

Explore and Heighten

As you engage your customer, look for ways to take your conversation to a higher level. Explore to find what your customer really cares about and then heighten by discussing why these things are important.

Find your customer's path

In your customer conversations, don't force your customer to discuss issues based on a pre-determined agenda. Pursue the path that best suits your customer at that moment.

Get rid of your but

Practice not using the word "but" in any of your customer conversations. Instead, try replacing it with "and" or a pause.

Make accidents work

When unexpected "accidents" happen in conversations, practice using these situations as a chance to elevate the conversation to a higher level.

Specify and elevate

You can always enrich a conversation by digging into specific details and elevating the topic of the conversation to a higher level in the customer's business or life.

Focus the Conversation on Your Customer

Resist the temptation to talk too much about your company or your products. Instead, have a conversation that is mostly about your customer.

Make 95% of the conversation about your customer

Focus virtually all of the subject matter of customer conversations on the customer. Be frugal with the 5% allocated to talking about your products or services.

Obey the one-paragraph rule

In customer conversations, don't talk more than one paragraph's worth of information at a time. Notice what your customer says or does when you leave this break.

Weave your stories together

Weave threads of the your story into your conversation while still keeping the focus of the conversation on your customer.

What does your customer care about?

Your customer cares a lot more about his narrative than he cares about yours. When you talk about him, you will be talking about what he really cares about.

Don't Rush the Story

Your customer won't be ready to hear your ideas as fast as you come up with them. Let the story emerge through your conversation, at a pace your customer can accept.

Don't load the slingshot

Avoid bombarding your customer with too much information at one time. Bring information into a customer conversation at a measured, intentional pace.

Leave things in your pocket

Your goal is not to tell your customer everything; it is to advance your relationship. Only include pieces of information that are critical to persuading your customer.

Create callbacks

To develop a sense of continuity and personalization, remember things your customer says or does and bring those issues back into the same or subsequent conversations.

Be patient

You will be much more successful when you have the patience to have a conversation at your customer's pace.

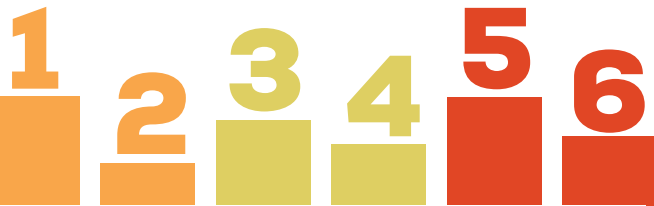
THE DITCH

THE PITCH

THE ART OF IMPROVISED PERSUASION



STEVE YASTROW



Ditch The Pitch Pocket Guide

Every customer interaction is an opportunity for you to practice ditching the pitch.

I encourage you to carry this Ditch the Pitch Pocket Guide with you to review before and after your conversations with customers, reminding you of the Ditch the Pitch Habits and practices.

Focus on practice, not perfection, and you will see your abilities as a persuader improve steadily.

For more resources, visit www.yastrow.com

HABIT 1

Think Input Before Output

In customer conversations, let everything you say or do be informed by what you hear and observe.

PRACTICE

Be alert

During a customer conversation, be alert and present in the moment so that you can notice every cue your customer gives you. Resist distracting thoughts and the temptation to multi-task.

Say less to notice more

Whenever you're talking, you can't be listening to your customer. Experiment with talking less, and be aware of the extra things you notice while you're listening.

Turn down your analytic brain

Practice the art of non-judgment. Don't rate or judge either yourself or your customer during the conversation; it will distract you from listening.

Keep Mind

Navigate from the passenger seat

Let your customer drive. Let your words and actions be driven by his. As you get comfortable, subtly navigate, but always respond directly to what he says or does.

HABIT 2

Size Up The Scene

As you listen and observe, take stock of your customer's character and situation to understand what this particular customer's reasons for saying "yes" might be.

PRACTICE

Know who you are with

When you enter a customer situation, notice what's happening. The cues you collect will inform your approach to the conversation.

Understand the context of your conversation

During a customer conversation, pay attention to your customer's situation and the issues they are facing.

Listen for the game

When you're talking with a customer, be aware of the emerging dynamic, tone and mood of the conversation, understanding what type of conversation will best engage your customer. Adapt your approach to the conversation accordingly.

Keep Mind

Figure out what's going on

When you enter a customer situation, notice what's happening. The cues you collect about who you're with and what's going on will inform your approach to the conversation.

HABIT 3

Create a Series of "Yeses"

A conversation only moves forward if both parties continually agree to let it move forward. At its core, a conversation is a series of "yeses."

PRACTICE

Say "yes, and..."

In customer conversations, practice saying "yes, and..." to affirm what your customer says, using "and" as a way to move the conversation forward.

Work with what you are given

You can't anticipate how a customer conversation will unfold. When unexpected situations happen in a customer conversation, don't resist them.

Ensure your customer keeps saying yes

Practice ways to encourage your customer to say "yes" to you by avoiding situations where they can say "no."

Keep Mind

There's always something to say "yes" to

Look for ways to keep a customer conversation flowing, creating continued mutual agreement, even when you have to disagree with your customer.