

**THE SALES MAKER**

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# **7 Ways to Build a Profitable Base of A-Grade Customers**

**By James McNamara**



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# ABOUT JAMES MCNAMARA

James McNamara has been in business for 23 years and is an accomplished salesperson and direct marketer.

James's specialty lies in advanced communication and influence skills. Whether you need to generate more leads, establishing yourself as a Local Thought Leader or convert more sales – James has genuine proven solutions for you.

James works with managers and business owners to help them develop the business leadership skills required to stand out from the crowd and build a loyal following.



## Here's what some participants have said about James's work...

*"My weekly net income increased by 100% in 120 days thanks to James McNamara and Impact Factory, and I did it without spending any more money on advertising. What's more he knew nothing about my industry prior to working with me!"*

**D. Cooke, Digitech (QLD)**

*"What a fantastic session! We all learned so much today from James, plus had an opportunity to open up and express any concerns, issues or ongoing problems at work and personal that we can address and work on to improve as people. Go for it, you've got everything to learn about yourself and the people you work with – It's all really positive information."*

**Darcy Power, Manager URSA Metropolis**

*"Fantastic presentation! A must for leaders! Exceeded expectations! Great for any leader in any organisation!"*

**Debra Campbell, Qld Police Service**

*"Well presented with excellent information."*

**Anastasios Geongas**

*"Great, energetic and full of useful material – great!"*

**Peter Sith**

*"Book him for at least 1 day. 1-2 hours was too short. One of the best sessions of the course."*

**Chris Cove**

*"Fantastic workshop following massive change. Creates reassurance and the ability to believe there is hope in bringing others/team along on the journey."*

**Nikki Clements**

*"He's fab – brilliant – great and inspiring!"*

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# HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD FORGET SELLING AND START LEADING

Your ability to generate a consistent flow of profitable sales is one of the only differences between you struggling in business and you having a surplus of time and money **and** an envious lifestyle as a business owner.

If you're frustrated by low enquiries, poor sales and nowhere near enough profits in your business, then this dynamic approach to sales leadership will provide the fresh insights that you've been looking for.

If you believe that it's time to replace the worn out sales model of 'power presentations' and 'overcoming objections' with a genuine approach to serving the customer's best interests, then a sales leadership approach is right for you.

Forget the tired old myths of *"you have to be a born sales person"* or *"you have to be able to sell ice to Eskimo's"* ... rubbish! Anybody who's motivated to succeed in business can learn the advanced communication and influence skills needed to fill their order book with profitable sales from quality clients.

Here are some of the winning strategies that sales leadership can teach you...

- ✓ How to relate to the different (and difficult) personalities that you encounter in building your business
- ✓ How to *prevent objections*, rather than overcoming them
- ✓ How to write winning proposals and make more sales with less effort
- ✓ How to turn price shoppers and tyre kickers into profitable sales
- ✓ How to develop confidence, motivation and certainty in yourself as a Sales Maker

There are many strategies that you could employ to improve your sales. The seven sales leadership strategies outlined below will give you great leverage in bigger sales where the customer has more at stake. These sales leadership strategies are...

1. Know your customer's goals
2. Understand your customer's pain and desires
3. Be an active and involved listener
4. Understand your customer's personality
5. Write compelling proposals
6. Know Your Numbers
7. Operate at Level 5

People only buy for *their* own reasons. The Sales Maker finds out exactly what these reasons are! This means that the Sales Maker must become an excellent listener. This theme will come through loud and clear in this e-book.

## 1. KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER'S GOALS

The essence of leadership is to influence people to *willingly* follow your lead. The Sales Maker sets out to have customers follow him/her and their recommendations willingly.

To the Sales Maker this means understanding the customer's goals in great detail. Eliciting the customer's vision and desires gives the Sales Maker great insight into how to best influence that individual.

This is a very different approach than that taken by most sales people. Most salespeople treat sales as a '*competitive exercise in which the first person to draw breath is declared the listener*'. Such an approach to sales communication does not build the trust. It raises more apprehension and objections than it solves.

If you've ever had a customer say "*Yes, but our situation is different*", that is a sure fire sign that you didn't draw out the customer's goals before you started into your sales presentation. Remember that customers will only buy for their own reasons i.e. to satisfy their goals.

It is not uncommon to encounter customers who do not have clearly defined goals. These types of customers can end up frustrating the salesperson and ultimately be given the unsavoury label of 'tyre kicker'. A key part of the Sales Maker's role is to help the customer to develop their vision and goals. It is best to do this gently with 'loose' questions such as, "*Generally speaking, what would you ideally like to achieve?*" It is important to step gently-gently through this stage. People can find specific and targeted questions about their goals very confronting. Particularly if they have no specific goals. During this stage resist the temptation to jump into a product explanation. If you do, you will quickly undo any rapport that you have built so far. (There is more on listening later in this e-book.)

Once you have a clear understanding of the customer's future goals, it is time to understand their current situation in detail. This way you 'bookend' the customer's situation, i.e. where do they want to be and where are they now?

## 2. UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMERS PAIN AND DESIRE

Understanding a customers' goals is not quite enough. A Sales Maker needs to know IF there is enough pain with the current situation and if the customer really does desire the goal. In other words, the Sales Maker needs to know if the customer really is motivated to take action (and spend money) to solve their problem.

This requires the Sales Maker to understand beyond (more deeply) the customers goals. They need to find out;

- a** How painful is the current situation for the customer? How is it really affecting them? How is it playing out right now? What are the 'pains in their neck', 'the frustrations', 'the worries', etc., etc.
- b** What is their vision for a solution? What will it look like, feel like, be like?

This level of understanding goes well beyond where most sales people stop their investigations. It gets to the true heart of the matter. It builds trust. It is genuine. And it is totally insightful.

This aspect of consultative selling is based on highly developed communication and connection skills. Done properly, this phase of the sales process sets the Sales Maker apart from the competitive pack.

There is room in this phase for the salesperson to 'build the pain' by teasing out dissatisfactions and frustrations from the customer. Equally there is an opportunity to build a powerful vision *with* the customer.

Both emotions need to be present in order for the customer to take action. They need to be fed-up with their current situation and have a clear picture of the future that is many times better. A powerful and compelling vision serves to make the current situation feel even worse and therefore the requirement for a solution even more important.

This is a rarely used and ever so powerful skill set for the Sales Maker.

## 3. LISTEN TO BUILD TRUST

Successfully implementing a questioning process is based more on your listening (or drawing out) skills than questioning skills. Only a handful of carefully constructed questions are needed to get the customer talking. Active listening uncovers the real gold.

Let's explore active listening in more detail...

Most people (unless trained in listening) listen autobiographically (from the perspective of their own paradigms). This means when listening to the information given by another person, most people tend to respond in one of four ways;

- ✗ We evaluate
- ✗ We probe
- ✗ We advise
- ✗ We interpret

These responses do very little to build the customer's trust in the sales person. They also make it practically impossible to see things from the customer's perspective. It's difficult for a salesperson to solve a problem, to the customer's level of satisfaction, when they are only seeing half the picture (your perspective). This is why customers typically don't trust a salesperson who launches into explaining their product/service too early. The customer simply doesn't believe that the salesperson *understands them well enough* to recommend the right solution for them.

The only way that a customer has any evidence that you *understand their individual situation* is if you've proven it through your active listening.

*Until your customer knows that you  
fully and genuinely understand them,  
they are unlikely to trust, or even listen  
to, your recommendations.*

Active listening is perceived as trustworthy behaviour by the customer. It lets the customer know that their situation is important to the sales person (i.e. that the salesperson cares). It shows that the salesperson is accepting (not judgemental) of the customers' thoughts and desires. It is also one of the best antidotes for the apprehension that many customers bring with them to the sales process. This is because the salesperson is **diagnosing before they prescribe...** not just pushing the latest *snake oil*.

The key word here is 'active'. Active listening is more than just hearing what the customer is saying. It is feeding back *one's understanding* of what the customer means. Listening becomes *active* when a salesperson genuinely tries to understand and get involved with the customer through feedback and checking their understanding along the way.

This approach communicates that you are interested and that the customer's situation is important to you. It is also a wonderful help to the customer as they try to articulate their problem, goals and desires to you.

Since active listening responses are about checking your understanding of what the customer is telling you, they are delivered in a slightly tentative way. This prevents you from being perceived as judgemental and leaves room for the customer to confirm your understanding or add more information. When done well, active listening allows the customer to move forward at their own



pace, rather than feel 'pushed' by the sales person.

Effective active listening requires the salesperson taking a genuine interest in the customer and their situation. They'll also need to be patient and disciplined enough not to jump in with a solution. A salesperson needs to get all of the buying signals from all stages of the goals and questioning process. The information that can be gleaned from using active listening is worth its weight in gold!

## 4. UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMER'S PERSONALITY

Each of us wears a pair of *personality coloured glasses*. These glasses effect the way we interpret information, make decisions and chose our actions. By understanding the personality of their customer, the salesperson can dramatically improve their sales results.

The customer's personality is the primary driver of their behaviour. A customer's behaviour is observable. It is therefore easy enough (through careful observation) to understand a customer's personality. This is not intended to mean that the salesperson can become a mind reader. They will however be able to pick up important clues to help them structure and deliver their sales message in a way that best influences and builds rapport with each particular customer.

When observing and interpreting a customer's behaviour it is best to consider two questions. Firstly, does the person (in the main) seem outgoing or reserved? Secondly, does the person (in the main) appear to be focused on people or focused on task?

The answers to these two questions you can reveal a lot about a customer. More importantly this can put the salesperson in the best position to build rapport with each customer and enter into meaningful two-way communication. After all meaningful two-way communication is the only way to truly get to know and understand a customer and their perspective on the problem.

The DISC model, developed by William Moulton Marston many decades ago, is an extremely accurate and simple way of interpreting a customers' behaviour. DISC represents four behavioural styles – **D**ominant, **I**nfluence, **S**teady and **C**onscientious. See the graph below...

A very brief summary of the DISC personality style definitions is as follows...

**Dominant style:** People with a dominant style tend to be decisive in their actions and prefer to be in control of their situation.

**Influence Style:** People with an influential style tend to be outgoing, friendly and enthusiastic.

**Steady Style:** People who are steady types are concerned about relationships and process.

**Conscientious Style:** People who are conscientious tend to be systematic and objective in their approach to work.

## 5. WRITE COMPELLING PROPOSALS

When it comes to ‘putting it in writing’, salespeople often use quotations. A quote does nothing other than focus the customer’s eyes onto the bottom right hand corner of the page... the price. The solution is to replace your quotes with compelling proposals.

Quotes may be suitable for long term loyal customers who simply need to confirm a price and specifications before raising a purchase order. However, they are **sales suicide** for new customers!

The body of a compelling proposal mimics the goals and questioning process outlined above. By following this process and using excellent active listening, a salesperson has ample information to develop a compelling, even mouth-watering, proposal.

Some sample heading that match the Goals and IDEAS process are;

- ✓ Background
- ✓ Desired Outcomes
- ✓ Situation Appraisal
- ✓ Values to [Company]
- ✓ Solution (or Approach or Methodology)
- ✓ Investment
- ✓ Signatures of Approval

A winning proposal should also contain other compelling information pages such as;

- ✓ 7 Reasons to Choose [Your Company]
- ✓ Customer Satisfaction Guarantee
- ✓ Testimonials
- ✓ Our Code of Ethics
- ✓ Terms and Conditions

A proposal of this structure shows that you understand the customer, that you have the best solution for them and that you are a solid and reputable company.

## 6. KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Successfully converting a sale comes from a series of successful mini-conversions. For example;

- ✓ Converting appointment setting calls into appointments
- ✓ Converting appointments into clearly defined needs (dissatisfaction and desire)
- ✓ Converting proposals into sales

Take Adrian for example. Adrian was a great prospector. He would prospect every day and set lots of appointments. He was also churning out lots of quotes as a result of his appointments. Unfortunately, his sales results were terrible. Based on our advice, Adrian started to record his mini-conversion ratios. This helped him to realise where he could get some significant and quick improvements.

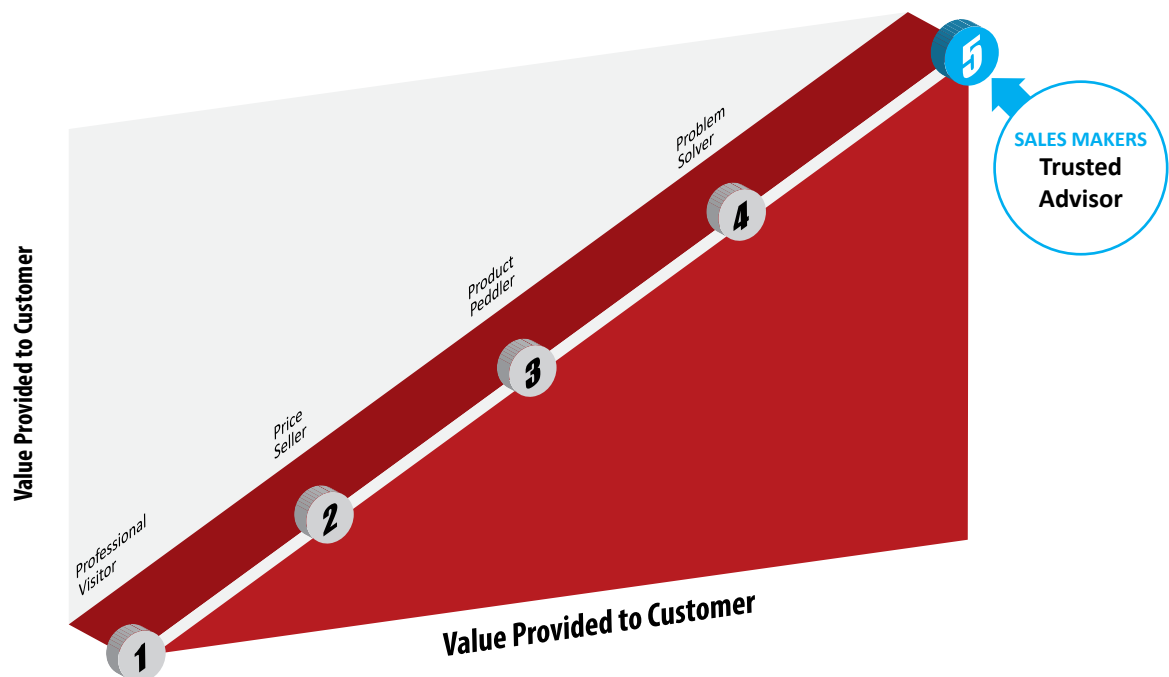
Adrian started by improving his 'appointment' to 'clearly defined needs' ratio. He got much better at identifying the customer's need. This meant that he was quoting to solve an actual need, not just presenting the customer with lots of options and hoping for the best. His results improved. From there he started working on replacing his quotes with proposals. This yielded even further improvement in Adrian's sales.

Adrian was like many salespeople. He had established a pattern that he was comfortable with. He kept using the same sales process over and over again. While this is good for the sales strategies that worked for him, like prospecting, it also meant that he repeated many sales mistakes over and over again.

The Sales Maker, on the other hand, keeps a close eye on their sales ratios to identify where they can achieve regular small improvements. These regular small improvements add up to big increases in sales results.

## 7. OPERATE AT LEVEL 5

Sales Maker's focus on creating revenue for their company and value for their customer. The chart below outlines five levels of sales behaviour. Only the top-level performers (Trusted Advisors) lead their customers. Comparatively, the others contribute far less in terms of company revenue or value to the customer.



Some of the identifying characteristics of each of these levels of sales performance include;

**The Professional Visitor:** Calls on customers regularly and likes it; has no trouble setting appointments and talking to customers; is polite, professional and never pushy; is not proactive and discussions about product/service are usually instigated by the customer; does not uncover the customer's real dissatisfaction or desire.

**Order taker:** Doesn't like calling on customers and would prefer the customer to come to them; will answer the phone if it rings but shy's away from making proactive outbound sales calls; works best with a 'low price' strategy; doesn't handle objections well; waits for the customer to ask and then writes up the order.

**Peddler:** The most common type of sales person; are either price or product focused; *"Look at the great specials we have at the moment"*, or *"Look at what my widget does"*; have good product knowledge and confidence; severely lack people skills; asks leading questions designed to lead onto product explanations or price comparisons; tells doesn't sell; focus almost totally on their need to make a sale and not the customers need for a solution – for this reason they are often perceived as 'pushy'.

<b>Problem Solver:</b>	Diagnoses before they prescribe; listens well and builds great rapport; gives superb advice on solutions and discusses alternatives; is more of a 'product expert' than a leader; has difficulty asking for the business allowing the now educated customer to shop the solution around town to the Order Taker with the lowest price.
<b>Trusted Advisor:</b>	Has great posture; establishes exactly what the customer's goals are and seeks to understand the customer's dissatisfaction with their current situation; focuses on adding value to the client by relieving their pain and helping them achieve their goals; uncovers every opportunity; prevents objections by identifying the real reasons why the customer wants to buy and present the exact benefits needed to achieve the customer's goals; becomes the customers sole source of advice on their particular product.

## CONCLUSION

When you start your sales work tomorrow, think of yourself as a leader. When you are talking to your first customer of the day, ask yourself *"how do I best lead this person from a place of dissatisfaction to a place of comfort and satisfaction?"*

When you take this genuine approach to understanding the customer, you'll build trust and discover mountains of invaluable information. Such trust and detailed understanding of the customer is all that you will need to grow your sales many times over.

Here's to your newfound success as a Sales Maker!



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