

How Scripts Can Help You Increase Sales

How did you answer your phone today? How was your tone of voice? If someone called you with a question about a product or service, did your caller "price shop" you, or were you able to take the lead in the conversation?

If you think back and feel as if you were operating by the seat of your pants, take heart.

Most entrepreneurs feel the same way, simply because they've never sat down and planned out a simple scripting system to guide business conversations.

Writing a sales script is simple. You just need to identify your specific types of customer interactions. Then, make a list of the key phrases that will help you gather information from a customer in that kind of situation, with a list of information that you want to convey, and the tone of the conversation.

No matter the business you're in, the benefits of scripting include:

1. Helping nonsales people, including yourself, stay on message and give them a guide to follow to work customers through your sales process.
2. Giving your team members a ready series of statements to help them overcome objections.

3. Making sure everyone is on the same page and uses language and messages in a way that reflects your company vision, mission and culture.

The outcome? More sales, more up-sells and better overall results from your team at all levels. Yes, this should include your "gatekeeper" or anyone answering phones.



For example, here's a simple "magic phrase" I've tested that has consistently increased sales.

"Hi there. . . Have you been here before?"

You may not see anything magic about this question. But such a simple yes-or-no question can open up a conversation to build rapport.

If the customer says yes, you can say:

"Great! You know, I thought you looked familiar. . . Is there anything special you are looking for today?"

Then, you can use open-ended questions (those that can't be answered with a yes or no) to help you understand what the customer is really looking for.

What if your potential customer says, no?

You can simply say:

"Great! Welcome to [the name of your store]. Let me tell you a little bit about what we offer."

This works well in retail. You can also use scripts with inbound calls. Here are a few basic rules for workers who answer your phones.

- Answer every call after the second ring, but before the third ring. You don't seem too eager, but you want to avoid the impression that nobody is "minding the store."
- Say simply: "Hi, thanks for calling [business name], this is [your full name]." Speak slowly. Seeming rushed can set the tone for the entire conversation.
- Always ask permission to put someone on hold.
- Never say: "Mr./Ms. is in a meeting."
- Always say: "Mr./Ms. is with someone."

You can script to eliminate price shopping and actually increase sales over the phone.

How? Here's how your scripted conversation might sound for a tire store:

"Good morning/afternoon, thanks for calling ABC Tires, this is Ray Smith."

[What's the price on ...]

"Thanks for your call. Could I just ask your name?"

[John]

"Thanks John, just so I can help you best would it be OK if I asked you a few questions?"

[Sure]

"Great. First, what sort of vehicle do you own?"

[Brand name]

"I see, and when did you last have your tires replaced?"

[6 months ago]

"Wow ... they didn't last long. What brand were they?"

[X brand]

"Understood. Actually, you'll find they wear quickly. For your car I'd recommend [Y brand]. They'll last twice as long, give you a better ride and they only cost a couple of dollars more."

If the caller says, "Actually, I've had those tires replaced 18 months ago."

Ray could say, "Great. And you've been happy with them?"

[Yes]

"All right, I've got those in stock and I'll get them on for you today."

Or "Great. I've got a brand just slightly better. They cost less, and I'll get those on for you today."

Scripting your approach is just like scripting a performance. Every great actor or actress has a script that he or she not only commits to memory, but embodies it, so there is honesty and belief in the performance.

Your leads, prospects and customers are your audience. So develop some scripts and start testing them.

Practice really does make perfect, and eventually you'll find your scripts become a natural part of your vocabulary, presented in your own personable and "nonsales" way.

The best part? Your efforts are likely to be reflected in more repeat customers, as well as improved cash flow and profits.