

## Sales: Customer Satisfaction and the Four P's

Any salesperson can close a sale. But it is the good salesperson that recognizes every client has four questions they need answered before they can experience lasting satisfaction over a decision to buy.

The client's four questions can be remembered as the Four P's:

Pizzazz – What's in it for me?

Product – What is it?

Proof – Why should I trust you?

Price – What does it cost?

Although dealt with separately below, the good salesperson's pitch will seamlessly answer the four questions while adjusting itself according to the interests and priorities of the individual client.

### PIZZAZZ

Pizzazz is where many sales begin. Pizzazz is the emotional hook that entices the client by creating a picture of the benefits associated with a decision to buy. Pizzazz is exciting, and it is easy for salespeople to focus too exclusively on it.

An example of Pizzazz would be a theme park poster displaying smiling grandparents with grandchildren under the slogan, 'For the time of their lives'; the emotional hook is happiness. Nothing is mentioned about the number of rides available (Product), or cost for passes (Price), or customer satisfaction ratings (Proof). Such an ad campaign is a common enticement that leads to a sale.

But if a sale is closed on Pizzazz alone, client dissatisfaction is often the case; once the short-lived emotional Pizzazz wears off, the client realizes their other three questions were left unanswered. In fact, the client may realize their other three questions didn't even enter into the decision making process. They were so wrapped up in the salesperson's barrage of Pizzazz, they forgot all about Product, Proof and Price.

There is nothing wrong with Pizzazz. It is a great place to start a sale. It is natural for both salesperson and client to enjoy it. But Pizzazz alone does not make for a truly satisfying sale.

### PRODUCT

As consumers become increasingly informed, it becomes equally difficult for salespeople to close sales on Pizzazz alone, which, in the long run, is good for both parties involved. The next logical question for the salesperson to answer after Pizzazz is that of Product – exactly what is it that is being sold.

This is where the hook of Pizzazz needs to be backed up with a great Product. Pizzazz answers what benefits the client will receive (staying with the above example, "happiness"); Product answers what features the client will receive ("Over 50 rides, 25 restaurants to choose from, world-class accommodations, etc.").

At this point, if the Product does not live up to the Pizzazz, the client, who only a moment before was enraptured by Pizzazz, sees the pitch as nothing more than hot air, and the sale is lost. But if the Product

does live up to the Pizzazz, a feedback loop can be created in the mind of the client where Product and Pizzazz feed off each other, automatically raising the perceived value of deciding to buy (“Over 50 rides? Wow! The grandkids would love that! They’d be happy. And that would make up happy. And then there’s those world-class accommodations...”).

With the questions of Product and Pizzazz now sufficiently answered, and perceived value on the rise, the client will likely experience a sudden sharp question that asks for...

## PROOF

The Pizzazz was great. And the Product backed it up. But this is when clients’ self-preservation instincts kick in, reminding them that the salesperson could be fabricating both the Pizzazz and the Product (or at least embellishing their benefits and features).

At this point, the client catches a glimpse of themselves at said theme park, surrounded by antiquated rides – half of which are closed for repairs; the other half running on dangerously rusty wheels – while eating greasy food served up by the impolite employees of the nightmare operation that has swallowed the client’s much anticipated dream holiday. This is when the client desperately needs some proof that they will not come to regret the decision to buy.

Customer testimonials, celebrity endorsements, and money-back guarantees are familiar and effective methods salespeople use to answer the client’s proof question. But again, as consumers become more informed, the single greatest answer to their need for proof will come in the form of a personal recommendation of the Product by someone they know and trust; thus, if a salesperson can inform the client that so-and-so personally recommended the Product, then the only question remaining will be that of...

## PRICE

If the questions of Pizzazz, Product and Proof are all soundly answered, Price is a far less daunting question to face. Every client realizes there is a Price to be paid, and everything communicated by the salesperson has reinforced that deciding to buy will lead to lasting satisfaction.

Of course, the Price has to be in line with the competition; otherwise no amount of Pizzazz, Product and Proof will result in a sale. Should the Price be significantly higher or lower than the competition, the salesperson will have already justified that difference in the three areas above (e.g., Pizzazz: Twice the benefits for only 20% more; Product: All steel construction, as opposed to plastic; Proof: Highest customer satisfaction rating in the industry.)

Finally, if the client does not have the money required, all the above efforts of the salesperson are not lost. Rather, the good salesperson can close an immediate sale through creative financing as offered by the business, or a future sale through keeping the client informed of ongoing Product offers.

## SUMMARY

The goal of the good salesperson, then, is to strive for long-term customer satisfaction by successfully answering each client’s questions regarding Pizzazz, Product, Proof and Price. By providing satisfying answers to the client’s four questions, the good salesperson not only closes the sale, but also does all that is possible toward lasting customer satisfaction.