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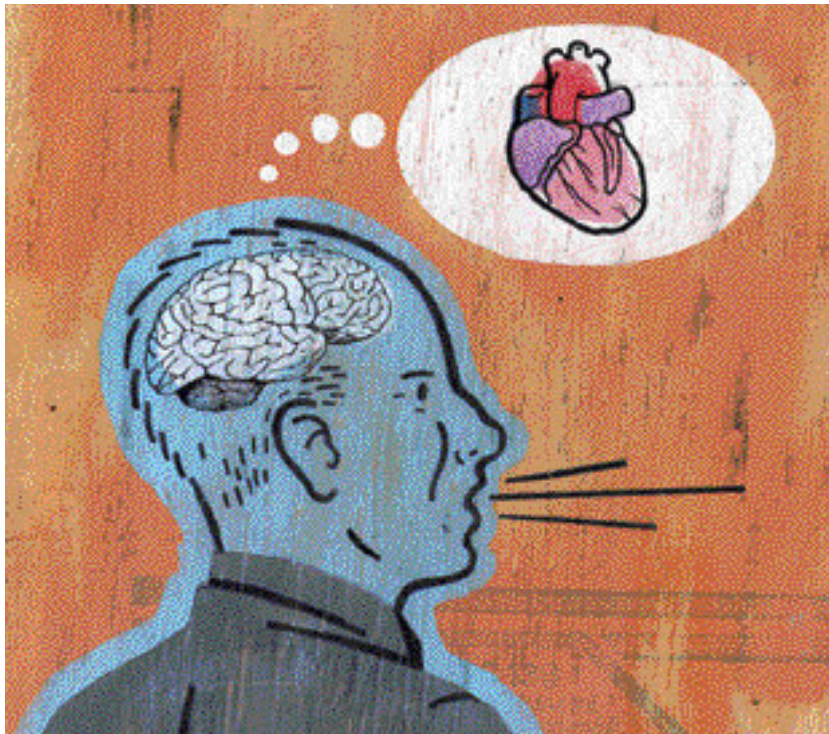
**D**eveloping powerful, meaningful, and concise materials for sales presentations requires diligent planning and preparation. Once you build this foundation (as outlined in the July and August Sell Sheet columns) it's time to take your pitch on

messages because, just as a good actor makes a movie or play engaging and believable with expressive dialogue, Sales Leaders establish interest and credibility when they speak from the heart about the products they sell.

There are two ways to make a pre-

A manager who walks by and casually says, "Great job today. What is on schedule for tomorrow?" offers positive reinforcement that provides only minor impact for the employee. The employee believes the praise is honest but at the same time probably fails to feel any

# True Believer



## SELL MORE EFFECTIVELY BY SPEAKING HONESTLY ABOUT PRODUCTS FROM THE HEART.

the road, where the true test of your success will begin when you stand up in front of prospects and/or customers to make your delivery. So I challenge you to rethink the way you deliver your

sensation: one stemming from your heart, the other from your mind. It's simple: If you want to make your presentations effective,

speak from the heart. Delivering a heartfelt message is not as hard—or as "touchy-feely"—as it may sound. Consider two ways in which a manager can provide feedback to an employee.

heartfelt sincerity in the statement. A manager who pauses to make eye contact with his employee will deliver a more meaningful message. That manager will say, "I wanted to stop by and tell you that I am so pleased with the way you handled difficult situations today. Great job." The employee will not only hear the manager's heartfelt words, he will feel them.

A phenomenon discovered years ago indicates that vibrations are felt in unique and symmetrical ways. An experiment consistently showed that striking the string of a guitar caused a vibration of the same (unplucked) string of another nearby guitar. This became known as the principle of "harmonic resonance." It is an astounding truism that the same principle exists in people. When talking with other human beings, they will receive your message in exactly the same way it is delivered. If you speak with your head, they will receive your message with their minds. But when you speak with your heart, your message can actually touch the other person and make him feel differently.

### A Tale of Two Presentations

One of the most enlightening moments of my career occurred when, during a practice presentation, a salesman delivered one of the most knowledge-based

lectures I had ever heard. The audience all agreed that he was an expert. But when we asked the group how many of them would buy the product from the salesman, only a few raised their hands. Someone asked the salesman, "You obviously know a lot about your product, but how do you really feel about it?"



The salesman paused. He then relaxed his shoulders, looked out to the audience, and simply said, "There are two features of this window that I have always thought made it special—the quality of the millwork and the fabulous flexibility of the product line. But the thing that makes me so confident about it is the fact that I've sold it for years and have almost always found that my customers are thrilled with every aspect of the product and service they receive from this manufacturer. I would stake my own reputation on this product—I mean that." He then became silent.

His first presentation lasted nearly five minutes and was a rambling iteration of high-level technical data. His second presentation lasted less than a minute yet was infinitely more powerful. When the audience was asked a second time if they would buy the product, every hand in the room went up. (If you are curious to know which window company he endorsed, then the proof is complete!)

In this example, the quality of the

second presentation required the knowledge that went into the first presentation. That is the very reason I suggested in my previous articles that you invest significant time preparing your presentation. If you have made the proper preparations, you can then focus on conveying what you *feel* when talking to customers and prospects. Your preparation allows you to rely on the principle of "unconscious competence."

Reaching unconscious competence requires passing through several stages of learning. As you develop your skills at any endeavor—e.g. riding a bike, baking a cake, playing the piano—you begin at a level often accompanied by frustration—"conscious incompetence." At this level you need to read the instruction manual, fall down a few times, and perhaps accept that you are not as skilled at the task as you wish. But if you endure, you will reach a higher level of skill, or "conscious competence."

At the level of conscious competence, you are able to perform the skills of the task even though you may have to concentrate very carefully on them. Then, after practicing over and over, you reach a stage of skills at which you no longer need to think very carefully about your performance. You achieve a lofty level of skills development—unconscious competence. At this point, you don't have to think about the words you will say, so you can express your emotions and speak from the heart.

## Dual Roles

A presentation is not just about knowledge, and it's not just about heart. Your ability to deliver a high-impact presentation is contingent on both mindful preparation and heartfelt delivery. To do so you need to consider your prospect's interests, personalities, product issues, time constraints, and other factors unique to each situation.

Try the following steps to deliver high-impact presentations:

**1. Listen carefully to your prospect/client.** After considering the mul-

titude of benefits and features that you can provide your clients, you know there is hardly enough time to discuss all of them. Therefore, you must decide which issues are most relevant to your audience. Ask yourself: How much time is available? What are my competitive challenges? What motivates this individual? What do I want to accomplish with this presentation?

**2. Establish your objective.** The last question is probably the most important because too many presentations are given without a sense of purpose. For instance, you may discover that the only purpose of a presentation is to get a second meeting. You may recognize that your presentation needs to isolate only one singular feature that concerns your prospect. You may believe that your prospect needs to sense your company is able to fulfill a challenging delivery schedule. The possible objectives you may have are endless.

**3. Listen to your heart.** You need to consider how *you* feel about the issue at hand. If the issue is service, consider how you really feel about your service capabilities. This doesn't mean you have to oversell. It merely means you need to describe honestly your feelings about the issue at hand. The presentation described earlier in the article illustrates the difference between a salesman considering his knowledge versus his feelings.

**4. Deliver the chapter(s) that will educate and motivate your prospect.** If you have taken time to prepare a presentation in chapters (like the sections of a well-organized book), your delivery will flow smoothly. You will no longer be thinking. You will deliver a heartfelt presentation at a level of unconscious competence.

When you speak honestly about your opinions of a product, you connect with your customers emotionally. As a result, you'll soon find that you gain more sales in a few minutes of speaking from the heart than from hours of spouting specs. ■