



TO SCRIPT OR NOT TO SCRIPT!

Whether it's a prospecting approach, a fact find, or a presentation, there has always been plenty of disagreement among sales professionals as to whether what will be said should be scripted ahead of time. Those that say that every sales call should be scripted, regardless of its purpose, believe that without a preplanned script, important information will be missed, therefore decreasing the chance of making the sale. On the other hand, others believe that scripting makes everything sound too "canned", making the customer feel like he is nothing more than a commission check, therefore decreasing the chance of making the sale.

To script or not to script? One only has to spend a day in the field with top sales producers to find that the answer is a resounding yes!

Ask the top sales representative in your office if you can follow them when he or she does 10 cold calls. Does the approach sound virtually the same on each call? Of course it does! They may have not have done so knowingly, and it may not be written down on paper, but they have actually scripted their prospecting approach. They use the same script each time because it has worked so well for them in the past, they would not consider changing it.

Now ask the top sales representative in your office if you can sit in with them when they do a few fact find interviews and presentation of offer meetings. You will quickly see that they ask the same questions and they use the same language over and over again. Again, consciously or unconsciously, they use scripts and they use them because they work.

Scripting is as much about planning as it is about anything else. In other words, you should never speak to a customer without planning what you are going to say, how you are going to say it, and why you want to say it in the first place.

More specifically before prospecting, script your headline and your qualifying questions so that you can recognize if you are actually talking with a prospect or not. Before arriving for the fact find interview, make a list of all of the questions you must have answered in order to prepare your proposal. Nothing hurts your credibility more than having to call a prospect and say that you forgot something. If you are presenting your offer, plan how you will speak about your solution, how it is going to solve the customer's issues, as well as the implementation schedule to complete it.

Spend a day in the field with a successful sales professional. Not only will you see that they use scripting successfully, but you will also see what script will work for you!

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Susan A. Enns is managing partner of B2B Sales Connections. She has a proven track record of success, with over 20 years of direct sales, management and executive level business to business experience. Currently, Susan provides revenue-generating consulting services to sales organizations and sales professionals in the business to business marketplace, including the operation of Canada's premier niche job board and career training website for business to business sales professionals. She has written the training course *Action Plan For Sales Success*, and as the B2B Sales Coach, she writes and edits the company's newsletter, *AIM HIGHER*. For more information, please visit www.b2bsalesconnections.com or contact Susan directly at senns@b2bsalesconnections.com or www.linkedin.com/in/susanenns.