

QuickTips

Having observed hundreds of customer presentations in both real life and through our workshops, ProAct Consultants have identified the Top 10 mistakes that even the most experienced salespeople can make.

In this QuickTips we offer our observations, to help you in avoiding the obvious pitfalls.

The Basics

- **Have a clear objective**
- **Understand the audience objectives**
- **Tell them what you're going to tell them**
- **Tell them**
- **Tell them what you have told them**
- **Eye contact – be a lighthouse**
- **Project voice to back of the room**
- **Clear, simple, succinct visuals that aid rather than being the presentation**
- **Have a call to action**

1. **Lack of a clear structure:** the presentation is an unfolding experience for the audience, that needs a clear structure. Two tips – make a story board before starting on constructing any slides; you could follow the Sales Call Model¹ structure (see box)
2. **Trying to do too much:** closely allied to not having a clear objective. Very few of the presentations that we observe do too little – the greatest danger is in trying to cover too much, and then timing out or being diverted from the central objective.
3. **Informing rather than selling:** the audience are not interested in how clever you are, or how wonderful your offering is; they are interested in what it could do for them.
4. **Using standard slides only:** many of our clients have some great slideware produced by marketing or sales support, however take care by ensuring that your presentation is relevant to the audience; at least half of the slides should be customised for the customer.
5. **Lack of Presentation basics:** everyone knows what they are (and the box above reminds us)
6. **Not involving the audience:** except in the case of a very large audience, the presentation should involve the audience, so that they come to the conclusions that you are wanting to achieve.
7. **Lack of Passion:** even people who give presentations every day, need to have true passion about their subject – it transmits itself to the audience somehow!
8. **No conclusions:** either at the end of the formal presentation, or more importantly at the end of any discussion.
9. **Not asking for commitment:** the whole sales presentation is about getting commitment for some pre-defined next step.
10. **When you've got commitment – close:** don't be tempted to continue just because you have more slides, or another person to speak; all that you can achieve is to talk yourself out of the commitment.

Possible Structure

(following the Sales Call Model)

- **Opening**
- **Background to your situation**
- **Your issues**
- **Characteristics of your desired solution**
- **Our offering**
- **Compelling Value Proposition**
- **Call to action**
- **Discussion**
- **Conclusions / Summary / Call to action**

¹ The Sales Call Model is our generic guide to a best practice solution selling call / campaign. Please contact us for a Briefing Paper.

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