



Selling

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS



Weitz
Castleberry
Tanner

Adaptive Selling for Relationship Building

Some questions answered in this chapter are:

- What is adaptive selling?
- Why is it important for salespeople to practice adaptive selling?
- What kind of knowledge do salespeople need to practice adaptive selling?
- How can salespeople acquire this knowledge?
- How can salespeople adapt their sales strategies, presentations, and social styles to various situations?

***“I’ve learned the importance of
adapting to the specific needs of
each customer.”***

*~Katherine Bowe
Account Executive
IGN Entertainment*

Types of Presentations

- Standard memorized presentation
 - Also called a canned presentation
 - Completely memorized sales talk
 - Ensures salespeople will provide complete and accurate information
 - Limited effectiveness
- Outlined presentation
 - Prearranged presentation that usually includes standard introduction, standard Q&A, and a standard method for getting the customer to place an order
 - Effective because it is well organized

Types of Presentations (continued)

- Customized presentation
 - Written and/or oral presentation based on a detailed analysis of the customer's needs
 - Allows the salesperson to demonstrate empathy
- Standard, memorized presentations can be delivered at **low cost** by unskilled salespeople
- Customized presentations can be **very costly**, requiring highly skilled people to analyze the customer's needs

Adaptive Selling and Sales Success

- The **customized** presentation illustrates adaptive selling.
- Adaptive selling forces the salesperson to practice the marketing concept.
- The world is made up of diverse people.
- Salespeople should adapt to the customer's desire for a specific type of relationship.
- Adaptive selling gives salespeople the opportunity to use the most effective sales presentation for each customer.

Knowledge Management

- Product and company knowledge
 - Salespeople need to have a lot of information about their products, services, company, and competitors.
- Knowledge about sales situations and customers



Knowledge Management (continued)



- How to create knowledge
 - Top company salespeople
 - Feedback from sales managers
- Other sources of knowledge
 - Web
 - Company sales manuals and newsletters
 - Sale meetings
 - Plant visits
 - Business and trade publications
 - Competitor displays at trade shows
 - Viewing competitor's Web pages

Knowledge Management (continued)

- Retrieving knowledge from the knowledge management system
 - Customer relationship management systems
 - Electronic sales partner

The Social Style Matrix

- The social style matrix is a popular training program that companies use to help sales people adapt their communication styles.
- Dimensions of social styles
 - Assertiveness
 - The degree to which people have opinions about issues and make their positions clear to others.
 - Responsiveness
 - Based on how emotional people tend to get in social situations.

Indicators of Assertiveness

| Less Assertive | More Assertive |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| "Ask" oriented | "Tell" oriented |
| Go-along attitude | Take-charge attitude |
| Cooperative | Competitive |
| Supportive | Directive |
| Risk avoider | Risk taker |
| Makes decisions slowly | Makes decisions quickly |
| Lets other take initiative | Takes initiative |
| Leans backward | Leans forward |
| Indirect eye contact | Direct eye contact |
| Speaks slowly, softly | Speaks quickly, intensely |
| Moves deliberately | Moves rapidly |
| Makes few statements | Makes many statements |
| Expresses moderate opinions | Expresses strong opinions |

Indicators of Responsiveness

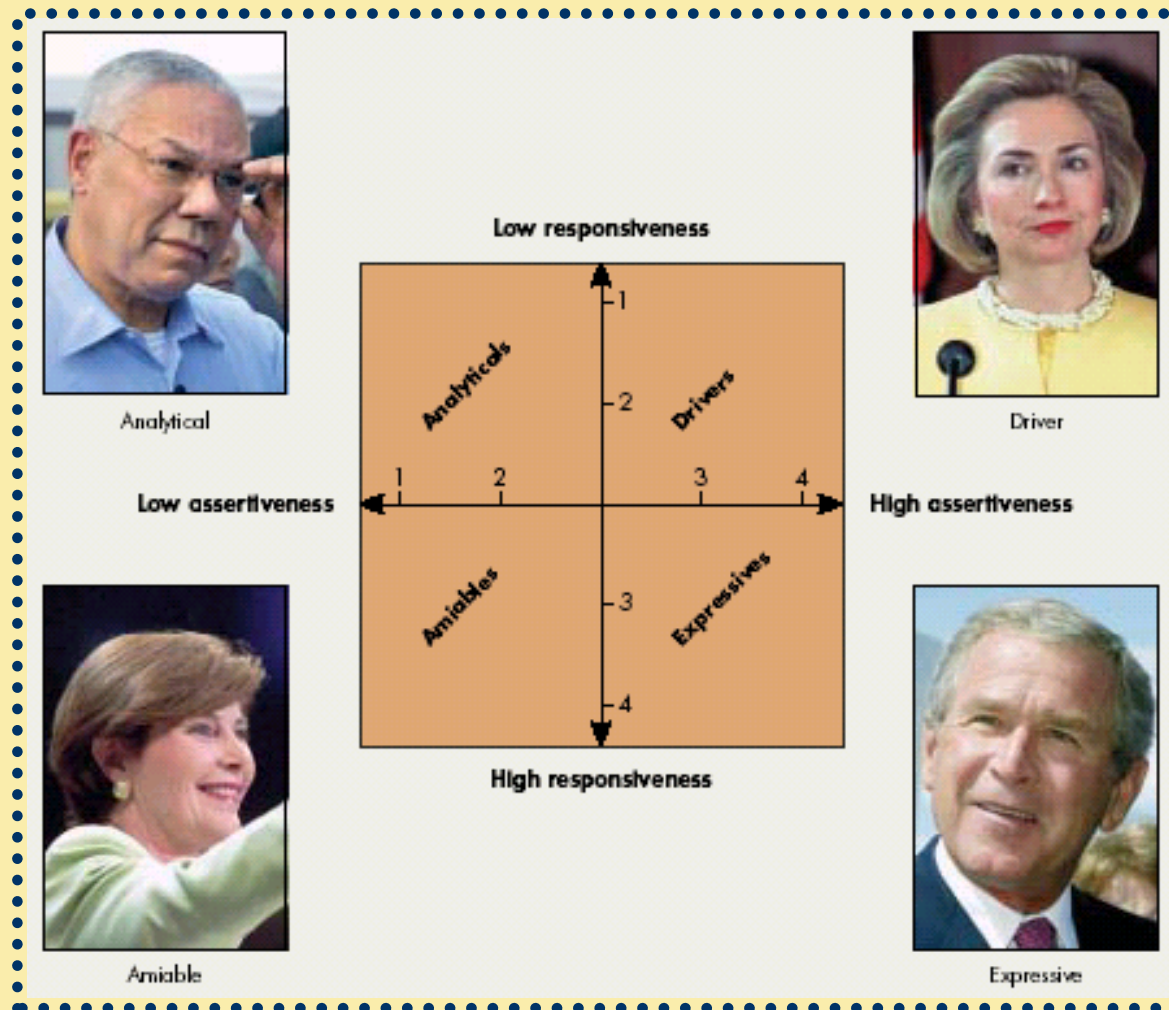
Less Responsive

Controls emotions
Cool, aloof
Talk oriented
Uses facts
Serious
Impersonal, businesslike
Moves stiffly
Seldom gestures
Formal dress
Disciplined about time
Controlled facial expressions
Monotone voice

More Responsive

Shows emotions
Warm, approachable
People oriented
Uses opinions
Playful
Personable, friendly
Moves freely
Gestures frequently
Informal dress
Undisciplined about time
Animated facial expressions
Many vocal inflections

Social Style Matrix



Selling to Various Social Styles

- Drivers
 - Use a direct, businesslike, organized presentation with quick action and follow-up.
- Expressives
 - Demonstrate how products will help the customer achieve personal status and recognition.
- Amiables
 - Build a personal relationship.
- Analyticals
 - Use solid, tangible evidence when making presentations to analyticals.

Identifying Customer's Social Styles

- Concentrate on the customer's behavior and disregard how you feel about the behavior.
- Avoid assuming that specific jobs or functions are associated with a social style.
- Test your assessments.

Cues for Recognizing Social Styles

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Analytical</p> <p>Technical background Achievement awards on wall Office is work oriented, showing much activity Conservative dress Likes solitary activities (e.g., reading, individual sports)</p> | <p>Driver</p> <p>Technical background Achievement awards on wall No posters or slogans on office walls Calendar prominently displayed Furniture is placed so that contact with people is across desk Conservative dress Likes group activities (e.g., politics, team sports)</p> |
| <p>Amiable</p> <p>Liberal arts background Office has friendly, open atmosphere Pictures of family displayed Personal mementos on wall Desk placed for open contact with people Casual or flamboyant dress Likes solitary activities (e.g., reading, individual sports)</p> | <p>Expressive</p> <p>Liberal arts background Motivational slogans on wall Office has friendly, open atmosphere Cluttered, unorganized desk Desk placed for open contact with people Casual or flamboyant dress Likes group activities (e.g., politics, team sports)</p> |

Social Styles and Sales Presentations

- There is no one best social style for a salesperson.
- Effective selling involves more than communicating product benefits.
- Salespeople must recognize the customer's needs and expectations.
- The salesperson's personal social style tends to determine the sales technique he or she typically uses.

Versatility

Versatile salespeople are much more effective than salespeople who do not adjust their sales presentations.

Less Versatile

- Limited ability to adapt to others' needs
- Specialist
- Well-defined interests
- Sticks to principles
- Predictable
- Looks at one side of an issue

More Versatile

- Able to adapt to others' needs
- Generalist
- Broad interests
- Negotiates issues
- Unpredictable
- Looks at many sides of an issue

The Role of Knowledge

- Sales people **learn the cues** for identifying the four customer categories or types.
- Salespeople **learn which adjustments** they need to make in their communication style to be effective with each customer type.

Adjusting Social Styles

| Dimension | Reduce | Increase |
|----------------|--|---|
| Assertiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask for customer's opinion.Acknowledge merits of customer's viewpoint.Listen without interruption.Be more deliberate; don't rush.Let customer direct flow of conversation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Get to the point.Don't be vague or ambiguous.Volunteer information.Be willing to disagree.Take a stand.Initiate conversation. |
| Responsiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Become businesslike.Talk less.Restrain enthusiasm.Make decision based on facts.Stop and think. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Verbalize feelings.Express enthusiasm.Pay personal compliments.Spend time on relationships rather than business.Socialize; engage in small talk.Use nonverbal communication. |

Systems for Developing Adaptive Selling Skills

- Training methods such as the social style matrix and expert systems are simply a first step in developing knowledge for practicing adaptive selling.
- Salespeople should avoid rigidly applying the classification rules.

Expert system
Computer program that mimics a human expert.

Summary

- Extensive knowledge of customer and sales situation types is a key ingredient in effective adaptive selling.
- Experienced salespeople organize customer knowledge into categories.
- The social style matrix illustrates the concept of developing categorical knowledge to facilitate adaptive selling.
- The social style matrix is one example of a categorical scheme salespeople can use to improve their knowledge and adaptability.