

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

Independent Study Course Number 13

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OVERCOMING PHONE FEAR

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You never know when one of life's terrible experiences may take place. It could be the worst thing to ever happen in your business life. What could this terrible experience be? It is phone fear, the dreaded disease that strikes us when we least expect it. The phone, the tool of our trade, becomes unfriendly to us. So unfriendly that it starts to feel heavy, heavy enough that we don't want to pick it up.

When phone fear strikes we become frustrated and angry with ourselves, at clients, at recruits, at temps, and of course, at the phone. Following the anger comes fear and that fear can be mighty hard to shake off. Sometimes this fear causes some of us to quit. Our business is a unique mixture of every type of human emotion imaginable. Anger, rejection, anxiety, and criticism – all often go hand in hand with the more positive emotions for us such as happiness, accomplishment, and fulfillment. Being confronted with objections, however, can tilt the scale to the more negative emotions.

Day in and day out, as we recruit, market, and interview, we often hear “no, maybe,” and “I'll call you back,” which never seem to compensate for “yes,” “make the offer,” or “I have an order for you.” It's no wonder that phone fear can even make us ill.

The time has come to turn phone fear into phone cheer. So let's begin with a funeral. Let's bury killer phrases such as “I have to,” “I can't,” “I only,” “If,” and “that's impossible.” **Keeping a positive frame of mind is one big step towards curing phone fear.** The second step in removing phone fear and keeping it from recurring is to **think**. Study your problems until you are completely aware of them. All the answers to your problems reside within the problems. Start by reviewing the techniques you use in areas such as cold calling, recruiting, interviewing, and marketing. Get a tape recorder and record those techniques.

Then play them back to yourself or, better yet, seek the objective assistance of your peers. Often times phone fear sets in when we lack the skills of our trade. If there's a deficiency in your techniques now is the time to take action, and not cower in fear.

The third step is to **gain knowledge**, particularly as it pertains to your techniques. Deep-down change is quite difficult to effect overnight, but it sure is easy to add to what we already know. Seek out all the possible knowledge you can.

The fourth step is to **know your buyer**. Most people only buy when they feel good and feel that we have solved their problems. So, one of the most critical things is making your buyer feel good. To better get a handle on what makes a buyer feel good you need to know that there are three basic questions a buyer asks himself when making a choice:

1. What do I have to gain by acting or not acting? (the rewards)
 - will I make or save more money or time?
 - Will I enhance my position in the company or community?
2. What do I have to lose by acting or not acting? (the penalties)
 - will I lose money or waste time?
 - Will I harm my image or position?
3. Does this agree or conflict with my beliefs? (the values)

Every buyer goes through the three questions. Therefore, in order to be successful, we have to understand what the buyer will be asking himself and shape our presentation in a manner which will yield favorable answers.

In order to help you put your sales presentation (never call it a pitch) into words of power, you need to understand the three questions each buyer asks and add the following to it:

People buy....

to increase profit, satisfaction, confidence, convenience, pleasure
to improve customer relations, employee relations, image, status, earnings
to protect investment, self, employees, property, money
to reduce risk, investment, expenses, competition, worry, trouble
to make money, satisfied customers, good impressions
to save time, money, energy, space

As well as you need to know your buyer to be successful, you also need to know yourself and your product. Ideally, there is a synergy created between service providers and their clients: they have a need and you are filling it.

Here are some key questions to ask yourself:

1. Do I know what my product will do?
2. Do I know why it will do it?
3. Do I know how my applicants acquired their skills?
4. Do I know all the benefits my service offers?

5. What are my product's exclusive advantages?

Then frame your product or service in the context of how it may be useful to your client. Here are some key questions that need to be answered about your client:

1. Why does my prospect need my product and service?
2. What does he expect from my product?
3. What are the reasons that will drive him to buy it?
4. How does he plan to use it?
5. What are the possible ways he can use it?

Knowing your buyer and yourself leads to confidence and you'll be better equipped to answer questions and objections as well as to engineer successful sendouts and placements.

Power words and phrases that work

Here's another tip for you. The following twelve words are considered to be the dozen most persuasive words in the English language. Use them well: **you, money, save, new, easy, love, discovery, results, health, proven, guarantee, free.**

Here's a sample sentence that uses four of those magic words: "Jack, **discover** how **easy** it will be to work with our **proven** personnel service. You will find **new** ways to get **results.**"

Use "tie down" statements during a close or to initiate an agreement question. There are many tie down statements such as "**aren't they?**" "**can't you?**" and "**isn't that right?**" See how they work when incorporated into agreement questions that can help clinch a deal. Example: "You're interested in quality and ability in the temp service you're looking for, **aren't you?**"

Be prepared for objections

Another vital part of overcoming phone fear is being prepared to handle the objections that invariably crop up. To arm yourself, sit down and write down every objection you've ever encountered or could imagine encountering and then write rebuttals to each one. Now is the time to really think your argument through rather than trying to present your case extemporaneously when you might not be as prepared. Think of how you would handle common objections such as "I'm too busy to see you now" or "We have too many employees now, we can't hire temps."

Prepare your own story

Another part of overcoming phone fear is to have a clear definition of your company and your services; one that properly highlights your achievements and abilities. Things to cover include:

- Date first opened
- Scope of services
- Training programs
- Invoicing structure
- Testing programs
- Staff and staff credentials
- Special office hours

Operational procedures
Insurance coverage
Caliber of applicant pool
Locations

Create a script that translates and links features to benefits

Creating scripts is a large part of increasing your knowledge. Create a script by writing down your applicant's features and benefits.

When creating a script, keep in mind that the prospect will buy only if it is in his or her interest to buy. Through "benefit" selling the successful salesperson deftly translates the product or service features in to easily understandable personal benefits that will be produced for the buyer. Translation is often best accomplished through "bridge" words.

There are several key bridge words that good sales people use to convey benefits; words such as "because" and "so." These words link the benefits to the features depending on where the salesperson elects to mention the benefit. If the salesperson starts with the feature, "so" becomes the key word. For example: "This has short sleeves so you will be more comfortable in warm weather." Many professional salespeople prefer to start with the benefit, feeling that this gives it more emphasis. In this case, "because" or a work with comparable meaning is used. For example: "You will be more comfortable in warm weather because this has short sleeves."

Stressing the benefits rather than the features gives you an edge because it tends to lead to more agreements. Who can truthfully say they don't want to save money, be more comfortable, have something more attractive? Stressing features is only winging it. Anyone can say they don't want a specific feature. And stressing the feature of a product can lead to natural comparisons with the competition.

Try to keep features, functions, and benefits in mind when creating scripts. For example, the statement "I am an executive recruiter specializing in insurance" is a feature. "We recently interviewed a supervisor with five years' experience in GL who has reduced his department pendings to 1000 from 1500" is a function and "Which means he can increase your profits and improve your corporate department to work in" is a benefit.

Try also to think beyond feature, function, and benefit to result and value. For example, think of a chair. Its feature is being a chair. Its function is for sitting. Its benefit is you don't have to stand. The result or value? You're not tired.

Telephone Sales Presentations

All sales presentations have to follow the following steps:

1. identify yourself
2. build a rapport
3. create an interest
4. deliver a message
5. overcome objections (if any)
6. close for hire
7. fact finding job order

Part of any presentation encompasses speech and vocabulary. Use positive words. Practice with your tone of voice. Even though they can't see you, make sure your voice conveys a smile. Create confidence with your voice. Use inflection and emphasis. Speak clearly and distinctly. Use pauses.

Three types of sales people

Sales people generally fall into one of three types. Which one are you?

Phase I

They tend to think of their clients as adversaries; they often believe that their clients are between them and success. "Get the money and run" and "get them to sign the contract" are the kinds of slogans often running through their heads.

Phase II

These people are problem solvers, but very focused problem solvers. They have to make sure that their client's problems matches perfectly with their solution. If there's not a match then they're not interested. Because of that tight focus, Phase II salespeople tend to miss the larger strategic opportunities. Further, when the client doesn't accept their solution, they revert back into the Phase I mode.

Phase III

They've completely blurred the boundaries of the selling relationship. It's hard to tell for whom the Phase III salespeople work, their agencies or their clients. They can be so close to their clients, so good at understanding and anticipating their needs, that you think they are on the client's payroll.

Summary

Phone fear is created by a lack of knowledge and preparation. Buyer knowledge, scripts, and preparation can help us overcome and avoid it. Getting to that point though, can take a bit of studying, practice, drilling, and rehearsal. But, ultimately, if phone fear causes you to refine your techniques, you should view it as a friend not an enemy.

Finally, the last ingredient in overcoming phone fear is belief. You can believe yourself to achievement. Believe in your daily plan. Believe in your job order. Believe in your candidate. Believe in your client. Believe in your industry. Bust most of all, believe in yourself and your ability.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU) REGISTRATION

Complete the registration information below and forward this page, continuing the independent study examination and your answers, plus payment to NAPS, 3133 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22305. The processing fee for the continuing education units for each NAPS independent study course is \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members. Feel free to reproduce the registration and examination page to allow additional individuals to apply for CEUs. Following receipt, each examination will be scored and CEU certificates will be issued to those who successfully pass the examination. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for examination scoring and CEU certificate processing.

Name: _____ Phone: () _____
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Current NAPS member \$10 Non-member \$20

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Multiple-choice questions. Circle the letter of the response you believe to be correct. Be certain to answer all of the questions.

1. "Tie downs" are mainly used when:
 - a. making an initial contact
 - b. soliciting an agreement
 - c. creating a positive presentation
 - d. closing on a deal

2. Confidence in selling on the phone can best be attributed to your:
 - a. length of service
 - b. knowledge of the buyer and yourself
 - c. training
 - d. none of the above

3. A "feature" in our service is:
 - a. how our service works
 - b. something that costs additional
 - c. a characteristic/attraction
 - d. none of the above

4. A "benefit" as used in sales is:
 - a. an unexpected reward
 - b. anything that contributes to or improves
 - c. an attraction
 - d. a power word

5. Bridges are used to:
 - a. close a call
 - b. link features to benefits
 - c. open a call
 - d. assist in “benefit” selling

6. A Phase III sales person is:
 - a. in an adversarial mode
 - b. the one with the greatest experience
 - c. one you think is on the client’s payroll
 - d. a “get the money and run” type person

7. When a sales person links a “feature” to a “benefit” it:
 - a. means little to the overall sale
 - b. reminds the buyer what’s in it for him
 - c. translates features into benefits
 - d. helps the buyer overlook the size of the impending fee

8. Which of the following should not be included in your “story”?
 - a. scope of services
 - b. staff and staff credentials
 - c. company business plan
 - d. caliber of applicant pool

9. Phone fear can be overcome and avoided by:
 - a. knowing your buyers better
 - b. gaining in-depth knowledge of the industry
 - c. keeping a positive frame of mind
 - d. all of the above
 - e.