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Sales & Business Marketing Program

## Connecting Solutions

Needs meet Solutions  
The VPC+ Model  
The Frame  
Presenting in the Right Box  
Avoiding False Presenting



# Sales and Business Marketing Program

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Module 6

Another Chapter in the Journey to becoming a Sales Pro!

# OnSELLING

current topics >>>

## The PERFECT Solution?

*The idea of perfect is actually a problem, so avoid thinking and speaking that way....*

**PERFECT HOLDS THE SELLER BACK:** Stop worrying about offering a perfect solution. The goal is to offer a solution that is a great fit for this buyer, but it is unlikely that it will achieve "perfect" status. The "perfect" mentality makes sellers hesitant to be passionate about their solutions knowing that the solution, even when it is an excellent solution for this buyer, has some negatives too. Accept this imperfection, and if your solution is a winning one, go ahead and sell it with passion!

**PERFECT CAN MAKE THE BUYER FIGHT BACK:** When we use language like "perfect" with the buyer we run the risk of making them push back simply because we have used such strong language. Be passionate and say things like "we have an excellent solution" but be careful not to invite blowback simply because you used overly declarative language. Smart & passionate is better!

*It is time to present solutions...*

## PLAY MATCHMAKER!

*Capitalize on the energy and effort spent understanding the buyer's needs and challenges by **CONNECTING** to solutions!*

*You have spent the time gaining a full understanding of the buyer's challenges, and you have spent time and energy learning about your firm's capabilities (the value you can provide thru the various combinations of the products and services that your firm can offer). Now put these two together to play matchmaker. Help the buyer understand how your firm's capabilities are a great fit for the needs and challenges the buyer has. That is your task. It is not to simply relay information about the typical best attributes of your company's offerings, but to do the harder, but much more impactful work of making the connection clear. This means that **EVERY** presentation you give is **CUSTOMIZED** to the buyer's situation. It means you recommend **SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS**, not list off options. This is harder than it sounds because it requires a great deal more brain power and discipline than simply getting good at the "we are great" pitch many salespeople default to. But while it might be harder, the payoff is much greater. Buyers are seeking solutions, and if you are good at connecting yours, you win much more often!*

Mark your calendars...

## Great Lakes High School Sales Challenge

Two Events: Speed Selling & Role Play  
Two Rounds: e-Round and  
On-Campus. Dates & details can be  
found on the GLHSSC web site:

[www.wmusaleschallenge.com](http://www.wmusaleschallenge.com)

Is your presentation focused on **CONNECTION**???

Understanding of  
Customer's Needs  
and Challenges

CONNECT

Understanding of  
your Firm's  
Capabilities and  
Products

# Connect with Great Structure >>> The VPC+ Model

Use the VPC+ Model to take a structured and organized approach to your solutions presentation. We want to manage the discussion so that issues are set up and knocked down in digestible chunks, versus everything being thrown at the buyer all at once. Win your presentation one step at a time!

1

## Start BIG PICTURE with the FRAME

Set up your discussion with three keys:

**The Specific Solution**

**The Big Picture Value**

**The Process Preview**

2

## VERIFY

Set up the issue discussion with a verification statement or question. This is especially important when there is significant time between meetings. Do this for EACH issue at start.

## PRESENT

it is time to make your case. You need to be convincing and compelling and fully connected back to the needs & challenges of the buyer

### CONVINCING: two keys...

**DATA:** What hard numbers, like a financial analysis, support your case? People need to see the #'s!

**LOGIC:** Why does your solution make sense given this buyer's challenges? Need to make the connection crystal clear!

### COMPELLING: two keys...

**BTL:** Use stories and demonstrations to bring the solution to life so that the value is specifically highlighted.

**MOTS:** Don't assume the buyer sees the value. Make the Moral of the Story (MOTS) clear.

## VPC

REPEAT FOR EACH KEY ISSUE & THEN GO TO THE RECAP

## CONFIRM

Clearly and directly confirm (close) with the buyer that your solution is a winning one related to this issue.  
"Does our X take care of your concern Y"

3

## RECAP

Take the time to put the whole thing together and make a final recap

## The keys to the FRAME >>

### SPECIFIC SOLUTION

Before you begin explaining why you have a good solution be sure you have taken the time to introduce the specific solution you are recommending.

*"What we are recommending today is XYZ and let's discuss why that is a great solution for your challenges..."*

### BIG PICTURE VALUE

You are going to get into the specific of the solution and how it connects with the specific challenges this buyer faces. But first, offer a big picture value statement to set the stage for the specific solutions.

*"Big picture what Crystal will be able to provide is a highly functional meeting with an inspired feel, all for the right price."*

### PROCESS PREVIEW

You plan to use an organized process so that the customer sees the connections between their needs and your solutions, so introduce the process before you begin.

*"To make this easy I was going to deal with each of your key issues one at a time, ultimately working thru them all. Does that work for you?"*

## Present in the right BOX

The ultimate idea is to convince the other party that the value you provide is their best option and this is hard to do unless you are in the right box!

### FEATURES

A Product Attribute  
"Bluetooth"

### FOCUS

### BENEFITS

How it Helps Buyer  
"Safe Driving"

### GENERIC

Apply to any buyer

### TARGET

**SPECIFIC**  
Aimed at single buyer

## Product List

Be careful not to simply list off all of the things your company is capable of. This is easy, but not effective. Our job is to communicate value and the list approach falls flat.

## Brochure

Typically, a brochure tries to move features into benefits, but still does this only with a typical customer in mind. You are with an actual customer, so be specific to that person / situation.

## Solution

When we describe the specific solution as a bundle of features, we at least are focused on this particular buyer, but we are still only speaking about features versus benefits.

## VALUE

The actual **benefits** that this **specific** customer will receive, this is VALUE and it is where you need to be.

Visit any box, but be sure you FINISH here

THIS IS THE BOX THAT WINS!

# Show and Tell Wins!

*As a salesperson it is your responsibility to convey your message in as effective a way as possible. If we have a great solution, but do a lousy job helping the customer to see that, is it really a great solution? You need to win on all fronts!*

## Make it a Multi-Media Show

Too often our presentation is simply talking AT the buyer. This rarely works. At minimum make your presentation a multi-media show. Why just say something, when I can say it and have a handout to support it. Why just say it when I have a picture, or a video to convey it? Thus, as you plan out your solutions presentation figure out how you can bring it to life with more than just talking and then fight off the tendency to just talk and be sure you are multi-media star!

## Offer Proof

Your mom believes you, the rest of us are going to need proof! Do the numbers back up your claim? Is there a third party that will back you? Think of how important customer reviews on Amazon or Trip Advisor are to people making decisions and use this to your advantage. Come prepared to show that something (math!) or someone (e.g. a respected trade publication) will support the claims you want to make. Plan out your presentation always assuming that your audience will be skeptical at best and disbelieving at worst.

## Use Demonstrations

If feasible don't just tell the person how something works, bring it to life with a demonstration. Demonstrations can be tricky in that things can go wrong, but plan smartly and remember that you are not training the person to use the product, you are showing them enough about the product to get them to WANT TO use it. So, make the presentation about VALUE, not technical aspects. Going back to our "Be in the Right Box" idea, a poor presentation is a feature dump, but a well schemed demonstration is a real value illuminator!

## The Final Truths of Effective Presentations!

**Be Organized  
Around the  
Buyer's Needs**

**Be Convincing  
& Compelling  
and Bring it to  
Life**

**Start & Finish  
with the Value  
the Buyer Will  
Receive**

ask the alumni >>>

**Q:** What Makes a Presentation Great?

**A:** "The key to a good presentation is relating your services to what the client is looking for and confidently demonstrating that your unique solution will solve their problem."



**Asad Khaja**  
Account Executive  
MLive Media Group  
SBM Graduate 2014

## Make it a Story

**People relate to and remember stories and a story communicates a message in the way a description can't.**

## Success Story

*Use success with another client to bring the solution to life for this client*

*Any decent company has a track record of success, so leverage that and craft stories that bring these victories to life in a succinct and impactful way and then share these stories with your client.*

*I could simply tell the client that CMR puts the customer first, or I could tell the story of how they refunded my non-refundable deposit on a ski weekend when my daughter came down with pneumonia at the last minute (true story!) and chances are the story will make my point best!*

## IMAGINE THIS...

*Bring a new reality to life for the client*

*Sometimes instead of an actual success story our best story is an imaginary one! It is the story of what life will be like when the new solutions are in effect and it is the story of a better reality.*

*"Let's fast forward to the week after your conference. The meeting room flexibility made it easy to have both the big sessions and the breakout sessions. The quiet rooms meant the sessions were productive. And the participants loved the nice rooms and resort amenities. As the kudos for a great meeting roll in, you get to sit back and enjoy that you made the right decision to host at Crystal Mountain Resort!"*

## Just a thought.

**If stories didn't sell, why is the entertainment industry a 1.7 trillion dollar world-wide success?**