



Consultative Selling PULSE Model - Solution

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The S in the PULSE consultative selling model stands for Solution.

The objective of this stage is to present solutions so the prospect feels they will be able to solve the problems they are facing or that they will be able to fulfil their requirements.

So far you would have discovered their needs and wants and you'll have built up the pain-points that make them need to make a decision and now you're set to prove to the prospect that your company is the one to help them.

Typically, salespeople will present solutions based on features or benefits. They want the prospect to be impressed by their selling skills, as they tell the prospect what they need to do. However, the consultant involves the prospect in finding the right solution that they value as important to them and their business.

By presenting in the way that prospects take in information, you make it easy for them to see the benefits and agree to the solution before you have to 'close' the sale.

So how can you involve the prospect in evaluating the solution?

Well, typically, salespeople will present solutions by outlining the features and benefits in mostly a one-way monologue. Unfortunately, this often breaks the connection you have with your prospect.

Consultants on the other hand, keep the connection with the prospect during this stage. This means involving them in finding the best solution that will help them achieve their goals and you can start this process right from the outset when you open the discussion about the solution. Here, you make a bridge from Understanding and Building Leverage to the Solution phase.

Here's what a typical sales person might say:

"OK, let me tell you what we will do for you"

Whereas a trained sales consultant might say something like this:

"So, we've discussed the situation and the impact it's having on the business. I have some ideas that will help you with this situation. Let's discuss the options and see which will be best for you, will that be OK?"

Can you notice the difference? The second example maintains the trust you've built up and keeps the prospect involved.

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Another way to keep the prospect involved is by getting them to agree on what has to happen to move towards a solution. This is very important because in a way, the prospect is giving you permission to proceed down a particular way.

Listen to this example:

“So the speed of your systems means that your staff lose about an hours-worth of productivity per day. We need to solve that immediately, and then we can look at how we can stop it happening again in the future. My advice is.....”

So with that example you're linking to the pain-points that you have discussed, you're summarise your understanding of their needs and you advised them on what a solution would do for them. After you have given some advice you can check for their acceptance of your solution at this stage by saying this:

“So this will deal with the immediate systems problem and then the monitoring I mentioned will also flag up any issues before they arise in the future. Does that sound good to you?”

Whatever solution you suggest, the prospect should see the value of using your company to provide it. So you should use words like:

The benefits will be....

This will help you by....

This will make it easier for you by...

You will save costs because....

What you will see is...

You will experience...

Productivity will increase by...

The improvements you'll get will...

And talking of value, your prospects will perceive the value of your solution in different ways.

This equation explains how value is perceived by the prospect:

The V stands for Value, PB are the Perceived Benefits of your solution, PP is the perceived price and PC are the perceived costs

In this equation, the Value you present is seen by the prospect as the Perceived Benefits they will receive by using your solution. This is then opposed by the Perceived Price they will have to pay for the solution and the Perceived Costs incurred by choosing it.

If the Benefits outweigh the Price and the Costs involved, they will see the value increase in their perception.

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So perceived Benefits could include:

Increased Production, Improved Staff Morale, Customer Retention, Decreased Operating Costs, Lower Risk, Time to Profitability, Improved Compliance etcetera.

Perceived Price could include:

The Actual Price of the Products and solution, Payment Terms or Discount Rates

And the Perceived Costs could include:

The Overall Time Taken to implement the solution, Gaining Internal Buy-In, Increased Risks Taken, The Decision-Making Process, Cost of Overall Change etcetera.

So its your job as a consultant to build value and it's important that you cover off the perceived costs of the solution. Sometimes the prospect can say that you're too expensive but really its a smoke screen because the real reason is that they won't get internal buy in to the change. So you in your fact find and throughout this stage you need to bring any perceived costs up and cover them off as they could well be a deal breaker if you don't.