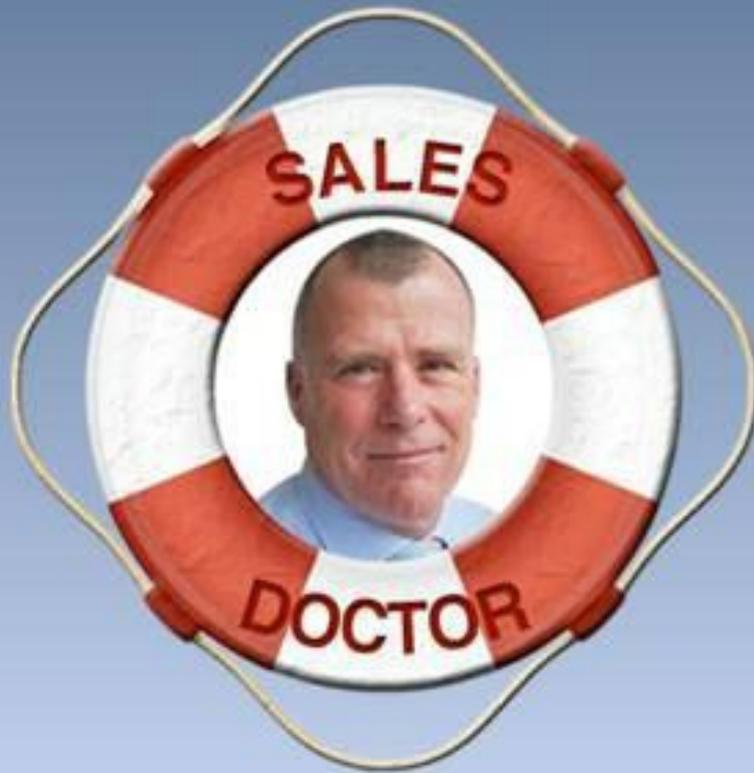


TURN MORE PROSPECTS INTO CLIENTS!

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Foreword

It was at the early age of fifteen that I started my then part-time career as speaker, salesman and entertainer at van Linschoten's Bakery in the De Hoogstraat in Rotterdam. At the time I had no idea that from then on the sales profession would mark my life. Now, forty years later I share my experience and knowledge with tens of thousands of people around the world. All in the hope of them learning from me and of them further developing the sales profession. Not all this knowledge is my own. Training and instruction by teachers, experts in their field and scientists have helped me become who I am and know what I know. In those forty years I educated and improved myself at well-established, renowned institutes and many lesser-known, yet equally fine organisations.

What I am about to share with you is original and authentic. For what I give is the sum of all my learning and forty years of sales experience. This knowledge has led to daily sales(t)wits on Twitter and among other things this ebook. With the intention to inspire people and to point them in the right direction. Many of my own pitfalls are discussed there so you don't make the same mistakes. My advice isn't merely theoretical, but proven in real life and ready to apply. Anyone who has ever learned from or worked in the sales profession will surely recognize the advice given.

The 73 sales(t)wits in this ebook are about the conversion of prospects into clients. Each one with an explanation or example. The ebook does not claim to be complete, but I am certain that if you put my tips to use, you will turn more prospects into clients.

Do not hesitate to debate with me or to send me additional remarks. Just email me at salesdoctor I also am still young enough to learn. Actually I learn from other people's remarks every day.

I wish you much pleasure in reading this ebook and lots of success afterwards in converting old and new prospects into new clients!

salesdoctor_uk/us



Rein Aantjes

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The MCM P CMC diagram



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Making a selection

- ⁽⁰¹⁾ A new year starts with a new budget. The perfect moment for looking up old prospects that bailed out before.
- ⁽⁰²⁾ In 4 weeks time you'll visit more prospects, who also have more time for you, by keeping regional holiday periods in mind.
- ⁽⁰³⁾ You can still visit prospects with a big ego if you're a dominant salesperson, as long as your ego isn't bigger than theirs.

Collecting information

- ⁽⁰⁴⁾ On your way to a sales talk? Look at your prospect's vision of the future rather than at what he's busy doing now.
- ⁽⁰⁵⁾ You can come across dangerous competitors anywhere. Especially where you're looking for new prospects.
- ⁽⁰⁶⁾ There's no reason at all to be nervous or insecure if you're prepared for talks with prospects or clients.
- ⁽⁰⁷⁾ The more you know about your prospect's trade, the more likely he'll buy from you. Professional knowledge creates bonds.

Making an appointment

- ⁽⁰⁸⁾ When a prospect says he's not interested, that's most probably due to the fact you weren't able to interest him.
- ⁽⁰⁹⁾ Only when you offer something extra will a prospect be interested in you. What you actually deliver is less important.
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ Errors in name or address in the letters you send will tell your clients and prospects what you think of them.
- ⁽¹¹⁾ Maybe data suppliers and telecom providers are warmed by cold calling, callers and prospects certainly aren't anymore.
- ⁽¹²⁾ Your chances of success are 5 times higher with prospects that speak to you directly than those who'll phone you back later.
- ⁽¹³⁾ A preprogrammed sales talk lacks respect and won't stand a chance as all your prospects and

contacts are different and unique.

- ⁽¹⁴⁾ You won't sell anything when your prospect has no time. So meet at the right moment and create a relaxed atmosphere.
- ⁽¹⁵⁾ Don't talk about your product when arranging a meeting with your prospect, but show him the profit you're going to make him.
- ⁽¹⁶⁾ As your clients and prospects are limited in time and they don't need to be flexible, they determine your time schedule.
- ⁽¹⁷⁾ If your prospect knew exactly what he wanted, he wouldn't have needed you to advise him and would have ordered via the website.
- ⁽¹⁸⁾ Regularly use your prospect's name and the name of his firm in your sales talk. That way he'll know you're talking about him.

Preparing conversation

- ⁽¹⁹⁾ Knowledge lies at the basis of your success. Knowledge of your clients, prospects and their sector, AND of your firm, yourself.
- ⁽²⁰⁾ Acquaint yourself with your prospect group's purchase criteria. It'll come in handy if your first meeting turns out to be brief.
- ⁽²¹⁾ When typifying prospects and clients or categorizing them with colours, make sure you're a good chameleon yourself.
- ⁽²²⁾ Late for a meeting with a prospect, makes a glum prospect, a prospect late for a meeting with you means a cheerful prospect.
- ⁽²³⁾ 1/2 an hour of witty googling before a talk with a prospect will give you more useful info than 3 1hour talks.
- ⁽²⁴⁾ Smoke an hour before a sales talk and you stand 50% chance your prospect thinks you smell and 100% chance you actually do.
- ⁽²⁵⁾ When selling products or services you need to be able to show your prospect in figures how he's to benefit.
- ⁽²⁶⁾ Prospects who ask your advice have their preferences. That's why knowledge of their line of business and preparation are vital.
- ⁽²⁷⁾ Prospects only go to a new supplier as long as there are no risks involved. So first make sure you can guarantee there are no risks.
- ⁽²⁸⁾ Surprise important clients' contacts in a positive manner. Make sure your organisation knows their names.

Conversation

- ⁽²⁹⁾ Ask clients and prospects if you may take notes on the conversation. That makes what they say important and more reliable.

- ⁽³⁰⁾ Consultative selling is what you're into when prospects have even more valid purchase motives after a conversation.
- ⁽³¹⁾ Ask your prospect why he hasn't bought from you before at the start of the conversation and use the answer as a topic!
- ⁽³²⁾ Clients and prospects expect you to sell them something when you come calling. So don't disappoint them!
- ⁽³³⁾ Your prospects' body language says something about their attitude. So keep an eye on this throughout the conversation.
- ⁽³⁴⁾ Asking your prospect about his opinion will make a client out of him sooner than asking what he thinks of your opinion.
- ⁽³⁵⁾ Answers a client may give you are not always the answers to your questions. Luckily you've got check questions.
- ⁽³⁶⁾ Open questions in between like: "What do you think...?" prevent a prospect from saying later on he had already lost you halfway.
- ⁽³⁷⁾ Only make price concessions in a face to face negotiation when your prospect immediately decides to do business with you.
- ⁽³⁸⁾ It's an advantage when prospects like you, but without your empathy it will never amount to anything.
- ⁽³⁹⁾ Stop trying to interest your prospects once they're prepared to purchase. Otherwise you may blow the deal yet.
- ⁽⁴⁰⁾ Let your prospect do the slandering of your competitor i.e. his current supplier. The fact he wants to talk to you says enough!
- ⁽⁴¹⁾ Only use your laptop to show clients or prospects things you can only show with a laptop and when they are sitting next to you.
- ⁽⁴²⁾ Your prospects seldom read documentation left behind or sent in advance. It's better to read with them during the conversation.
- ⁽⁴³⁾ Tell prospects who your back-up is and what will happen should something happen to you. This creates trust in your organisation.
- ⁽⁴⁴⁾ Clients and prospects trust you if they share their private life with you. But, make sure you leave yours at home!
- ⁽⁴⁵⁾ Thank clients and prospects who criticize you and your products or services. They're actually helping you.
- ⁽⁴⁶⁾ When a prospect misses an important moment in your presentation, go back to that point for him and for yourself.
- ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Don't go into defence mode when your prospect comes at you with useless arguments, instead ask him why he thinks that way.
- ⁽⁴⁸⁾ Simply ask your prospect what would make him or her decide to switch to your services.
- ⁽⁴⁹⁾ With a procurement officer you discuss the best terms, whereas with a prospect you look for

the best solution first.

- ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Avoid mentioning all those objections that everyone mentions to you, if your prospect doesn't mention these himself.
- ⁽⁵¹⁾ When a prospect appears to be uninterested, it doesn't go to say he isn't interested. He may just be pretending.
- ⁽⁵²⁾ The kindest prospects are the most difficult decision makers. So confirm what you've agreed on and repeat this again and again.

Making a proposal

- ⁽⁵³⁾ You can count on lots of extra needs and demands from a prospect who does everything to be liked.
- ⁽⁵⁴⁾ When you know the prospect's budget before making a proposal, you'll end up discussing less about prices. So ask about it!
- ⁽⁵⁵⁾ Your prospect's critical remarks on your offer are easily foiled by emphasizing your unique strong points.
- ⁽⁵⁶⁾ Your prospect is not only looking for a solution, but also for an expert salesperson to find that solution.
- ⁽⁵⁷⁾ Prospects love it when you recognise their objections first. The trick is turning those into arguments to purchase.
- ⁽⁵⁸⁾ Not unless you don't succeed in quantifying their return on investment will prospects think you're too expensive.
- ⁽⁵⁹⁾ Client and future geared salesmen put down in writing all agreements with clients and prospects. You never know...
- ⁽⁶⁰⁾ You get to plan most of your tasks yourself. Except sales tasks. Your prospects plan those for you.
- ⁽⁶¹⁾ A salesperson sells when his prospects are awake. He does his preparation and completion when his prospects are asleep.
- ⁽⁶²⁾ Email your prospect a report within 24 hours of your conversation and grab the opportunity to add relevant information.

Closing a deal

- ⁽⁶³⁾ Exceptionally good salespeople do not only make fine conversation with prospects, they also land the most orders!
- ⁽⁶⁴⁾ Mentioning your well filled pipeline only helps when you occupy yourself with the conversion of prospects to clients.
- ⁽⁶⁵⁾ He who plans ahead and sets dates together with his prospect, will prevent purchase decision postponement.

- ⁽⁶⁶⁾ If your prospect wants extras, ask for something in return. For a good deal is always a balance between supply and demand.
- ⁽⁶⁷⁾ He who uses information from earlier talks with his prospect, makes his proposal made to measure and himself more successful.
- ⁽⁶⁸⁾ When your prospect doesn't have the answers due to not being able to confer, it means you're sitting at the wrong table.
- ⁽⁶⁹⁾ When a prospect bails out because it's too expensive, he really means the advantages of buying haven't gotten through to him.
- ⁽⁷⁰⁾ Prospects who say no to your propositions actually mean to say you haven't found their purchase motives yet.
- ⁽⁷¹⁾ Contrary to what you may believe, according to your prospects, only 15% of your offers are declined due to price.
- ⁽⁷²⁾ Phoning your prospects after delivery and finding out your sales arguments were right, means you've won another loyal client.
- ⁽⁷³⁾ Having a meal with the prospect that bailed out, could turn out to be a very useful 'self-investment'.

Preface

This ebook will help you improve your conversations with prospects*. By using the tips, you will certainly increase your conversion. However, I know many salesmen* who had very good conversations with prospects and still didn't succeed. If you want to land that order on time, you'll need to have the right knowledge and skills. So be aware that reading this book and using the tips, doesn't mean you're there yet. Because...

[\(63\)](#) **Exceptionally good salespeople do not only make fine conversation with prospects, they also land the most orders!** [↵](#)

* To make reading this ebook easy, I often use the word salesman, i.e. the male version. It goes without saying that in doing so I am referring to saleswomen as well as salesmen. The prospect named Mr. Johnson further on in this book is purely fictitious.

Approaching prospects is harder than you may think.

So you've made a list of prospects and have just decided to approach them? Obviously you decide to pick up the phone and start phoning. If you're lucky, you'll speak to someone and if you're very lucky that someone is also the person you're looking for. If this person has enough time, you may even be allowed to ask a question! Subsequently, the answer to your question whether the prospect wants to discuss your offer will be: "No thank you, we're really not interested..."

Depressing, for of course you know better. Otherwise this organisation wouldn't be on your list of prospects. Don't wonder what's the matter, but consider this...

(08) When a prospect says he's not interested, that's most probably due to the fact you weren't able to interest him! ⇐

Every prospect, however grumpy, is interested in matters that will benefit him or his business in the field of cost reduction or turnover growth. To attract his attention, you'll have to show him that further contact with you will benefit him. Also, the more precise you can be, the more precise his interest will be! So it's preferable to say: "Mr. Johnson, I guarantee you that after my visit you will know how to spend 1000 Euros less on office accessories and furthermore how you will achieve a time reduction for your secretaries of at least 2 hours a week per secretary." Instead of: "Mr. Johnson our online supply system will save you lots of money and time." That's because...

(09) Only when you offer something extra will a prospect be interested in you. What you actually deliver is less important. ⇐

Promising or guaranteeing something is one thing, but you won't be going anywhere if it appears your prospect doesn't believe you after your visit. Worse than that, don't count on going back to this prospect for the time being! So, you'll have to prove to your prospects that you are very knowledgeable. Not just of your own products, but also of your prospects' products and their lines of business. Only then will you be able to serve prospects as a true advisor and convince them you're right. Besides that, you won't be viewed as an advisor when you have the word consultant on your business card, but when you provide valid reasons that help your prospect along...

(30) Consultative selling is what you're into when prospects have even more valid purchase motives after a conversation. ⇐

• I found this video on YouTube in which Keith Rosen really hits the nail on the head. [How to capture a prospect's proposal](#)

Make an efficient job of it.

Let's go back to that moment at which you decided to approach prospects. Your goal was to deliver your prospects what they really want and you prepared yourself well. Now all you need to collect are some names, addresses and phone numbers, and you're all set to go. I wish it were that easy. While approaching prospects all sorts of things can go wrong and I know plenty of salesmen that quit after four attempts. Their contact had left the firm, the phone number had been changed, a certain Mr. appeared to be a Mrs, or the firm was closed for a three week holiday... All a big waste of time and effort that you would have been better off putting into improving the relationship with your current clients. However, with a couple of handy tips you'll beat inefficiency and approach more prospects in less time!

For example, sometimes it can be helpful to send some information beforehand to tickle your prospect's curiosity. Then he'll be expecting you to contact him and be more prepared to talk to you. When applying such tactics, bear this in mind...

(10) Errors in name or address in the letters you send will tell your clients and prospects what you think of them. ⇐

Of course you can also decide to seek direct contact with prospects in an attempt to get them interested. In sales jargon this is called 'cold calling'. In that case make sure you know the name, the job title and direct number of the person you want to talk to. For, the question: "Could you put me through to the person responsible for...?" really gets people's hairs on end...

(11) Maybe data suppliers and telecom providers are warmed by cold calling; callers and prospects certainly aren't anymore. ⇐

The moment you seek contact, is very important for an efficient working manner. Because your chances of success will be highest when you choose the right moment and when the prospect has time to talk to you. When you interrupt prospects on their direct number when they really don't have the time and are in conversation with someone else, you will lower your chances by 99%! So always ask the prospect whether you're phoning at the right moment. When the prospect shows so much as an ounce of hesitation, move on to the question which day and which time is appropriate. Never let a prospect phone you, for then you'll end up at the bottom of his To Do list...

(12) Your chances of success are 5 times higher with prospects that speak to you directly than those who'll phone you back later. ⇐

You've finally got that prospect on the phone and he's even got time for you. You know exactly how to begin and hardly even need your script. Wrong! Of course you won't be working with a script. After all you can expect a good salesperson to listen well and to ask the right questions using the answers to the right questions and using the answers he gets to the previous question. Remember that two answers to the very same open question will never be the same. For...

(13) A preprogrammed sales talk lacks respect and won't stand a chance as all your prospects and contacts are different and unique. ⇐

External factors can also effect the chance of speaking to a prospect soon. A sudden takeover and economic issues or crises, are good examples. When times are uncertain organisations and people are usually unsusceptible to change. Actually that's why I've put many prospects on hold in my forty years of sales experience. Often the disappointing results in the first half year and the following cutbacks were the cause. In situations like these make sure that delay doesn't become permanent. Soon you can approach prospects again who bailed out earlier due to them being faced with cutbacks halfway into the year...

(01) A new year starts with a new budget. The perfect moment for looking up old prospects that bailed out before. ⇐

Of course you also want to approach new prospects when you have more time on your hands. Otherwise it may cost you current clients or would be clients. Holiday periods are an ideal time! Don't think all of your new prospects will be on holiday then. Have a look at this...

(02) In 4 weeks time you'll visit more prospects, who also have more time for you by keeping regional holiday periods in mind. ⇐

Yet, there are no certainties in life. Even when you've taken into account with the above said and what you've come up with yourself, it can still go wrong 5 minutes before the conversation you had planned. Something's popped up that is more urgent for the prospect (which easily happens...), the office next door is being renovated, your prospect's secretary tells you she has to rush off home because the children are off school all of a sudden... These and dozens of other unforeseen circumstances may arise. Many salespeople then make the mistake of giving as much information as possible in a limited amount of time. Even while the prospect is packing his briefcase. That's not going to work though. Don't cram everything into a short talk. Instead...

(14) You won't sell anything when your prospect has no time. So meet at the right moment and create a relaxed atmosphere. ⇐

• Some years ago I visited a conference in the US, where among others well known international top speaker Frank Furness was giving a talk. He has his own way of reaching prospects. How to make appointments. [How to make appointments](#)

You need to grasp this

Nearly all successful salespeople tend to show extremely dominant behaviour. Besides having an air of self-assurance about them (often taken for arrogance), they love to be in control of the conversation as well as take the initiative. However there are prospects who, although working in procurement can be equally dominant. In that case successful salespeople can distinguish themselves from prospects with their ability to place themselves in the background. So adjust your behaviour in order to maintain that pleasant atmosphere and your prospect's natural behaviour...

(03) You can still visit prospects with a big ego if you're a dominant salesperson, as long as your ego isn't bigger than theirs. ⇐

Imagine returning from a visit to a recently acquired client, who has happily shown you that the product you sold him meets his original expectations. He has praised you abundantly for the quick delivery and for the fact that your product is still working perfectly. You may be tempted to apply this client's positive remarks about this product to the way you make contact with your next prospect. Don't make that mistake! Earlier results do not guarantee future success, is what the prospect may think. Furthermore, your prospect will be sure to view things different than that satisfied client...

(15) Don't talk about your product when arranging a meeting with your prospect, but show him the profit you're going to make him. ⇐

Here it's not so important whether your calculations match your prospect's situation one hundred percent. For he will understand that you do not yet know his figures. He'll most probably apply your maths to his very own situation. That's why you're better off keeping your calculations on the conservative side than being too optimistic. It is more important that the prospect trusts you and that you're capable of interesting him. A reliable calculation will show your prospect that you understand his line of business and his firm. Knowledge of the facts lies at the basis. Don't overrate this knowledge, because your prospect always knows more about his line of business than you...

(19) Knowledge lies at the basis of your success. Knowledge of your clients, prospects and their sector. AND of your firm, yourself. ⇐

When you know your prospect's sector, i.e. line of business, then you'll also know what made earlier prospects fall for you and become clients. A new prospect on the other hand, will be reluctant at first when he hears you talk and will certainly ask you to keep it brief. Therefore you need to tickle his curiosity in the first minutes of conversation, in order to convince him to give you more time...

(20) Acquaint yourself with your prospect group's purchase criteria. It'll come in handy if your first meeting turns out to be brief. ⇐

Obviously you're smart enough to check these three criteria piece by piece with him and to only

elaborate on those he says are important to him. Remember he already said he had little time and that counts even more for information that he finds irrelevant!

Your prospect's time is valuable. You certainly won't be the first salesperson to hear halfway during the conversation, after the prospect takes a look at the clock: "Very well, my dear consultant, what are you getting at?" Which, by the way doesn't mean the prospect doesn't know that already...

(32) Clients and prospects expect you to sell them something when you come calling. So don't disappoint them! ⇐

As you know, not all prospects are the same. One prospect once became so interested in what I had to say and in my information, that I started to run out of time! Although it's dangerous to put people in boxes, it can prove to be useful to adapt your conversation strategy to the type of prospect sitting opposite you. For that purpose I sometimes use Jung's theory on colour categorizing...

(21) When typifying prospects and clients or categorizing them with colours, make sure you're a good chameleon yourself. ⇐

• Many personality categorizations are based on the theories of the famous psychologist [Carl Gustav Jung](#) You can read about colour categorization based on his theories on www.insights.com (you can also find out your own colour here!) or you can look up 'insights wheel' on the Internet.

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