



Mastering Technical Sales

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Breadcrumbs and Baseball Bats

The Demo Secrets Of A CIO

"The Customer Just Doesn't Get It!"

"They Don't Understand Why We Are Better/Faster/Cheaper!"

"We Have To Go Back And Show Them It Again!"

"They Went With The Competition - But We Can Do Everything They Can!"

I've heard sales and presales teams around the globe say variations of these phrases way to many times. Why? Because they failed to tempt the customer with bread crumbs and failed to beat them with a baseball bat. Let me explain what those two demo / presentation techniques mean - and I'll put on the hat of a former IT executive when I do it. Think of this as a lesson from CIO school.

These two techniques are specifically designed to help me as the CIO, or anyone in my organization, to remember and understand why I should buy from you rather than your competition. In fact, at a higher level, they are designed to encourage my team to buy something, rather than go with Do Nothing Incorporated.

The Baseball/Cricket Bat (Pick your own sports equipment). Look at it this way - do you have any ideas how many vendors want to meet with me every month? How many of them want to be my strategic, consultative, partner? (Hint: almost 100%). Yet how many vendors do I buy from? My team feels the same way. Sure - the lower you go in the hierarchy the fewer vendors they may deal with, but even my first-line managers could fill 50% of their calendar every week with vendor-focused meetings.



So when you meet with us make it memorable. I don't mean a multimedia, Broadway, whizz-bang demo - but I do mean when I leave the room I need to remember what your solution does, why it is different, why it will work in my environment and most importantly

what results we can achieve if we buy it. Yes - that's right; no matter what all the sales methodology books say out there - I don't buy solutions - I buy results and outcomes! Where does the heavy piece of sports equipment fit in? Well, you will never get rich by over-estimating the intelligence of your audience. Simply put - do not assume that we "get it". Make sure that we "get it", repeat the key points of your message multiple times, start and finish with your most important item and repeat as needed. You need to virtually beat us over the head with it (and make sure that we care about it).

There is a downside to this - you can overdo the beatings so that your sales messaging sounds like marketing doublespeak. We may resent the repeated mantra as if we were 8 year olds - to the point where we will stubbornly decide **it's** not that important if only because you say that **it** is.

So that is where the second approach comes in - [the trail of bread crumbs](#) (pick your own variation of tasty sweets or candy). The intent is to lead the customer (that's me) towards asking the question "[tell me about /your most important item/differentiator/](#)". I've heard this called the curiosity-based demo, as you want to generate enough interest in just one person in the room to ask you to explain more.

Why be subtle? Well - my organization is full of IT-savvy technologists who pride themselves on their skills and abilities. Most of them would love to engage in techie toe-to-toe talks with you because they believe they are smarter than you (and many of them are). They certainly don't want to be sold - so if they follow the breadcrumbs to ask the insightful question everyone gets their desired outcome.



How do you leave a trail of breadcrumbs? Suppose you want someone to ask about a specific Feature-Advantage-Benefit of your solution - the FAB. You can put part of the FAB on a PowerPoint slide (twice) but not really talk about it. You can tell us a story about what another customer has done with your solution using the FAB without specifically mentioning it. The FAB can be an obvious path in the demo that you don't take. You get the idea. And if no-one bites - get out the baseball bat.

Ideally you can use the bat and the bread crumbs together. The bat tends to work better with economic/business issues and the bread crumbs tend to work better with the

technological issues. I've even seen good cop/bad cop variations within a sales/presales team be used very effectively. Sales is of course the bad cop.

Let me finish by asking you to do the math. I'll beat you over the head with this one. Let's imagine that you meet with me and my team for an hour and we'll examine the media that you can use.

| Action | Media Quantity |
|------------|------------------|
| Speaking | 10,000 Words |
| Presenting | 30-40 PPT Slides |
| Demoing | 30-50 Screens |

If you speak / present at me then you'll get about 10,000 words out in an hour. A PowerPoint presentation may cover anywhere from 30 to 40 slides and a demo could go through 30-50 distinct screens. Let's suppose your key statement takes 25 words to express. The odd of a random listener catching that is 25/10,000 or 0.25%.

Very poor odds! You want me to remember what? Make it easy and involve my curiosity.

These two techniques used in parallel are incredibly effective and will make sure that you never go back to your VP of Sales and say "*The Customer Just Didn't Get It!*"

Talking Points is a monthly column authored by John Care, Managing Director of Mastering Technical Sales. For more information on this and other Sales Engineering topics visit the website at www.masteringtechnicalsales.com.

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