



## Point of View

# Leave PowerPoint Behind and Make the Person-to-Person Sale

by Joanne S. Black

**D**eath by PowerPoint: We've all been there. The lights in the room are dimmed, everyone is looking at a screen and listening to a product manager, salesperson, or executive read what is on each and every slide. You look at your watch and can't wait to leave the room.

New, fancy technology is alluring. It's easy to get sucked into the PowerPoint universe. But you need to connect person-to-person first if you ever intend to make a sale. The power of connections is infinite—and I'm not talking about computers.

There's a saying among salespeople that customers buy with emotion and justify with fact. If our customers don't like us or don't feel comfortable with us, they won't buy from us. You can wow your clients with technology know-how now and try to win them over later, once they find out you're honest and reliable. But the reality is, you need people to start liking you within the first few seconds of your relationship. That's really all you have to get off on the right foot. And fancy gizmos won't make that happen. But a trusted referral and a personal connection will.

According to recent research at both Harvard and Stanford universities, the No #1 skill for success in the 21st century is the *ability to talk to other people*. If we don't "connect" with others, there is really no next step. And when we are referred, we have an immediate connection. We talk about the person who referred us and discard those first uncomfortable and awkward steps of the sales meeting—explaining who we are and what we do. We also discard the question we always wrestle with: "How am I going to begin the conversation?"

Here are some ways to connect with your clients:

- Smile! A smile is the greatest connector of all. When you smile, people automatically smile back.

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- Salespeople are often the first to know what's new. Demonstrate your knowledge of your client's business and the problems they are facing. Many people are buried in their work inside their companies. They want to know what's going on "out there." They expect you to know, so be sure to have relevant answers.
- Ask insightful questions and listen carefully to the responses. What you hear may be different than what you expect. Entertain different perspectives — read between the lines and understand the shades of gray as well as noting the black and white.
- Connect your solution to the business results your client can expect. Only discuss the key points that are pertinent to this particular customer.

Do not discuss the “features” of your product. Do not discuss “benefits” of your product. Do not talk about the weather. The only thing your client is interested in hearing are the ways you can contribute to his business. What can you do to help him implement his business strategy?

Connect with people, and you will have the business. If you connect with the business problem only and don't take the time to relate one-on-one with your client ... you won't have the client and you won't have the sale.

Business is serious, but people aren't, so leave the PowerPoint behind and make the person-to-person sale.

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### Take the first step...

**Build a referral system that will leave your competition in the dust. Call Joanne Black at No More Cold Calling™ NOW! 415-461-8763.**



Joanne S. Black

*Joanne Black is America's leading authority on referral selling and the author of **No More Cold Calling™ The Breakthrough System That Will Leave Your Competition in the Dust**, from Warner Business Books. She developed her No More Cold Calling practice in 1996 and now reaches thousands of people each year. Her Referral Selling System has increased the performance of many top companies including: California State Automobile Association, CCH Knowledge Point, Charles Schwab, Colliers International, KPMG, The Marlin Company, and The Mechanics Bank.*

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*There is significant research about why clients make buying decisions. Bottom line: because they like and trust the salesperson and his organization.*

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