

Sales Linguistics for Persuasive Presentation

Sales presentation is an important component of personal selling process

Sales Linguistics converts skeptics into believers through structured language-based interaction. The core of sales linguistics is to understand the language conversation between sales people and prospective customers while making sales presentation.

According to sales linguistics, every conversation passes through three stages:

1. Opening stage: The beginning of the talk
2. Main stage: Longest interaction to deliver main message
3. Closing stage: End of the speech

Sales Presentation is to communicate to the consumer about the benefits of the product, generate an interest in the product, and create a desire to purchase the product. An effective sales presentation can be made based on the AIDA (attention, interest, desire and action) concept. As a result, the customer may take action to fulfill the desire.

- **First Stage is behavior interruption:** The purpose is to establish a behavior interruption i.e. put in the shoe of the listener for a moment. It begins the process of building rapport, creating interest and provoking open-mindedness. A behavior interruption is pre-mediated language structure to establish connectedness
- **Second Stage to deliver message:** Use metaphors (stories, parables, analogies) to simplify complex concepts into an understandable, persuasive and nonthreatening way to put your point of way and show the direction your audience to follow. Audience conscious mind focuses on the content of the surface level story where as the sub-conscious mind tries to decipher its own message. For example, smoker examples with health issues on a television are more impactful than simple warning signals on cigarette package.
- **Third stage to Close:** The language structure should incorporate commands and presenting forehand and background suggestions.
 - **Hard close:** A command is instructional statement put audiences in 'yes or no' mode i.e. take it or leave it mentality.
 - **Medium close:** Foreground suggestions are explicit but deflect the source of the request from the demander
 - **Soft close:** Background suggestions persuade audience to believe they are acting on their own but in fact they are influenced by the message.

For example, a passenger who wanted to control the driver who is driving faster:

- **Hard Close:** Slow down, a command style
- **Medium close:** The speed limit is 30 KMPH and the traffic police monitor vehicle speed, - a fore ground suggestion
- **Soft close:** There was an accident last week for faster driving at this spot, - a background suggestion

Persuasion:

- Background suggestion is more subtle in its delivery and can persuade audience towards your way of thinking
- Persuasion is making audience to internalize your message because they trust that it is in their best interest.

Topic	Course
Sales Presentation: Personal selling and sales force management: Unit 21.5	Marketing Management

Source: Steve W. Martin (2013), *Use Sales Linguistics to Structure Winning Presentations*, HBR Blog Network, May 2, 2013