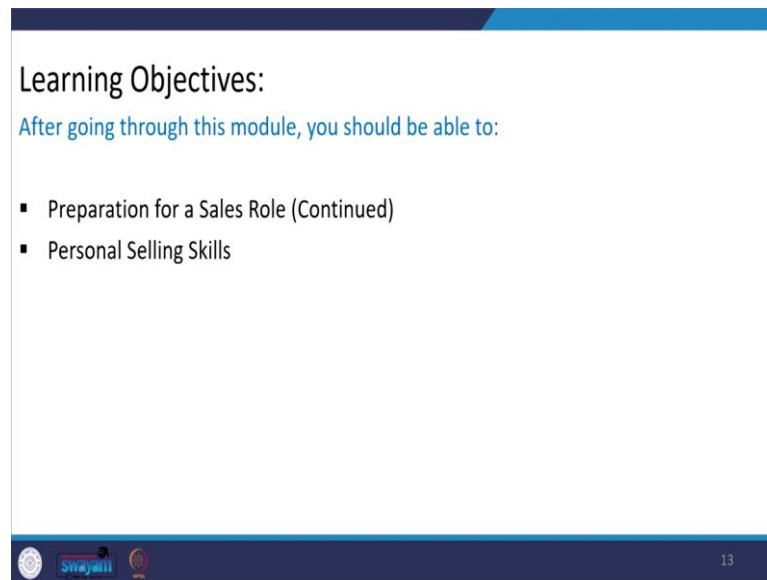


Strategic Sales Management
Prof. Sourabh Arora
Department of Management Studies
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture - 24
Preparing for a Sales Role (Continued) Strategic Approach to Sales
Responsibilities, Preparation and Management

Welcome back everyone, I hope you really had a great time going through the session one of the week 5.

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Learning Objectives:

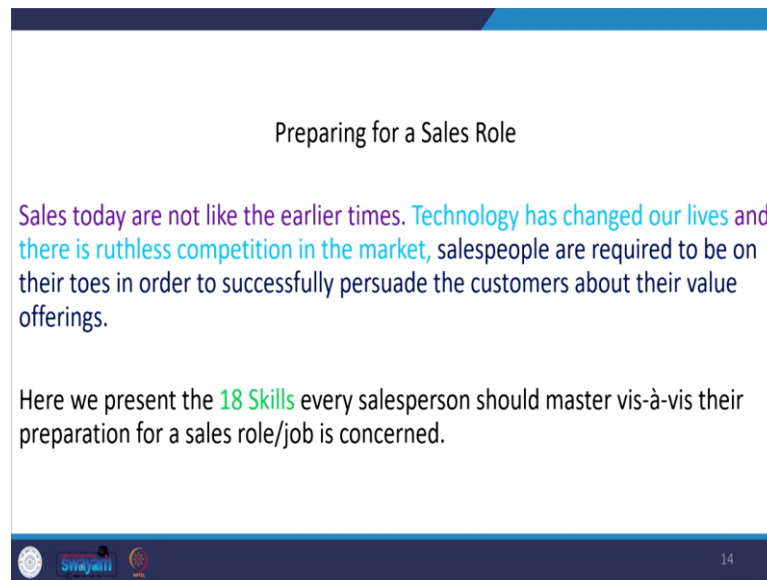
After going through this module, you should be able to:

- Preparation for a Sales Role (Continued)
- Personal Selling Skills

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Now, as far as this session is concerned, we will be learning about the Preparation for a Sales Role and then we will be ending it with personal selling skills.

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Preparing for a Sales Role

Sales today are not like the earlier times. Technology has changed our lives and there is ruthless competition in the market, salespeople are required to be on their toes in order to successfully persuade the customers about their value offerings.

Here we present the 18 Skills every salesperson should master vis-à-vis their preparation for a sales role/job is concerned.

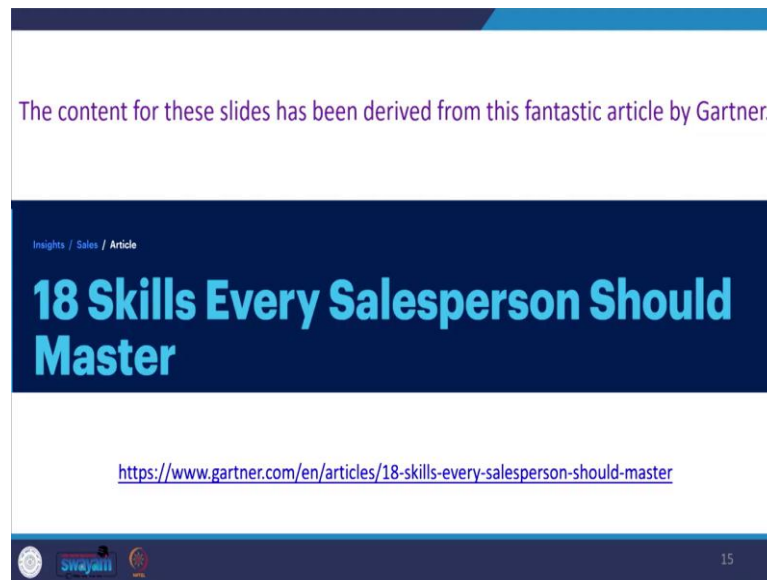
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Now, as far as preparing for a sales role is concerned, we cannot deny the fact that selling today has completely changed. It is not like earlier times we have technology that has completely made our lives upside down and there is ruthless competition in the market.

The salesperson are required to be on their toes, because there are so many options which are available to the prospects or customers that they will not even think twice before moving to the another player. That is why we say that relationship building and nurturing those relationships from the day one itself when the sales person meets the prospects or customers is of crucial importance.

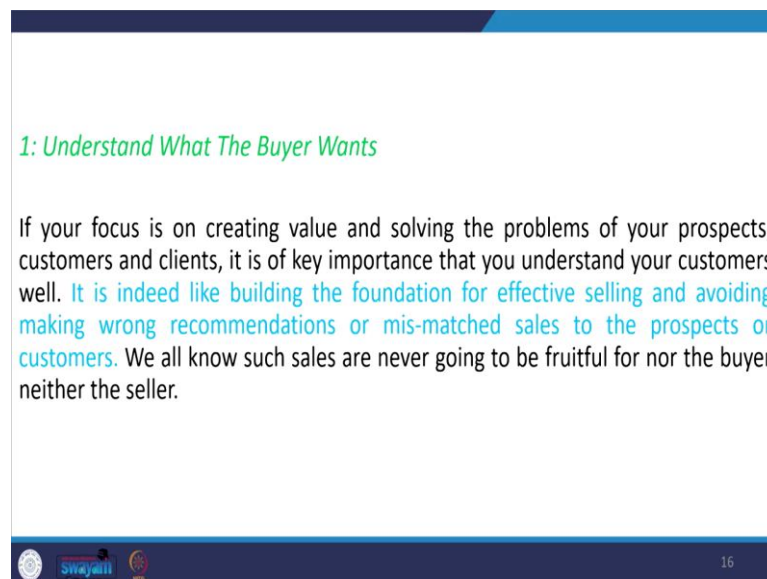
As far as this particular topic is concerned how you should prepare for a sales role, I thought we will do it in a more exciting way. So, we will be going through one of the very fantastic articles by Gartner in which they are talking about 18 Skills which every sales person should master. And trust me if you do this you are not only going to stand out as far as the other sales people are concerned, but you will have a very exciting and fantastic sales career.

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The content for these particular slides is concerned, this has been derived from this article by Gartner 18 Skills every salesperson should master. And the link has also been provided; so, that you can refer it to your own leisure and I would personally request you to read this article in great depth.

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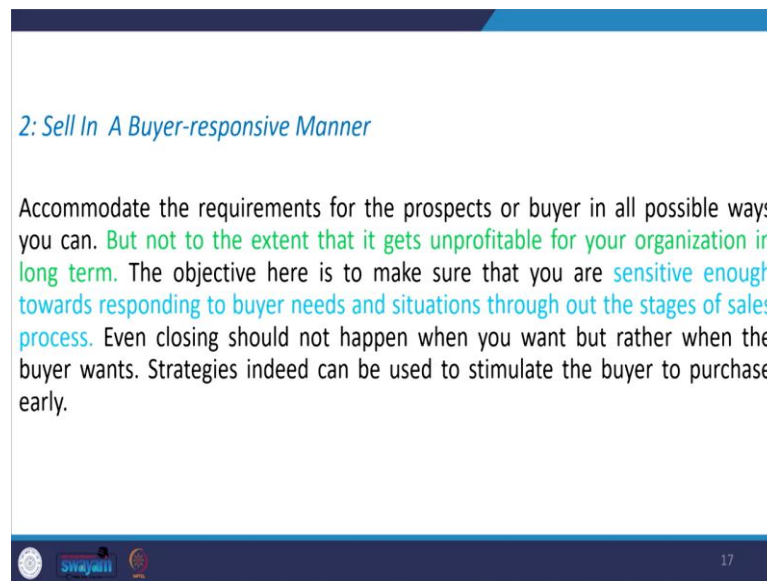
Now, the first skill is understand what the buyer wants, see if your focus is going to be on creating value and solving the problems for your prospects as we have been discussing in various sessions. It becomes very important that you understand in depth

what is it that your buyer wants, until and unless you understand what are their requirements by doing a very accurate needs analysis.

And understanding their business functions, processes, and how the organization functions as a whole, you might not be able to pinpoint the best fit solution for them. As it has been written in slides, it is indeed like building the foundation for effective selling, and avoiding making wrong recommendations, or mismatch sales to the prospects or customers.

And we all know and we have discussed about this a couple of times that this is never going to be fruitful for both the buyer and seller. So, this is the first skill that you need to have which means understanding your buyers in the best way possible you can.

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2: Sell In A Buyer-responsive Manner

Accommodate the requirements for the prospects or buyer in all possible ways you can. But not to the extent that it gets unprofitable for your organization in long term. The objective here is to make sure that you are sensitive enough towards responding to buyer needs and situations through out the stages of sales process. Even closing should not happen when you want but rather when the buyer wants. Strategies indeed can be used to stimulate the buyer to purchase early.

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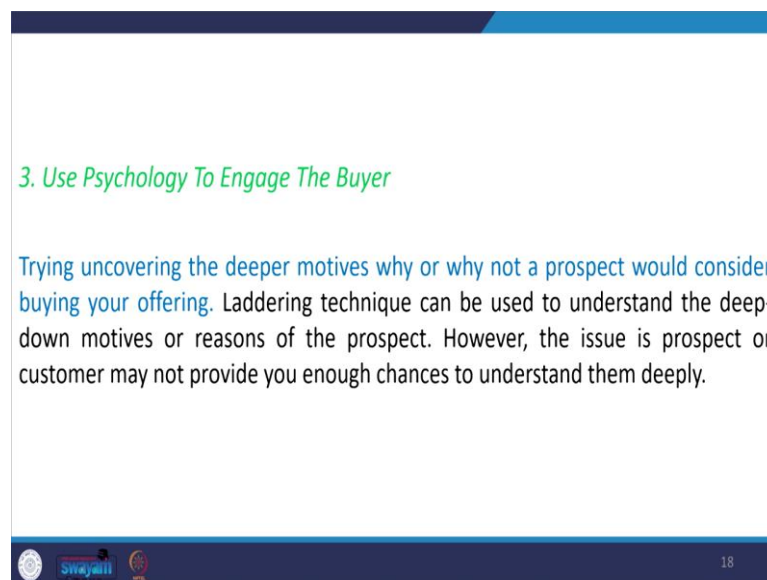
Now, the second skill that you need to have is, sell in a buyer responsive manner. Now, this is all about accommodating the requirements of the prospects of buyers in all possible ways. But as we have also been touching upon these things, if you keep adding on things just to please the prospect or the customer and eventually it ends up being unprofitable for you this is again going to be a bad business.

The whole objective here is about being sensitive enough with respect to responding to the buyers needs and situations as far as various stages of a sales process are concerned. Like let us consider this example, with respect to closing a sales person might be in a

hurry and would want to close it early because he or she wants to achieve its targets. But you cannot also deny the fact that this might even irritate the prospect of the customer and the deal could eventually be cancelled.

So, the whole facet is about even giving that comfort to the buyer with respect to closing the deal which in a way is very very important. But we cannot also undermine the importance of strategies that you can use to stimulate buyer to purchase early. But again, there is a thing that you need to remember, you should not go to an extent that it actually irritates the prospect or the customer and the deal which was supposed to happen may not even happen at all. So, this was the second skill which you need to have and you need to prepare for.

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Now, the third is use psychology to engage the buyer. Now, again this is very fascinating, because many times you might assign certain motives, the prospects or customers could be buying your product on account of these motives. But we all know that as far as psychology is concerned things could be very different; so, we need to understand the deep-down motives of the prospects or customers.

And see we can learn more about this by having more conversations with the clients by using laddering techniques where we get into depth of understanding, why they bought certain products as far as our offerings were concerned, and what is it that they liked in them, or what is it that they did not like in them. Then we can use all this information to

better understand the psychology of people who are buying and also not buying our offering.

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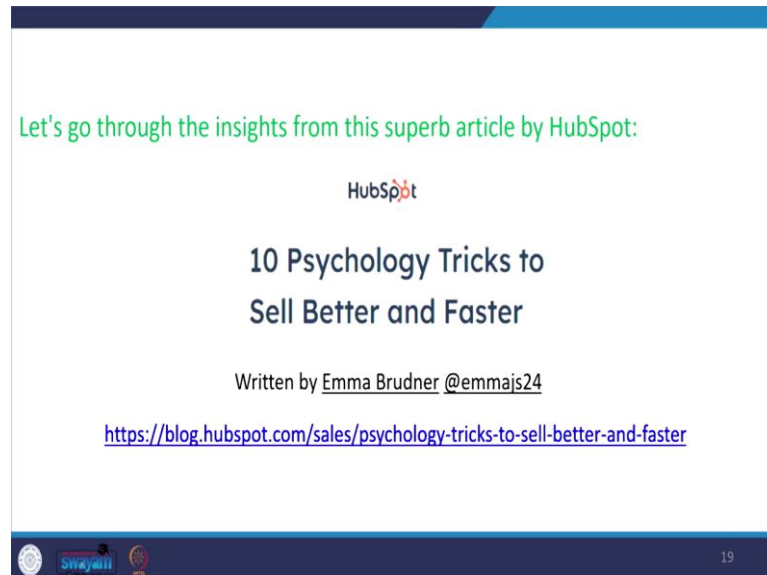
Let's go through the insights from this superb article by HubSpot:

HubSpot

10 Psychology Tricks to Sell Better and Faster

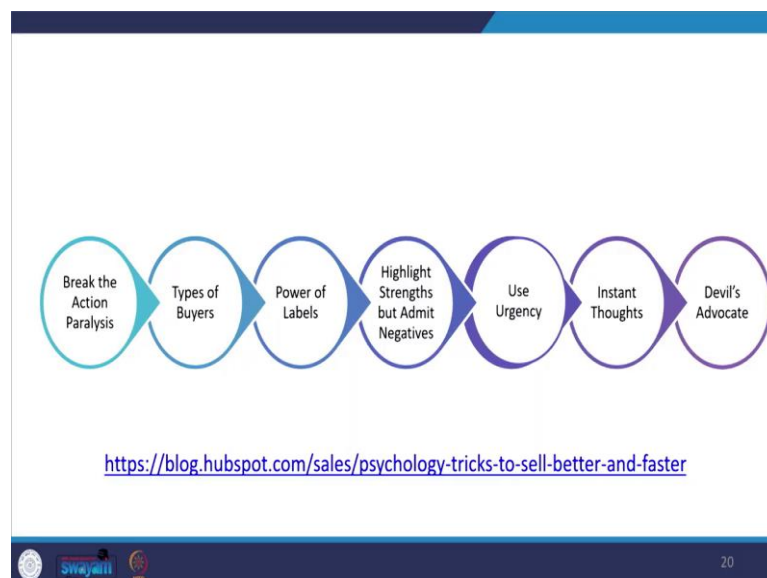
Written by Emma Brudner @emmajs24

<https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/psychology-tricks-to-sell-better-and-faster>

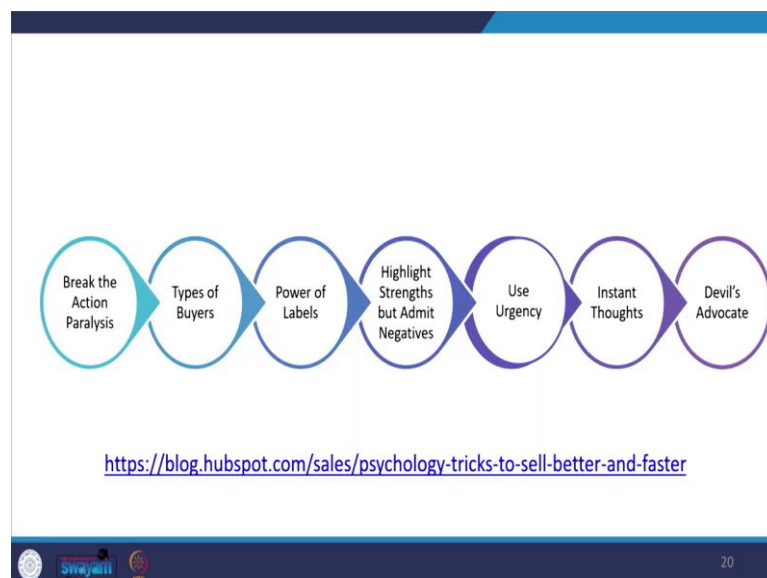
A presentation slide with a white background and a blue header and footer. The text is centered and includes the HubSpot logo, the title '10 Psychology Tricks to Sell Better and Faster', the author's name 'Emma Brudner @emmajs24', and a URL. The slide number '19' is in the bottom right corner.

So, as far as even this particular point is concerned, I would request you to go through this super article by HubSpot which talks about 10 psychology tricks to sell better and faster. This has been written by Emma B and trust me this is a very enriching article; so, I would urge you to go through this at great depth, but I thought I will share some insights with you because I read this article recently.

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A diagram showing seven interconnected circles in a horizontal line, each containing a psychology trick. The circles are connected by arrows pointing from left to right. The tricks are: Break the Action Paralysis, Types of Buyers, Power of Labels, Highlight Strengths but Admit Negatives, Use Urgency, Instant Thoughts, and Devil's Advocate. Below the diagram is the same URL as in slide 19.

<https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/psychology-tricks-to-sell-better-and-faster>

A presentation slide with a white background and a blue header and footer. It features a horizontal sequence of seven overlapping circles, each containing a psychology trick. The tricks are: Break the Action Paralysis, Types of Buyers, Power of Labels, Highlight Strengths but Admit Negatives, Use Urgency, Instant Thoughts, and Devil's Advocate. Below the diagram is the URL. The slide number '20' is in the bottom right corner.

Now, one thing as far as the psychology is concerned one fantastic trick that you can use is about breaking the action paralysis; which means, there should not be too much hustles or formalities about eventually buying the product with respect to the customers. Or even if they want to collect more information about your products then website should provide them that ease; so, that they can easily download the required material.

If the formalities are going to be too many with respect to learning about the product or even buying the product. Let us say even with respect to trials if you have a list of formalities that they are required to comply they will anyway back out. Which means, action paralysis should be removed you should make it more and more easy for the prospect of the customers to go for trial orders, collect information about the products and also eventually buy them.

Now, the second psychology trick that you can use is about segmenting your buyers into various types. Now, this becomes important, let us say if you segment your buyers by using the data which comes from a very insightful customer relationship management databases, then it can definitely be magical for you. Let us, say you divide your buyers into various categories like price sensitive, spend thrift, value conscious, or let us say quality conscious.

So, when you are dealing with them you can use this as pillars to pitch products to them. Which means you will be eventually hitting them on things which are important for them which will make it very easy for you to close the deals or to persuade them to buy in all right ways. Now, the third trick which can be used is power of labels, which means in a very subtle way while you are having conversations with the prospects, or customers, or clients.

If you allocate right labels to them; let us, say if while talking with a particular prospect I label them as very rational who will be making right choices. And then I definitely drive them towards how this product is the best, or is going to be beneficial in bringing value to an organization they might even get a step closer. Because, as far as the psychology research is concerned power of labels has been found to play a very critical and influential role.

Now, the next thing is about highlighting strengths, but admitting negatives or weaknesses. Now, even with respect to this the psychology says when you even admit

what is negative about your product, or what are the shortcomings of your product along with strengths. This is definitely going to foster more of trust and the prospect customer or client will start trusting you more; which means, there are high chances that the relationship might get intimate with respect to up selling, cross selling and working on collaborative projects.

Now, another psychology trick which can be used is creating a sense of urgency, but as far as this particular trick is concerned you cannot just overdo it. If we overdo this the prospect or the customer or the client may not be willing to buy, because they might find it very superficial. So, the urgency should be created at the right time; like, by giving a special offer which we might say is only available for a short time this can play the magic trick.

Apart from that you need to infuse some instant thoughts where the prospect or the customer or even the client will start thinking about your product, what are the benefits that it brings in. For this what is important is provide them with some insightful or very exciting findings related to your products or organizations which could come as a surprise rather a positive surprise for them. Now, the last is you can also act as a devil's advocate which means you do not need to agree to everything which the prospect customer or client is saying.

Once you get into friendly terms, if you in a bit challenge their thoughts in a polite way this can also become a relationship. Where they will start looking up to you as a collaborator who can actually give them a right perspective; so, that they are making the best decisions for their organization. But in this case, what is important is that you need to be very polite and you have to put it across in such a way that you are not proving the prospect customer or client completely wrong.

It is just that you are sharing or trying to give them a different thought process which anyway is going to be very beneficial for you. So, as I said in the evening, please go through this article by HubSpot, you will definitely learn a lot of fascinating things about psychology and how it can play a very crucial role in selling.

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4. Establish Trust With The Buyer

Will you ever buy from someone that you don't Trust?

What does it actually mean? Trust is defined as "the willingness of one party (trustor) to depend or rely on the actions of another party (trustee) (Bisdikian et al., 2014)*"

Establishing trust certainly has been considered as a core selling skill.

*Bisdikian, C., Gibson, C., Chakraborty, S., Srivastava, M.B., Sensoy, M. and Norman, T.J., 2014. Inference management, trust and obfuscation principles for quality of information in emerging pervasive environments. Pervasive and Mobile Computing, 11, pp.168-187.

So, apart from what we just discussed now, the fourth preparation or the skill that you need to work on is about establishing trust with the buyer. Now, before we understand this further, we first need to understand what trust is? So, we will first look at the technical definition of trust, it is defined as the willingness of one party trusted to depend or rely on the actions of another party trustee.

So, this in a way clearly indicates that the other party is showing confidence in you that you are not going to do any harm to them in various situations. And establishing trust certainly has been considered as one of the core selling skills. See, the whole importance of trust lies in the fact that when the other party starts trusting you, they will be definitely doing more of business with you and even with respect to start on initial level this is going to be of critical importance.

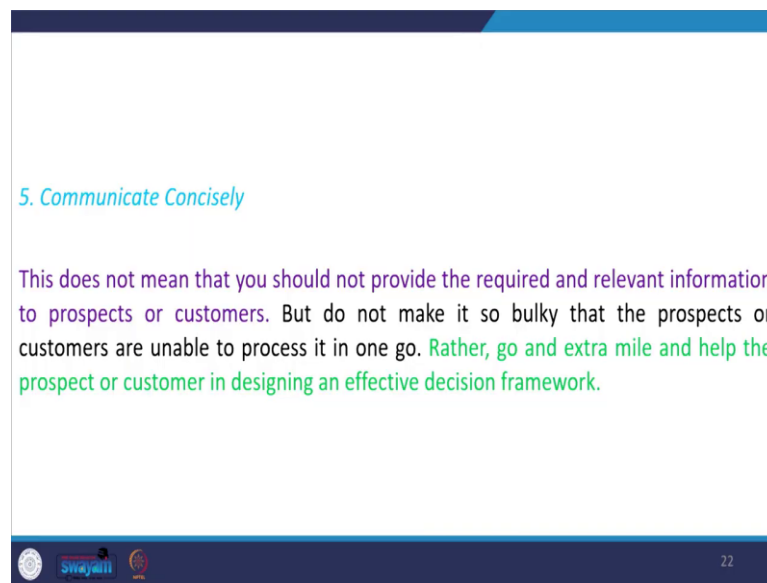
Even if I ask you personally will you ever buy from someone that you do not trust. Because, when that trust is missing the risk is also going to be enhanced psychologically you will start perceiving that this particular exchange could be very risky. And you might even feel that the other person is going to deceive you or there could be a very high chances of deception.

Which means, you might not get the product that you actually placed order for, you might be deceived with respect to prices, someone could have been provided the same

product or same contract on a lesser price; whereas, you were charged much more for that.

Even the promises that are made with respective after sales services warranties and guarantees may not be complied with. So, it is only trust that is going to bring all these risk and chances of deception to a very low level and you will get that confidence of going ahead and completing or closing that deal.

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Now, as we move further the other skill that you need to work on is about communicating concisely. Now, this basically comes from the fact that a mind has a very limited capacity of processing. So, it becomes very important for a sales person to not to provide very heavy information or too much information to the prospects or customers in one go; so, that they are unable to process it. And they might even miss out on the important aspects which you wanted them to retain about your organization or the offering.

But, this in no way means that you should not provide them the required and relevant information. So, in this case what is important is provide information in piece meals, but work as a collaborator with them and come up with the effective decision framework which is going to be beneficial for them as far as various decisions with respect to purchasing and the particular context is concerned.

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6. *Act On What The Customer Is Saying*

Don't Just listen, you should execute upon the rational requests of the customers. Otherwise also provide them a reason for delays and non-compliance. Prospects or customers should not be taken for granted.

7. *Demonstrate Subject Matter Expertise*

Know the pros and cons of your offerings in and out. You must be in position to display how your offering is superior to the competitor's. *And, most importantly how the product will solve prospects or customers problems.*

swajati 23

Another skill is all going to be about act on what the customer is saying, if the customer or the prospect or the client has been requesting you a few things continuously and you do not act on them this is going to give a message that you are taking them for granted. Even if there is something which cannot be complied with, then also you owe an explanation to them why this could not be done, or what are the various ways through which this can be done.

Let us say, through revision of offer, or through some other means. Because, noncompliance is definitely not going to be good for long term relationships and this is also going to indicate that you are taking the prospects or customers for granted. The another, skill which you need to master is going to be about being short about the subject matter.

Which means, you should definitely invest time in learning about the pros and cons of your product; whenever, you are meeting prospects customers or clients you should be in a position to display how your offering is superior to the competitors.

But most importantly you should make them understand how the product or offering that you want to provide them will solve their problems. This requires an in-depth knowledge about the product and also understanding of the competitor's product. Because, whenever you will start drawing a comparison you might face questions from the prospect or customers or clients. And when you are not thoroughly prepared for it might

come across chaotic or the prospect or customers or client might also feel that you are trying to bluff which again is going to be a deal breaker.

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8. Help As Opposed To Closing
Do not just focus on closing. Try your best in figuring out the issues that prospects or customers are facing. *Have situational conversations to help customers.*

9. Tell Compelling Stories
Buyers never want an overdose of products features and benefits. *They are more intrigued about the stories that are built around products benefits and value it brings to the prospects and customers.*

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Now, another thing is help as opposed to closing, see we have discussed about this a couple of times throughout this course. Now, you should not focus on closing, if your objective is going to be about helping the prospects or customers and solving their problems this can be done via selling. Which means, let us say there is a situation when you have realized that your product is not going to be the best fit for the prospect or the customer.

Then you should not take that deal forward, you could be in a pressure of achieving targets, but trust me this is again going to be a deal breaker in long run or this is only going to turn against you in long term. Because, you will end up losing the chances of striking better deals or in a way we can say the chances of upselling or cross selling will be vanishing right.

So, another skill which you need to work on is about telling compelling stories. If you are going to give an overdose of products features and benefits to the prospects, customers or clients. They might find it boring and they might seem the every person who comes talks in the same way or it might appear to be very monotonous for them. But one thing which can intrigue them to buy a product or gain some interest in that is

going to be about the stories that you built around your product benefits or how your product has been adding value for your existing clients.

So, this is something which they might find exciting or they might even pay so much attention too. So, I really hope that you enjoyed learning about the scales that we are discussing with respect to the Gartner's article. So, when we will be moving to the next module, we will be taking this forward and I am very sure you are going to enjoy this a lot more. Because, this is something which holds a lot of importance as far as the practical sales dynamics are concerned; so, looking forward to meeting you in the next session.

Thank you.