

Transcript – GET to YES Podcast

E20: B2B The 7 Steps of Consultative Selling

Hi, Neil Osborne from The Sales Catalyst here. In this episode we're going deep into self-discovery. I call it, the SAS Way.

Whether you're selling to Beauty salons, Skin clinics or owners of hairdressing salons, you always need to think about the role you play in getting answers from buyers. And if you're like most salespeople in the B2B space, you're constantly on the lookout for new sales tips.

So, when salespeople ask me for the best ways to close a sale, I normally circle back around and explore some of their other skillsets first. Why? Because people frequently aren't not losing the sale at the close, but at hello. Or... somewhere close to the beginning, not at the end. To help with this, I've done some research and found a great online tool to help you do a bit of your own self-discovery.

The tool we've secured to help you, is called a Sales Acumen Survey – or SAS.

Our Sales Acumen Survey helps to identify your knowledge of the consultative sales process, which is especially useful for those of us working in the hair, beauty and body markets.

It's often said that salespeople are "born not made." That may be true for traits like resilience, assertiveness and serious mindedness however, it's not true when it comes to the essential processes and skills associated with effective selling. They must be learnt.

Great salespeople solve problems. They can even find problems that people didn't even know they had.

In his 2012 bestselling book, "*To Sell Is Human*," author Daniel Pink noted that according to the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, one in nine Americans worked in sales. However now, so do the other eight people. Like it or not, almost everyone is spending their days trying to move others to do things and build relationships and much of that shift has to do with the emergence of technology.

Back in the 1980s, people needed to trust salespeople for all the necessary information on products, whereas now they can easily do the same research themselves on both products and companies, in a matter of minutes.

This shift has changed the qualities needed for salesperson to be successful. You now must be likeable and relatable, for a person to want to do business with you.

The Sales Acumen Survey is designed to provide an assessment of your own understanding and approach to successful Relationship or as its more frequently termed, Consultative Selling.

In any company the sales team plays a pivotal role in the success of the business. They bridge the gap between the customers' needs and the product or services that are being offered.

But given that sales styles have changed more in the past 10 years than in the previous 100, the question must be asked, "Are you or your team keeping up?"

What if your sales skills aren't keeping up?

What impact is that having on your business a success?

Today, success is almost impossible in any field without solid sales skills.

Some recent statistics are:

- Only 47.3% of sellers are closing what they forecast to close
- Only 54.3% of salespeople achieve their monthly quota, which by the way, is down from 63% achievement in 2014.

Wow, that's quite a low result, isn't it?

If only 54.3% of salespeople achieve their monthly quota (in the US market), I don't think Australia or New Zealand would be too far off that number. That's a lot of sales volumes not coming in the door. It means there's 45.7% of your sales team that are not regularly achieving their monthly targets.

Why do you think that's the case?

Is it the buyer or the salesperson?

Where does it lay for you?

From my perspective, there are two possibilities:

1. I think we'd all agree that today's buyers behave very differently

Their buying motivations have changed and so has the knowledge base from which they're basing their buying decisions. After all, today there's a lot more information online that your salesperson could ever help to deliver to a prospect.

My question to you is...

Have you or your company kept up with those changes?

Have you changed or modified your selling style to suit?

Are you still selling the way you did 3, 5 or 10 years ago?

2. A lot of salespeople look for the Silver Bullet

You know...

That perfect close

Or that fantastic way to handle the objections

Always looking for the shortcut

If I use Google maps as an analogy: when you don't know where you are, how can you possibly look up how to move forward?

To help our industry move forward and embrace the necessary changes in selling techniques, we've introduced the Sales Acumen Survey, to be used by B2B Sales Teams in the hair beauty and body industries in Australia and New Zealand.

The Sales Acumen Survey helps diagnose how skilled or unskilled you are, across the seven steps of the Consultative Selling process. Those seven steps are:

1. Prospecting – identifying sales prospects and pre-qualifying them
2. The first meeting – recognising the importance of the first impression by initiating positive and productive sales relationships
3. Investigation and probing – and in doing so, developing a clear understanding of the customers' needs and areas of interest
4. Presenting – presenting your sales pitch on a product or service to your prospective customers
5. Influencing and convincing – convincing the customer of the value of your company's products or services
6. Working with objections – using problem-solving and overcoming objections
7. Finally getting the business – negotiating with the customer closing the sale

This self-assessment tool is specifically designed to help salespeople who want to expand their knowledge of the consultative sales process. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions, across each of the seven key selling steps – 70 in total. Each survey takes 45–60 minutes to complete.

Once complete, you receive a 10-page report highlighting your strengths and suggesting further skill development ideas (if you score below the 70th percentile in any key selling step). Targeted developmental recommendations include a selection of further reading and specific books.

So, how would you rate your sales skills across those seven categories?

Which are your strengths?

Which steps would you like to learn more about?

However, the tool isn't for everybody. You need to be honest and have a good swig of humility. I've had some very successful salespeople do their self-assessment and I must admit there's been a few that scored a little lower than what was expected (by both themselves and me).

Afterwards, we openly discussed that they'd chosen to be very honest about their skills. I admired their attitude, (rather than some who only try to beat the system and in doing so learn nothing) and how they'd taken the approach of looking at it as a huge opportunity to grow and finesse their skills.

If you do decide to embark on his journey with me, you'll need to relax, open up (in some cases I may even ask you to leave your ego at the door) and take an honest look at where you're at and where you can grow your skills.

If you'd like further information visit our website at thesalescatalyst.com.au

Go to the tab Sales B2B Training, and dropdown option will take you to the Sales Acumen Survey.

There are options for individuals, or company sales teams.

To help further your understanding of seven steps of consultative selling, I'll be focusing the next seven podcasts on each step of the Consultative Sales Process. That way, we can all be more successful and more importantly, have our clients become more successful too

Until next time, enjoy your day.

