**Presenting Like A Pro**

What's wrong with this picture? The presentation isn't going very well. Should you plow through it or acknowledge that something is wrong? Find out exactly what to do and why.

Your *presence* makes your presentation more passionate and persuasive. At least it should. You will be more persuasive when you give off these three vibes:

1. I’m glad to be here.

2. I know what I’m talking about.

3. I love what I’m doing.

If I were in the room when you were making your sales presentation, would I see you standing tall, speaking with confidence, smiling, making eye contact, and being totally present for the prospect?

Look, if you are worried about making the sale, or if you are afraid of getting up in front of people, it’s going to show. People have asked me if I get nervous before making a presentation. I can honestly say, “No, I’m nervous when I’m not making a presentation, because that means I’m not making an income.”

Rehearsing your presentation is the best way I know to gain confidence quickly. The very first person who hears a major presentation of yours should not be the prospect.

Speaking of rehearsals: My best, Tom, called for some advice. He was making the toast at his daughter’s wedding and feared he would start crying and not be able to get through it. My advice? “Rehearse the toast and cry during the rehearsal. Keep doing it until you no longer feel like crying. Then you’ll be ready for the real thing. I was in the audience when he delivered a beautiful toast. Rehearsal makes every presentation better.

**Confidently Managing the *Process* and Not Just the Content of Your Presentation**

The *process* is how you and the prospect are working together. Is the atmosphere tense or relaxed? Is the prospect collaborative or combative? Here’s how you go about managing the process: You stop delivering your content and you make a comment about the way you and the prospect are working together.

A positive process comment might be, “You seemed more interested (or excited) when we were going over that last feature.”

A negative process comment might be, “You seem distracted. Did I lose you somewhere?” This is not psychotherapy. It’s simply taking the prospect’s temperature instead of blindly plodding forward with your presentation.

When you sense your presentation is not going well, you need to stop it right there and work with your prospect to get it back on track. You may even have to abandon your written presentation and improvise based on the feedback you are getting. Many salespeople don’t know they can do that—make a process comment.

Or they are too afraid to comment that the meeting is not going well and instead rush through their content without stopping to resolve any problems they and their prospect are having in working together.

Getting feedback throughout your presentation is paramount. Think of it as closing every page (or stage) of your presentation. You can elicit feedback and gauge interest throughout your presentation by keeping prospects engaged. Before you change a slide or move to a new page or thought, ask one or two of the following questions:

* Do I understand your business (situation)?
* Am I on target?
* Am I missing anything?
* What would you add to this?
* Are we together on that point?
* You’re frowning. What did I say?

You do have to provide information, demonstrate an understanding of the prospect’s problems and business situation. You must prove your capabilities. I get that. Avoid the tendency to tell too much and ask too little while you’re presenting. You’ll have an engaged buyer throughout and fewer surprises at the end of your presentation.

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