

ARTICLE REPRINT

Rising To Your Default Level

Naturally talented salespeople are, among other things, confident. Most of them actually believe that they can use their native intelligence and interpersonal skills to rise to the occasion in dealing with even the most difficult selling situations. Unfortunately, nothing is further from the truth.

It was widely reported, recently, that a 5' 4" tall female police officer apprehended and handcuffed a seven foot tall male offender. Incredulous that a small, female officer could place handcuffs on an angry, seven foot tall male, reporters asked her how she managed to do it. She replied, "My training took over and I just acted as I've been trained to act in this type of situation."

It's the same for sales professionals. Although sales people often think they will rise to the occasion in difficult selling situations, that's not what happens. What happens is that they default to the level of their training. If they are generally disorganized, and if they rarely plan ahead for important sales calls, this is the default behavior that shows itself in difficult selling situations.

When a prospect asks how a salesperson's product or service will impact a specific issue the prospect is concerned about, the salesperson who is unprepared to discuss anything specific pulls out his favorite brochure or spec sheet and begins a rehearsed sales pitch. He defaults to his level of training and usually leaves the prospect confused, uncertain, unsatisfied and uncommitted!

Sales managers who teach their sales people how important it is to impress customers with a polished sales pitch shouldn't be surprised when the sales people rely on their sales pitches as their default response to difficult questions posed by prospects and customers.

If, instead, the salesperson has been taught a sales methodology designed to uncover potential prospect concerns through research, and has prepared answers and responses to a wide variety of questions a prospect might ask, the salesperson is effective, even in difficult selling situations.

Don't expect sales professionals, even superstars, to rise to the occasion in all selling situations. If salespeople are trained well, they will generally respond well to tough selling situations. The reality is that a salesperson's performance always defaults to his level of training.

Copyright © 2006 Selling Up™. All Rights Reserved.

About the author: Steve Chriest is the founder of Selling Up™ (www.selling-up.com), a sales consulting firm specializing in sales revenue improvement for organizations of all types and sizes in a variety of industries. He is also the author of *Selling The E-Suite*, *The Proven System For Reaching and Selling Senior Executives* and *Profits and Cash – The Game of Business*. You can reach Steve at schriest@selling-up.com.