5 Steps to a Successful Recruiting Presentation

In the world of sales, there is a high correlation between presentation skills and sales success. Great salespeople work to hone their communication skills and are able to communicate with confidence and impact. In addition, they are often remembered and acknowledged as key business partners — not simply as "*someone trying to sell us something*."

Less successful salespeople, on the other hand, spend very little time consciously building their competency in this area.

But what are the elements of a great presentation? Is there a way to make a compelling presentation over the phone? And more importantly, what can recruiters do to build their phone presentation skills? In this article, I provide a simple 5-point checklist for recruiters who make presentations to candidates and hiring managers during phone conversations.

Right Time, Right Target

Whether engaging with prospects, candidates, or hiring managers, there comes a time when a recruiter will need to "present the product." In a good sales process, this presentation should come after the salesperson has **developed some level of rapport and trust** — and after the salesperson has uncovered, clarified, and developed **the needs of the buyer**.

Presenting product information too soon is a sure sign of a poor salesperson. It's not "*ready, fire, aim."* It's "*ready, aim, fire*." Be sure you know the target (think: *needs/problems*) before you waste time presenting information that is not important to the other person.

For recruiters, the same principles apply. After developing a relationship with the candidate or prospect and getting a clear picture of what's important, it's time to present the specific opportunity. And the same applies to your hiring managers. Know what they are looking for **before** you make your "candidate presentation."

5 Steps to a Successful Presentation

You can find a lot of good information about "best practices" for presentations. For this article, though, I've put together a simple 5-point "tuneup" checklist that may help as you set the goal to develop your (phone) presentation skills.

#1: Start with the pain

Begin your presentation by summarizing what you know about your candidate or prospect's pain points. Can you concisely and accurately play back what's important to them in a company and in a position? Perhaps it's *growth opportunities*, *work-life balance,* or *job stability*. For a hiring manager it might be a proven track record in a similar position.

Nothing is more of a turnoff than a presentation that is not relevant. Remember, people just don't buy products. They buy products *because of what they can do for them*. They buy "*solutions."* And the same principle applies to your hiring managers or to those seeking career opportunities. So be sure you clearly set the target before you begin presenting anything.

Keep lasering in on the **benefits** the candidate or prospect can expect to gain (aligned with the pain points) — as opposed to the "*generic features*" of your company or job opportunity. With your hiring managers, be careful to point out the qualities/competencies this candidate brings to the table that are aligned with what the hiring manager is looking for.

Here's a tip. You can even *use their questions* as great opportunities to further target your presentation. For example, if a candidate or prospect asks, "*Does this position include health insurance benefits*?" resist the temptation to immediately go into a presentation about all the wonderful features of the health insurance plan.

Instead, begin your presentation with, "*I'd be happy to share information about the health/benefit plan with you. But before I do, is there something in particular you are looking for*?" Remember — customers buy for *their* reasons, not *yours*.

#2: Anticipate objections

It's not uncommon for customers, prospects, or hiring managers to have at least one objection. So be prepared for objections before your presentation. Can you anticipate some common objections that might arise? What do you know about your prospect, hiring manager, or candidate that might help you prepare? How about putting yourself in *their* shoes and asking yourself what *you* might be concerned about? Then, plan your response and be ready to address it if it comes up your presentation.

And be sure you don't get caught off guard by a quick "*show me the money*" objection from a prospect. Your presentation will be spoiled if you get tipped over in the first minute by this common objection. So know how to handle this objection and keep your presentation on target.

#3: Involve the other person in the presentation

Try to keep the other person engaged and active during the presentation. Do not make them simply a bystander. You don't want to turn into a talking version of your latest marketing materials. Boring! Keep in mind that we talk at approximately 110-150 words per minute. However, research suggests that we are capable of listening and processing up to 600-1,000 words per minute! So be careful not to spend too much time talking — giving your listener an opportunity to tune out or become agitated.

Since you can't see them (as in a face-to-face presentation) to be able to "read" their level of engagement, try to ask quick, confirming questions throughout your presentation.

"*How does that sound*?"

"*Does that address your question*?"

"*What other concerns do you have at this point*?"

"Does that tuition reimbursement program match what you are looking for?"

"*What have I left out that's going to be important as you make this decision*?"

"*What other information do you need from me at this point*?

#4: Be comfortable with silence

Great presenters know that a well-timed pause can be powerful. Resist the temptation to turn your presentation into "*total transmit*" of information. You don't have to fill the air with your voice to ensure the message is being heard and received.

As you hone your skill of becoming more comfortable with silence over the phone, try to build some intentional silences into your presentations. A good place to begin is to try a moment of silence before answering a question. Put in a pause, or a moment of silence, before simply "spewing out" a response. Many sales have been lost — or a concession made — by someone talking without thinking first.

#5: Show enthusiasm!

When you present your opportunity, remember to sound excited! If *you* are not excited, why should anyone else be? If you don't believe in your "product," your candidate or prospect won't either. Your enthusiasm (think: confidence) is noticeable to others.

OK, this is sort of corny, but you've probably seen some of those commercials on TV. You know — the ones that pitch a product and end with something like, "*But wait! There's more. If you act RIGHT NOW, we'll DOUBLE your offer. All you pay is shipping and handling … "*

Regardless of how you feel about these approaches or products, one thing is clear. Without exception, the people you are watching are enthusiastic about their product! Perhaps a bit over the top, for sure. But clearly enthusiastic. Evidently, enthusiasm (even over-the-top enthusiasm about the *Shamwow*) *does* grab attention and peak curiosity.

A final word: Practice does not make perfect …

And finally, keep in mind the importance of practicing. The old saying, "*practice makes perfect*" is not entirely true. Practice only makes "permanent." To develop "*perfect presentations*" be sure to practice the **right things**.

Practice using pain points to develop your presentation. Practice managing objections **before** they happen. Find a co-worker or friend and try some role-playing Have some fun!

Practice confirming and checking — as well as silence. Start by pausing before answering questions.

Don't forget to bring all of your passion and enthusiasm to the call!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR*: Nancy Parks is the founder of HRPartnersplus, a consulting practice specializing in human resource and organizational development services—including instructional design and delivery, e-learning design and delivery, training needs analysis, sales training, performance analysis, employee surveys, and program evaluation. As a top salesperson, she was consistently recognized and rewarded for her ability to exceed sales quota—receiving the prestigious "Account Executive of the Month" award three times in a single year. While at the AT&T National Sales Training School, she developed a performance diagnostic tool for sales managers that received high marks as a method for helping reduce training costs and improve job performance.*