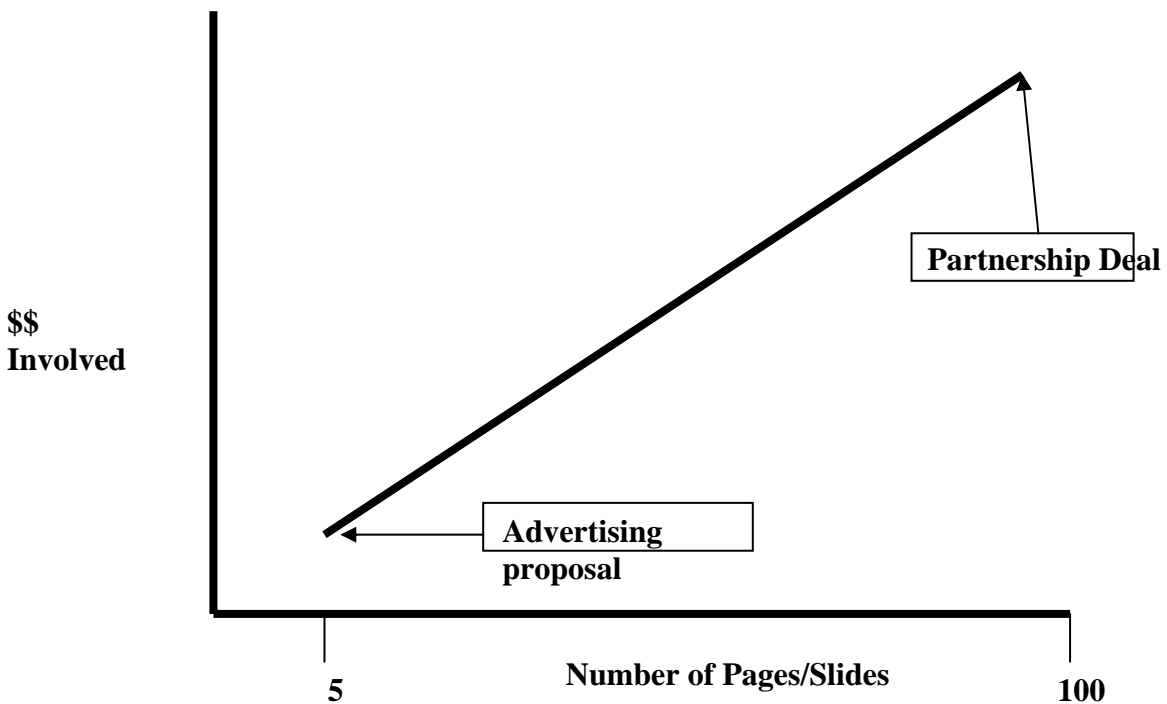
Here are 10 good reasons for creating excellent, customized, solution-based presentations:

1. You cannot win without one and you can win even bigger with a good one.
2. You are compelled to do your homework and be thoroughly prepared.
3. They increase your confidence and commitment when you rehearse.
4. They show that you understand your prospects' businesses.
5. They are proof of your professionalism and trustworthiness.
6. They concentrate prospects' focus and attention on your solutions.
7. They provide permanent, tangible, memorable records for prospects.
8. They provide you with a permanent record.
9. They show your management how you sell.
10. They build libraries of presentations and best practices.

How Complex Should Presentations Be?

Figure 10.2 shows that the relationship between the complexity of a presentation and the dollars involved.

Exhibit 10.1 Sales proposals and presentations.



As you can see from Exhibit 10.2, the complexity of your presentation should increase as the dollars at stake increase. The dollars involved are relative to your medium and market, so an advertising proposal for a one-week schedule for a few hundred dollars need not be more than five 8½ X 11” pages (but always should be longer than all of your competitors’ proposals and always should include some creating value elements that emphasize your benefits). On the other hand, a presentation to a major advertiser recommending a large \$450 million investment in a partnership that includes not only advertising, but also promotions, events, signage, and personal appearances, for example, might run 50 PowerPoint slides, accompanied by a 100-page hard copy with reams of data attached to it.

Planning Your Presentation

Begin your planning by determining your target (more about targets later in this chapter) and the presentation’s style and then *develop an outline*. You must plan what benefits and solutions you are going to present and how you are going to price and order your proposals.

Develop your proposed advertising schedule before you create an outline and presentation because you want your presentation to lead up with clear, inescapable logic to an investment in one of the schedules you are going to propose.

Always include at least three proposals in a presentation. Including three or more proposals allows you to use effective ordering effects, such as foot-in-the-door or door-in-the-face. One of your proposals should be large (the optimal order you’d like to get), one (or several) medium, and one small (the minimal order).

Ordering Tactics for Proposals

The order of the proposals in your presentation depends on the characteristics of your prospect. Normally, you should put the smaller proposal (in dollar terms) first and then build up to the increased benefits and advantages of each of the larger ones. This ordering is effective because it does not intimidate prospects with a large investment at the beginning. You can build up slowly and logically to the reasons for investing more money and for giving you your optimal order. This tactic is particularly useful with prospects who might not be used to spending much money and with those new to your medium or to advertising and usually leads to a sale for the medium proposal or even the large one. This first ordering method is known as the *foot-in-the-door* technique. Remember Chapter 8?

On the other hand, if your prospects see themselves as important, big-spending clients, then starting with the large proposal can be effective in letting prospects know you think they can afford it. You can discuss all of the benefits of the larger proposal and then show how the medium and smaller proposals are not worthy of such an important client.

With some customers, putting the most expensive proposal first makes the following ones look inexpensive by contrast and is an effective tactic with a customer who always complains about high prices. This second method is known as the *door-in-the-face* technique; it presents an unreasonably large initial proposal that is sure to be turned down to make the next proposal seem more reasonable.

Whichever tactical or ordering decision you make, it should be a conscious one and one that best satisfies prospects’ business and personal needs.

Putting Prices in Your Proposals

Break costs into smaller units. “Just pennies a day” is an example of this tactic. Break your rates or schedules down to the lowest possible unit rate. Show the average unit rate of a schedule instead of the total weekly or monthly or total package price. An average of only \$10 per ad unit sounds to a prospect like an easier amount to handle than \$860 per month. If prospects ask for yearly totals, give them the yearly amount, but also show weekly, monthly, and average rates. Your objective is to minimize the impact of the dollar amount you are proposing. Learn to use modifying words that connote minimization, such as “only” and “just,” when you refer to your costs or prices when you discuss them.

State costs as investments. Advertising is not an expense; it is an investment in future profits. Therefore, on proposals, show “Total investment” *not* “Total cost.”

Determine Your Presentation’s Style.

Exactly what reaction do you want and what would you like to sell the prospect? This information comes from your targeting and from your analysis of a prospect's needs. Your presentation’s style – how you phrase and write your proposals and presentations – will depend on the style preferred by your prospects. Do you need to write very formally with lots of supporting figures for those who like precision, understanding, and expertise or less formally and more colorfully for a prospect who is impressed by media glitz and glamour and a casual approach? Do you need to write a short presentation for prospects who have short attention spans, bordering on attention-deficit-disorder (ADD).

Your Presentation Outline

After you have determined what solution is best for the client, what you have targeted to sell, and have determined what the best style is, write an outline. You can review it and change it as you complete each step and evaluate it. Here are the guidelines for developing your outline:

- 1. Aim your presentation at the right person** at the client or to an agency, to a buyer or to top management. Each group will require a slightly different approach, will need different facts, and will have different needs to be satisfied.
- 2. Set priorities for the problems** you are trying to solve, and call them challenges in your presentation. Customers do not want to be reminded they have problems. Concentrate on solving the challenges that are uppermost in prospects’ minds first.
- 3. Be parsimonious with facts.** Do not try to overwhelm prospects with facts; give just enough to win. Some prospects, especially those who must be convinced of your expertise, might need more facts and data, but, generally, this is a wasteful, time-consuming approach.
- 4. Avoid presenting your proposal’ costs (and cost-related statistics) until near the end of the presentation.** Always plan to include qualitative information and to provide facts that create value before you mention price.
- 5. Anticipate the competition.** Know what your competitors are most likely to offer and to say about you. Position your strengths directly against their weaknesses and emphasize your strengths; point out, briefly, their generic weaknesses, but do not appear to knock them. Remember game theory and anticipate how complex

competitors' presentations are and make yours better and longer, just enough longer to win.

6. **Remember the KISS rule, Keep-It-Short-and-Simple.** Often presentations ramble on with unnecessary detail. Present only as much information as you need to make an important point and to beat the competition. Show just enough to win.
7. **Be honest and accurate.** As you develop your outline, do not include anything that might be an exaggeration, give false information, or use numbers or figures for which you do not give a credible, reliable source. Always double-check your figures for accuracy. Mistakes and inaccuracies in your numbers and writing will destroy your credibility.
8. **Target what you want to sell.** Target the type of order you want to get, which will guide your outline and eventual proposal.

Targeting

Targeting is determining in advance the kind of order you want to get within the framework of an appropriate solution; it is *setting a goal* for yourself for each presentation. Targeting gives you something to shoot at, helps you select your selling tactics, and helps you develop and create your presentation. Your target is your destination and your presentation is the road map.

Targeting is the only part of the solution-selling process where the focus is on your company's needs. Without a clear, realistic target, you might get so wrapped up in satisfying prospects' needs that you forget about balancing their needs with your company's needs. While you want an order, you want the *right order* for both your prospect and for your company. The following *value proposition* shows how targeting can be good for both your advertisers and for your company.

“We are committed to partnering with our advertisers and their agencies by providing innovative solutions for connecting them to our audience in a way that delivers advertiser-defined results and jointly builds both of our brands.”

Target Selection.

In order to be coordinated with your overall sales strategy, targets should be selected based on the following elements:

1. **A specific opportunity.** In this case, your target is to sell an advertiser a specific opportunity in your medium that is the right solution to an account's advertising or marketing problem. Examples of opportunities are: Special programming (The Academy Awards, e.g.) or a promotion (Win a Vacation, e.g.), a special content area on a website (Health, e.g.), a special section in a newspaper (Home & Garden Sunday section, e.g.), or a special advertising section in a magazine (New Technology, e.g.).
2. **Price.** In this case, your target is to get prices within a predetermined range. Examples are: In television to get no lower than \$1,300 for an early news spot, in radio to get an average rate of no lower than a cost-per-point of \$125, or on a website to get no less than a \$20 CPM (you will learn about cost-per-points and cost-per-thousands in Chapter 16-Media Research). In these situations, your primary concern is to sell your product for the highest possible price, regardless of the overall size of an order, the type of order, or the share of an advertiser's budget. A price target might be used in situations, such as in broadcasting and cable, where you have limited inventory to sell, or in

newspapers where moving advertisers up to a higher lineage commitment would increase their total investment in the paper.

3. Size of an order. Here, your target is to get an order for a particular dollar amount based on what you know advertisers' budgets are and how much investment it will take to get results, as they define and expect them. This type of targeting allows you to set goals for each order based on what it will take to achieve the results an advertiser expects. It also allows you to set minimum order-size goals for yourself so that you can manage your selling efforts to achieve your revenue targets. For instance, if you decide to restrict yourself to orders above a certain amount, you can avoid calling on prospects who do not have businesses large enough to support advertising at your minimum level. A combination of price and size targets works well.

4. Share of budget. In this case, your target is to get a predetermined share of a customer's advertising budget. This targeting is especially effective when you have abundant inventory available and when getting the highest possible price is not an issue. Used with the other three types of targets, the share-of-budget target can be the most profitable. For example: "I want to sell out the Super Bowl adjacencies at no less than \$10,000 each as part of a package that sells for a minimum of \$150,000 and that gets 45 percent of XYZ Company's first quarter television budget." This statement gives you a measurable, attainable, demanding, written, and flexible target as well as a good, solid goal.

Setting size-of-order and share-of-budget target requires good qualifying. You must know the total revenue of prospects' businesses and their advertising budgets. The type of target you choose will determine your sales strategy, which you must bake into your presentation from the very beginning.

Major Presentations to Key Accounts

At the upper ranges of the sloping line in Figure 10.2 – toward the partnership deal end – you should create a winning presentation that will knock your prospects' socks off. And a dynamite presentation does not have to last for an hour-and-a-half, or even an hour. The ideal length for a presentation is between 20 and 25 minutes, not including time for questions. Therefore, when you write a presentation, write one that the person can comfortably deliver in 20 to 25 minutes.

Here are some tips for creating such a presentation.

- 1. Appoint a prep team.** Ask people who have expertise in different areas such as research, marketing, production, and creative to help you craft a major presentation and join your prep team.
- 2. Preparation.** The prep team should meet in a room that contains flip charts or white boards on which to write. In this prep room, you will develop a maximum of eleven charts or subject areas – less for some presentations. Pick someone with good, legible hand writing to be the scribe and put information on the charts/whiteboards. The charts are:
 - A. Your prep and presentation team.* A list of who is on the team and each person's role, including the presenters.
 - B. Your purpose.* Concisely state the purpose of your presentation. For example, "To introduce solutions and get a commitment from the prospect to pursue a deal" or "To gain an agency's support for the proposed deal" or "To close a deal."

- C. *The prospect's objective and challenges.* A chart showing the prospect's marketing and advertising objectives, target consumers, and the challenges (do not call them problems) the prospect is facing in achieving those objectives with their target customers.
- D. *Your opportunities.* Write down all the relevant opportunities (promotions, packages, etc.) that might possibly be relevant to the prospect or be a potential solution.
- E. *Your target.* Determine your target—opportunities you want to propose and your dollar, size, or share-of-budget target.
- F. *An ROI analysis, if applicable.* An ROI analysis shows what the bottom-line effect is of a one-year advertising investment.
- G. *The timetable.* A time-line chart that shows milestone dates for key tasks (deliverables) and who does what and when they do it. Include in this chart tasks such as who does the setup of the room and who prepares and delivers copies of the presentation to the site. Also, plan something special for the setup, such as printed note pads with the prospect's name and logo on them, high-quality pens, such as Cross or Mont Blanc, to take notes with, small calculators they can take home if numbers are involved. Brainstorm to come up with some creative setup ideas.
- H. *The prospect's team.* A chart showing the key people who will be involved in making the decision—the decision maker and influencers who will be listening to and/or evaluating your presentation.
- I. *Ideas.* Brainstorm and come with an *idea pipeline* in five areas:
- i. *The big idea.* A creative or promotion idea that meets the prospect's challenges (solves problems). The big idea may also be a way to present an existing product element or promotion as a solution.
 - ii. *A theme idea.* Come with ideas for a unifying theme that captures the essence of the big idea and of the presentation overall.
 - iii. *Evidence, examples, analogies, equivalencies, and stories.* Think of all the testimonials, success case studies, examples, analogies, equivalencies (definition and example later in this chapter), and stories you can that might be relevant to support and dramatize your benefits. Analogies and stories are especially effective. An analogy compares your product with something else.
 - iv. *Language.* Brainstorm to come with ideas on the most effective language – phrases and words – to use. You want your language to mirror the jargon, idioms, and slang the prospect and the prospect's target audience use.
 - v. *Wow! opening and closing ideas.* Creative opening and closing ideas plus a memorable and exciting presentation method or style that enhances the impact of a presentation will win big. It may mean opening or closing with a video clip from a “Spiderman” movie, balloons cascading down from the ceiling, a personal appearance by an “American Idol” contestant, a video clip from “The Daily Show,” “The Colbert Report,” or the hottest video from YouTube. Do not create a wow! opening or closing that you are not comfortable delivering, but if you are comfortable with a dramatic presentation style, it can be extremely effective.

J. *Deal terms.* In some large deals there are terms and conditions such as payment schedules, exclusivities, content restrictions (no pornography, for example), revenue sharing, or options to renew that are material. Material means that they are deal breakers—not getting these terms would prevent consummating a deal. It is best to put important terms and conditions that are different from standard media contract terms that advertisers are used to in your presentation and sell them aggressively because you want prospects to know what your terms and conditions are before you get into negotiations. If you spring terms and conditions on prospects after they have agreed to pursue a deal and while you are negotiating, prospects and their negotiators (sometimes lawyers) often become angry and negotiations stall. Introducing deal terms in your presentation will make negotiations go more smoothly.

Giving advertisers a deal term that includes the option to renew a contract at the end of a year at the same price originally agreed on is not a good idea because it precludes raising rates or taking a bid from a higher bidder.

K. *A Benefits Matrix.* Develop a Benefits Matrix for your presentation.

L. *Your offer and anchor.* When appropriate, have a chart that shows the details of the structure of your opening offer. Pricing your initial offer is probably the most important decision you will make, so spend plenty of time debating and crafting it. You will learn more about opening offers, called anchors, in Chapter 12 - Negotiating and Closing.

M. *Follow-up* - Brainstorm on creative ways to follow up on your presentation. For example, if you give a presentation in your office, as the audience leaves your presentation, give people tickets to an opening of a movie. Have a top executive or celebrity greet them and thank them for their time. You could give them a T-shirt or baseball cap with your logo on it, or send something really cool to their offices the day after the presentation. A creative follow-up solidifies the relationship, makes them like you more, makes them feel that you care, reminds them of the terrific experience they had at your presentation, and reinforces the value of doing business with you.

3. Structure your presentation effectively. A winning presentation should have the following seven structural elements: Opening, Theme/Introduction/Purpose, Agenda, Main Body of content, Success Stories, Deal Terms, Summary, and Conclusion/Next Steps.

A. *Opening.* A relevant quote is a good way to open a presentation to focus, motivate, and even inspire an audience. A carefully chosen quotation can be the theme of your presentation. Here are some good quotes:

Problem solving. “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler,” or “Imagination is more important than intelligence.” (Albert Einstein).ⁱⁱ

Major change. “If there’s not a ripple at the bow you’re drifting,” or “If in the last few months you haven’t discarded a major opinion or acquired a new one, check your pulse. You may be dead.” (George Bernard Shaw)ⁱⁱⁱ

Motivation. “When you cease to dream you cease to live.” (Malcolm Forbes) “If you can dream it, it is possible.” (Buckminster Fuller) “Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fail.”

(Confucius) “Failure is only the opportunity to more intelligently begin again.” (Henry Ford)^{iv}

Marketing Strategy. “Never interrupt the enemy when he is doing something wrong.” (Rommel) An especially relevant quote: “For every complex problem there is invariably a simple solution—which is invariably wrong.” (Lady Wortley Montagu)^v “The only functions of an enterprise: marketing and innovation.” (Peter Drucker).

An excellent source for finding relevant quotes is www.quotationspage.com.

B. *Theme/Introduction/Purpose*. Near the beginning of a presentation you should state the theme of the presentation. A theme gives a presentation direction and focus.

Examples of themes:

“Together into the Year 2009!”

“Making Burger King Number One!”

“A Global Solution for a Global Company!”

“Yahoo! and AT&T: Partnering for Solutions”

The introduction slide should state the purpose of the presentation, and the presenter's remarks should expand briefly on the purpose statement. An example might be, “The purpose of this presentation is to show how the Fox Television Network can provide you with effective and efficient solutions to your two biggest marketing challenges.”

C. *Agenda*. The next slide after the introduction should list the main topics of the presentation. Like the old saw says, “Tell ‘em what you’re going to tell ‘em.” An agenda or Table of Contents tells your audience what to expect, prepares their minds, and sets their anticipation positively to receive your communication. Research shows that people like to know what's coming. An example of an Agenda: 1. The Economy and Competitive Landscape, 2. AT&T's Objectives, 3. AT&T's Challenges, 4. Options in Meeting those Challenges, 5. Recommended Solutions, 6. Terms and Conditions, 7. Summary, and 8. Conclusion/Next Steps.

D. *Main body of content*. The main body of a presentation should flow logically from one topic to the next and from one solution or proposal to the next. Every feature, every statistic must be accompanied by a corresponding advantage (why it is better) and benefit (how it solves a specific prospect’s problem). Numbers without comparisons are ineffective. Dramatic comparisons make the numbers memorable. See Chapter 8 for examples.

Make sure to include success stories or case studies that are relevant to the prospect's business and that give proof that you can get results. Use success stories, case studies, and testimonials in every presentation. A website that has good case studies is Microsoft’s MSN at <http://advertising.microsoft.com/advertising-case-studies>. On the www.mediaselling.us website, there is an excellent success case study in the link “Aladdin Resort and Casino Case Study” that was prepared by the Infinity Broadcasting stations in Phoenix and tells a powerful story.

Each section of the presentation (as outlined in the Agenda at the beginning of your presentation) should come to a solid conclusion that points inescapably to the solutions you are offering.

Writing Tips: When you create a presentation, it is imperative to start with an outline, then write the presentation following the outline.

After you have written the presentation that follows your outline, edit it to make sure that the headlines are clear, concise, and compelling. Good, short headlines are hard to write, but are the most important single element in a sales presentation – craft them carefully. When you edit your presentation, make sure there is a logical, cohesive flow that leads to an unavoidable conclusion. Make sure you back up each of your benefits with credible, fully sourced evidence. Credible evidence includes testimonials, success case studies, and analogies.

Keep numbers to a minimum in the body of the presentation. Instead of raw numbers, always try to use equivalencies. For example, if you are selling for a website for a station or newspaper in a town near Kansas City, instead of saying that your site has 73,000 unique visitors a month, say, “My website has more visitors than a sold-out Arrowhead Stadium holds.” This statement makes the number 73,000 more concrete, dramatizes it, and gives your prospects something they can visualize in their minds. Put the dull, raw numbers and statistics in an Appendix that you leave behind.

Do not use convoluted or flowery language, but write positively and with enthusiasm. Write clearly, crisply, and concisely and with as few words as possible; ruthlessly edit out unnecessary words. Write in prospects’ voice and use their industry language and jargon, not yours. Use simple everyday words. It is said that Ernest Hemingway had a small vocabulary of only 800 words, but he used those 800 words brilliantly.

You want to project through your writing that, “we’re here to make this easy for you.” An overly wordy, complex proposal can cause prospects to think doing business with you is going to be too complicated or too hard. You want them to think that you are a salesperson or a team of experienced professionals who know how to make your recommendations work.

When you are satisfied with your presentation, write a script for yourself that contains examples, anecdotes, and stories that reinforce your major points and make your presentation memorable. Most people will remember your stories, particularly if they are good, longer than they will remember your solutions and the facts that support them. Make sure to actually write these stories and anecdotes in your script, as there is nothing worse than coming to a place in your script that reads, “Tell the St. Peter joke,” and you have forgotten the first line.

E. *Success Case Studies and Success Stories.* Include relevant case studies, success stories, or testimonials.

F. *Terms and Conditions.* Include deal terms.

G. *Summary:* The summary is the most valuable, but often the most overlooked, part of a presentation. The summary ensures that prospects leave with key points you want them to remember. Too many summaries are too long—15 points, for example. Remember the psychological rule of five plus or minus two, which means that the maximum number of things people can possibly remember is seven (Snow White and the eight dwarves? The nine wonders of the ancient world? Ten card stud?) Five is better for remembering than seven and three is ideal. If you can boil your summary down to three key points you want your

audience walk away with, you can be quite confident that those three points will stick with them.

- H. *Conclusions and Next Steps*: One of the principles of maximizing a customer's experience is “finish strong.” This point comes from the article, “Want to Perfect Your Company's Service? Use Behavioral Science,” in the *Harvard Business Review*.^{vi} Your close should be creative, powerful, and memorable.

The conclusion is the close. It tells your audience what you want them to do. If you are offering proposed advertising schedules with prices included in the conclusion, make sure you order them effectively. Do not offer any price concessions or a Clincher Close at the conclusion of your presentation, save these for later, during negotiations (you will learn about Clincher Closes and negotiating strategies in Chapter 12). At this time, during the conclusion, hand out copies of the presentation, ask if there are any questions, and thank them for their time and attention, their intelligent questions and clarifications, and the opportunity to present your solutions. Finally, make sure to implement the follow up your prep team has planned.

Create Modular Presentations

When you write presentations, write them in a modular form—that is, so you can use sections of them again within another presentation. Always keep an eye out for opportunities to write a section of a presentation in such a way that you can copy it and paste it into other proposals and presentations. You repeatedly use much of the information you convey to prospects and customers; this is especially the case with advantages and benefits, value propositions, positioning statements, research information, and competitive media information. Label and save these modular sections as separate PowerPoint and Word files that you can easily retrieve and insert into any presentation, document, or e-mail.

Checklist for Customized, Solution-Based Presentations

Exhibit 10.3 shows a checklist for major customized, solutions-based presentations that are appropriate for key accounts.

Exhibit 10.4

Checklist for Customized Solutions-Based Presentations

1. First slide with company's name, logo, and a catchy **theme** that communicates that you understand its challenges and suggests a partnership
2. Second slide with a concise **Introduction** which includes a statement of the purpose of the presentation
3. Next, a list of **Agenda** items or a **Table of Contents**
4. A list of the prospect's **marketing and advertising goals**
5. A list of the prospect's **challenges** in achieving those goals
6. A statement of the prospect's **current strategy** in achieving marketing and advertising goals (differentiation, focus, low-cost producer, e.g.)
7. A description of the **prospect's primary customers/target audience**
8. An identification of **opportunities that are solutions** to the prospect's problems and challenges
9. Present the **advantages of your solution** over your competition, but **don't knock the competition**.
10. Present **the benefits of your solutions** (schedules, campaigns, packages, etc.) to the prospect's challenges.

11. Show specifically **how the solutions and recommendations will make their business more profitable**. Use an **ROI analysis** if appropriate.
12. Show relevant **success stories and case studies** from similar customers as proof of your ability to perform and get results.
13. Show **terms and conditions** if they are different from standard terms and conditions in your medium.
14. A concise **Summary** of the main benefits and solutions
15. A **Conclusion** or **Next Steps**, both for you and for prospects to implement the proposal and/or to advance the partnership, which is a **call for action or commitment**
16. An **Appendix** containing numbers and supporting information

Note in the Presentation Checklist how the steps logically lead up to proposing solutions and follow with the advantages and benefits of those solutions. Without solutions, a presentation, other than an introductory GP, does not answer a prospect's WIIFM question, "What's in it for me?" Even an introductory GP should answer the WIIFM question in a general, overall, non-specific way (see the AOL GP at www.charleswarner.us/aolgp.htm). Solutions are the nutritious meat and potatoes of a presentation that make your business grow; without realistic solutions presentations are non-nutritious deserts that are unhealthy for the future of your business because prospects answer the WIIFM question by saying to themselves, "Nothing."

Test Yourself

1. What is the best way to generate a variety of solutions?
2. What is the difference between a proposal and a presentation?
3. How long should a presentation be?
4. What are the four different types of targets?
5. What are the seven elements in an effective sales presentation structure?
6. Give an example of an equivalency.

Project

Who is the largest advertiser in your market? Ask the local newspaper ad department and several local radio and television sales departments. Then select a local medium. Create the first three slides of a PowerPoint presentation to the largest advertiser for the medium you select. Use the Checklist for Customized Solutions-Based Presentations for your guide: A first slide with medium's name, your name and phone number, advertiser's logo and a catchy theme headline, a second slide titled "Introduction" and statement of purpose, and last a Table of Contents for your presentation.

References

- Chase, Richard B. and Sriam Dasu. 2001. "Want to Perfect Your Company's Service? Use Behavioral Science." *Harvard Business Review*. June.
- Neil Flett. 1996. *The Pitch Doctor: Presenting to Win Multi-million Dollar Accounts*. New York: Prentiss-Hall.
- László Mérő. 1998. *Moral Calculations: Game Theory, Logic, and Human Frailty*. New York: Copernicus.
- William Poundstone. 1992. *Prisoner's Dilemma*. New York: Doubleday.

Resources

www.charleswarner.us (Author Charles Warner's website with case studies, presentations, and articles on advertising, marketing, managing, and sales)
www.gametheory.org (Website about game theory)
www.mediasellng.us (This book's website with many useful downloads)
www.msn.org (The Microsoft Network website that includes case studies)
www.quotationspage.com (Search for relevant quotations by famous person or by subject)

Endnotes

ⁱ William Poundstone. 1992. *Prisoner's Dilemma*. New York: Doubleday.

ⁱⁱ Neil Flett. 1996. *The Pitch Doctor: Presenting to Win Multi-million Dollar Accounts*. New York: Prentiss-Hall. p. 201

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. p. 202

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Chase, Richard B. and Sriam Dasu. 2001. "Want to Perfect Your Company's Service? Use Behavioral Science." *Harvard Business Review*. June.