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# 25 Essential Tips to Improve Sales Close Rates

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How to Have  
Compelling  
Conversations

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1. Fine tune your messaging on all marketing content wherever it resides, to ensure you attract the most valuable sales leads. Poor sales leads kill attractive close rates. Ensure the collateral emphasizes the business results you achieve for clients.
2. Prioritize your time. Not all sales leads are born equal.
3. Preparation is key. What business issues are live and relevant for your prospects e.g. raw materials inflation, compliance and risk, delivery on time, software bugs.
4. It is tempting to explain the quality & depth of your experience by delivering the premature presentation method but it will fail.
5. Professionally interrogate prospects in a friendly conversational style to discover real symptoms and their impact on the performance of a prospect. Recognizing when you can't solve a problem gives you a distinct advantage.
6. Help your prospect put a cost on these consequences e.g. say a severe software bug arises that is not detected until the product is ready to ship. To correct that bug might require a \$180k per year senior developer one full day to fix. That's \$493. Say you have 1000 bugs in a year – that's \$493,000!
7. Always act as if you are financially independent.
8. Don't over specify your solution. Recap early and often what your solution delivers and build no more and no less into your proposal.
9. Position yourself and your company as a problem solver in your prospects mind. And ensure your unique skills translate into improved performance for your prospect e.g. a narrow technical skill set such as Digital Content Governance TRANSLATES to helping Frank the CIO of a large enterprise, mitigate risk and ensure that IT supports regulatory requirements. You are

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improving the personal performance of Frank not some abstract value proposition for IBM.

10. Authenticity comes from telling stories that you have lived through. Share details of roadblocks got round and solutions that failed. Sound human. Sound real.
11. Look for agreement with the prospect that the issues you are discussing are a high priority. Create a sense of urgency in the prospect's mind.
12. Understand both the decision making process and the authorization process. The latter process may contain a key person you need to influence but may not get to meet or even talk to.
13. Always prepare an ROI spreadsheet document for the prospect to play with and use.
14. Understand the quality of your competition but always be ready to reposition the competition as a solution to a problem the prospect doesn't have.
15. Ensure junior consultants see great selling in action. Selling is a contact sport.
16. Understand your prospects world as well as you understand your own solution.
17. Remember the family of excuses why buyers don't buy tends to boil down to 2 reasons: No belief the problem exists or if it exists, it is not a priority, secondly prospect doesn't believe your solution will work.
18. Create realistic expectations in the prospect's mind about how the product will be used and the timetable for success.
19. Time kills deals: Deploy reverse timelines. Explain that a Dec 1<sup>st</sup> delivery requires feet on the ground in October and a PO by the end of September type approach.
20. Let the prospect define what success looks like, criteria, timing etc.
21. Use recap documents to summarize the exact solution, the timetable of deployment and the cost. Only once this casual document is agreed should you issue a formal proposal.
22. Build a sense of collaboration throughout the sales process not a combative, point scoring battle.
23. Always be clear on the business results you will achieve for your prospect and link those results as high up the food chain as possible e.g. if your consulting offering impacts the bottom line for your prospect's P&L, make sure you state it.
24. Brevity in conversation doubles your IQ, improves your ability to listen and boosts your level of seniority in the prospect's mind.
25. Always be setting up the next conversation even after you have closed a deal. It is a constant loop of credibility. You are in the business of value achievement. Has your client achieved value from your product?

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