**The Best Visual Aid for Salespeople**

As I’ve been telling my audiences for years, “The best visual aid is a blank sheet of paper.”

Mike Weinberg puts it this way in *New Sales Simplified. “*Bring a pad and pen. Leave the projector at home.”

I like to bring a legal pad in a leather or leather-like cover and a decent looking pen. It doesn’t have to be taking notes. And serious about making the meeting about the prospect.

Too many salespeople want to bring in the product literature and spew about their company, products and services. When I was a sales manager and we introduced a new program or product and the first thing salespeople would say is “Can I get a one-sheet on that?’

Of course, you can have a one-sheet. But the more one-sheets you have, the more you tend to pass them out. And too many salespeople pass them out way too early.

Too early means any of the following:

* Before you’ve established a problem or opportunity your product addresses.
* Before you’ve had a longer conversation about that problem or opportunity
* Before you’ve established your own credibility by telling a story of a business you’ve helped exploit a similar opportunity or solve a similar problem.

Product literature is fine, but it is never better than a good story. Or a great question.

One more thing: When you finally do hand the person across the desk the product literature let them read it.

Shut up and let them read it. Resist the temptation to talk while they’re reading. They can’t read because you’re talking. And they can’t listen to you very well because they’re trying to read. Every time I’ve been on a ride-along with a salesperson, I’ve seen this happen.

Maybe you noticed I mentioned “the person across the desk” from you. Whenever you can try to sit perpendicular to the prospect rather than across the expanse of a desk. It symbolic, but you want to be the salesperson who’s on your side, not an adversary. Whenever you can get people in a conference room or at a round table try that.

And try very hard to hold onto your one-sheets until the exact right time, which may be never.

And on the first meeting especially, “Bring a pen and a pad. Leave the projector at home.”

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