

Radio Sales

Professional Radio Selling

The Radio Advertising Bureau (RAB) is an industry organization that promotes radio advertising as an effective means for business owners to generate more business. You'll be learning more about the RAB and the materials available to you.

The RAB has assembled an excellent manual of radio sales techniques, entitled "Professional Radio Selling." This manual will discuss how you should look professional, how to prospect, how to answer objections, how to use your time wisely, as well as many other skills.

Read and study this manually carefully. After you've been in radio sales for three months, read it again as a refresher and to pick up on things you may have missed the first time around.

PROFESSIONAL RADIO SELLING

A Manual of Radio Sales Techniques



A Publication of The Radio Advertising Bureau

1. BASIC SELLING CHECKLIST

Here's a checklist of sales "basics." Although they're fundamental, they are worth reviewing...

Look like a salesperson. You're in business. Project a neat, serious business manner - in clothing, attitude, grooming.

Confirm your date the day of the presentation, if possible.

Be prepared. Check out your equipment. If you're playing a spec spot, for example, make sure the cassette player is in working order. Is the written proposal typed neatly? Is the client's name spelled right?

If you have to wait, use the time. Study merchandise, shoppers, clerks. If it's an office, read the company literature.

Don't wait too long if you've got a firm appointment. Make sure the client knows you're there. Make yourself visible. Remind his secretary or associate.

When you're selling, maintain a pleasant, respectful manner. You're selling a positive benefit. Act positively.

Don't argue. Too many salespeople win arguments but lose sales.

Your presentation isn't a monologue. Encourage feedback from the client. Keep asking questions that will result in a positive answer.

Know when to leave. Don't take the money and run. But don't sit around too long.

Drop all clients a short note. "Thanks for the order," or just "Thanks for the time."

2. A 13-STEP PLAN FOR PROSPECTING

Prospecting for new business requires hard work, patience and planning. Here is one tested method for planning your prospecting program.

Fine-comb the newspapers. Some stations subscribe to all area papers and keep at least a three month file of unclipped copies. Local libraries usually have a back file of area newspapers. You should also have rate cards for every newspaper you compete against.

Make out file cards for every newspaper advertiser. Include budget, type of store, consumer targets - all information you can pick up from the ad's size, position anti copy.

Monitor TV for all retail accounts. Your salespeople and families can watch different times and channels.

Make out file cards for all local TV advertisers. Again, include estimated budget, type of store, consumer targets.

Check out billboards. Maybe take a picture of every exceptional billboard. RAB Research can give you an approximate billboard budget. Just send its three facts: (1) number of boards; (2) size of hoards, and (3) whether they're illuminated.

Make out file cards on all billboard advertisers.

Examine all direct mail that comes into the station and to station personnel at home. Your printer can give you an indication of costs involved.

Fill out cards on every notable local direct mail advertiser. Fill in all facts you can determine from the direct mail copy.

Arrange the cards alphabetically. Put duplicates together. Then review every prospect. The sales manager may do this himself or it can be a group project. Usually you'll set aside advertisers with too small a budget, advertisers with products and services that don't fit your format, those you can't accept for policy or legal reasons and bad credit risks. Incidentally, if a merchant is a consistent newspaper advertiser, he's likely to be a good credit risk. Most sizable newspapers don't carry deadbeats.

The manager divides the cards among the salespeople according to station sales procedures.

Each salesperson goes over his list. Each fills out the RAB Consultant Sell form for their prospects. This form is filled out before making a call, and contains information learned from newspaper ads, personal contacts, other salespeople, etc.

The salesperson arranges prospects by order of importance into three basic categories. Category A is for best prospects – the advertisers with relatively big budgets and reasons to advertise. Next best prospects go into the B category. And C category gets the rest - marginal accounts that many sales people call on only after they've pitched and re-pitched every advertiser in Categories A and B.

Combine prospects logically. Put together advertisers that relate either by location or advertising category.

3. GETTING THE APPOINTMENT

Many prospects are accessible, with an open door and an open mind. We're dealing here with those that are tough to see – that demand a prearranged date and time.

There are three basic ways to secure an appointment: by phone; by stopping by in person; or by mail or telegram. A phone call is usually is efficient.

When making a phone call for an appointment, be prepared. Talk about benefits to the prospect up front.

Have an opening line set in your mind. Here's one used by many phone solicitors: "Good morning, Mr. Johnson. I've got a plan to make you money."

Don't mention immediately that you're selling. He'll sense it soon enough. Everybody likes the idea of making money. When you identify yourself as a salesperson the resistance begins.

A basic objection you get on the phone: "I'm too busy." How do you overcome that stall? A choice of options. Something like: "I know you're busy now. I called to determine a good time to see you. Would Tuesday be better? Or better still Wednesday?"

Try to control the time of day. Once you're committed to a day, you should try to set the time. Your time is as valuable as your prospect's. Try for a time that lets you build other appointments around it.

How to get through the overprotective secretary. Bucking the assistant who thinks it's her duty to shield her boss from salespeople is a constant selling problem. One solution: In person calls. One salesperson reports; "It sounds corny, but I stop by the office and give her a rose. The 50c investment puts us on a personal basis. She feels obligated and usually paves the way personally to her boss."

What about a letter or telegram? When writing a letter for an appointment, begin with a benefit. Here's an example: "Dear Mr. Johnson. We've just received a report revealing 70 percent of your prospective customers are women 18-49. We can translate that fact into profits for you."

What about gimmicks? Imaginative salespeople always find a way to get inside the door. One sent a prospect a pitch for an appointment on a cassette. The cassette had no label, no covering letter. The prospect got curious about its contents, played it and called to set up an appointment.

Summing Up:

- Be ready with benefits for your clients.
- Begin your conversation or print communication with a specific money benefit.
- Break down roadblocks with persistence and in person calls.
- When all else fails, use gimmicks to gain attention and admission.

4. EXPANDING CURRENT ACCOUNTS

What signals should you look for to indicate the advertiser is ready to be moved up? You'll think of more, but here are six to get you started.

- **Is his business better?** Is he seeing results of the advertising he's doing?
- **Is he spending more money** in other media than he did six months ago?
- **Is he expanding his store or his store staff?** Is he planning a move to bigger quarters?
- **Is he expanding store hours?**
- **Is he adding additional merchandise** and/or services?
- **Is there more direct competition** now than there was a year or two ago? One fast way to check that growth: compare last year's Yellow Pages against the present volume. See how many more retailers there are in this category now than there were then.

If the answer to one or more of these questions is yes, then the advertiser should be ripe for a bigger, more substantial schedule.

What are objections you may face when you sell on expansion? Here's an excuse you're likely to get — and a suggestion response:

Excuse: *I'm doing fine now. I've got all the customers I can handle.*

Answer: *You're open six days a week, 12 hours a day. You've got to have some slack periods.*

Incidentally, a salesman at an RAB Idearama reported a response he uses with success. When he gets the line: "We've got too much business already," he tells the advertiser "Okay, then let me run a commercial telling people not to come, that you're doing more business than you can handle right now." When the advertiser comes out of shock, he sees how ridiculous his objection is.

Another answer to the same objection: "You've got to continue to grow. You're adding more sales help, more floor space. It's natural you should continue to increase advertising to accelerate your selling momentum."

Your comebacks are all positive because increasing an advertiser's budget comes out of success. So sell with confidence.

Now here are some planning techniques before making the call:

Examine his schedule by daypart. Is he advertising in enough parts of the day or is he limited to, say, drivetime or daytime hours? You can point out the advantages of extending reach into new times to pick up new customer areas. A few spots a week may not be effective in today's battle for mind share.

Here is a practical example. A restaurant has been successful advertising in evening drivetime to reach homeward bound working men. There's room to expand the schedule. Commercials in morning drive can build lunch business. Commercials in daytime hour can suggest women shoppers stop in for the shopper's special.

Expand the Number of Days. Many retailers coincide their advertising with their best business days. Assume a retailer advertises from Thursday through Saturday. How about the beginning of the week? Check his Sunday newspaper advertising. Then suggest a Sunday-Monday schedule that reinforces and pays out his relatively expensive Sunday newspaper specials.

Sell Him on Consistency. Many advertisers go in flights... in for a while, then they disappear for a month or so. There are reasons for consistency and frequency. First, people are besieged by messages of every kind and therefore tend to forget fast.

There's a classic psychological study called "*The Curve of Forgetting.*" What this study shows is that inside of 20 minutes people forget 42% of what they've learned. And after nine hours, people have forgotten 64%. With each passing day less and less of what they've learned is retained.

Flights are an effective way to dramatize a sale or special event, but because people tend to forget fast, advertisers should maintain daily schedules of reminder spots.

5. SELLING WITH SERVICE

It's a fact of selling life that it is often easier to expand a current account than sell a new one. Yet many salespeople avoid making service calls. They knock themselves out making a sale, take the money and never look back.

On the other hand, some salesmen spend too much time making follow up calls. The reason - human nature. They've made a friend and it's simpler to go back to someone you know than risk rejection by calling on new accounts. Both these patterns are likely to be harmful to your progress.

You've got to make service calls. They're a basic part of a sales job. But you shouldn't spend more than one third of your time with current clients, unless they're about ready to reorder or expand their schedule.

What are the reasons for service calls? Basically, two. The first is to show your continuing interest in the advertiser. And the second, to protect your own assets. You've gone to some trouble to sign this advertiser. It's in your own rightful, selfish interest to hang in and encourage his growth.

When you make service calls have a reason. Use RAB resources, for example, to keep the advertiser up to date on national developments in his industry. Come in with information on a competitor, a new co-op plan or a relevant RAB sales tool. Take the Instant Background on back-to-school for instance. It's a good reason for a service call on interested advertisers.

What are the benefits of service calls? You're enhancing your image as a thorough, conscientious salesperson. If the advertiser has been in a business a while he's been burned by salespeople, regardless of what they're selling, who make the sale and disappear.

You're there to put out the fire in case one develops. By checking the progress of the campaign, you can suggest a solution if problems arise. And with every service call you learn more about the advertiser - information that helps you expand the account at renewal time.

Service calls keep you visible. The advertiser is meeting salespeople all the time from competing media and other fields such as insurance, office supplies and real estate. They, too, take up your customer's time and attention. Your calls keep you up front in his mind.

Finally, you're more likely to be on the spot when changes in responsibility occur. It's always chancy when a new man takes over. The sooner you're aware of change the better.

Salespeople in many other businesses - auto dealers, insurance agents - consider personal service basic to keeping the customer sold.

6. LOCATING SELLING BENEFITS

Here are 10 areas to dig into, any of which can produce effective selling benefits. Often the retailer will be too familiar with his store to recognize his own advantages without your help.

Does the advertiser offer personal service? Tailoring... financial advice
decorating?

Is his selection out of the ordinary?

Does he have an exclusive service? Is it a franchise operation, for example?

What about experience? His own or the combined total of his sales staff?

What conveniences does he offer? Things like tree parking, Sunday openings,
late hours, free delivery.

What about prices? Are they better than his competitors?

Is there something special about store size? Is it the biggest... the smallest?

Location. Is he in a good shopping area, a downtown mall or a shopping center?
Conversely, if he's out of the way, that can be a benefit. Tell listeners his lower
rent can be turned into a big saving.

Neighborhood. That's different from location. When an advertiser can't find
anything special about himself, maybe he can promote his area. Dry Dock Savings
Bank in New York City arbitrarily calls everything within a six blocks radius "Dry
Dock Country," and uses Radio commercials to describe shops and restaurants
within the area.

The store itself. Has it just been remodeled? Does it have an old fashioned
quality? Is there something about the store that makes it appealing to the listener?

7. WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A NEWSPAPER AD

You can pick up valuable information by examining a prospect's newspaper ad. Here are suggestions what to look for.

Keep a back file of newspapers handy - at least six months - so you can determine how often his ads run. You need this to determine frequency discounts.

Estimate ad costs - Get out your ruler. Measure the ad's depth in inches. Then count across how many columns wide the ad is. Multiply depth by width for total ad space. Then multiply by 14, as there are 14 lines to the inch. This will give you total ad lineage. Then multiply the lineage by the open (undiscounted) line rate for ad cost. Example: An ad 8 inches deep by three columns wide is 24 inches, or 336 lines. If the paper's line rate is 25 cents a line, the ad would cost \$84.00.

Decide the budget you're going to shoot for, based on the estimated newspaper budget.

Look over the layout. Often a newspaper ad will be written and designed by the newspaper so it will, in many cases, be bland, inoffensive and generally of low interest. Later when you discuss the prospect's ad, you can point out with comparative commercials and your own spec spot, the creative advantages of sound. Don't be too critical. The prospect may have written the ad himself. And he did invest his money in it.

Read the copy so you can determine who he is trying to reach. RAB can furnish facts on the marketing patterns.

Check his major selling points. Often the ad will include price, location, credit, slogans. All factors can then be worked into spec commercials.

What about location, page number? Often ads are arranged haphazardly - a tire ad next to a fashion ad; an ad aimed at young people on a page of international news. All this can give you another selling point - comparing the newspaper's basic lack of selectivity to Radio's ability to pinpoint consumers.

Now examine the ad, checking first for co-op. If national or regional brands are represented, check your RAB Co-op Profiles.

Figure ad readership. Check Starch scores, which are available from RAB. Then write in scores across the bottom of the page.

8. STRATEGY TO TURN OBJECTIONS AROUND

Here's a strategy for handling resistance. It can be used to overcome communication roadblocks you face.

First step: Neutralize the objection. Acknowledge the right of the prospect to hold opinions different from yours. Once you admit he's got a point, no matter how illogical you may believe it is, you take the sting out of his resistance and reduce the danger of argument. Never argue. When you argue you may win the battle but you'll often lose *the sole*. Three examples:

When a prospect says: "It's too expensive," you reply: "Sure I know it's expensive to advertise. I certainly can appreciate how you feel, but..."

When a prospect says: "I tried Radio. It didn't work," you say: "When you say you tried Radio and it didn't work, I know you've obviously got a good first-hand reason for feeling that way, but..."

When a prospect says: "I don't like your format," you say: "I can understand you not liking our format. I'm just delighted you took the time to listen, but..."

Once you put yourself on his side you move to the second step, and that is...

Keep the dialogue open. You ask the customer to explain his objection. In effect, you're returning to the Consultant Sell. You ask the prospect to educate you. You do this with an open-end question that draws out the reasons he doesn't want to buy. Let's assume you get this often heard stall: *"I'd like to think it over."* First, neutralize the objection. Then ask what's wrong. Here is an example:

"I can understand you wanting to take a little time, Mr. Prospect. It's an important decision. But I think you liked the sound of the Radio commercial we prepared for you. We both know that ad can build sales and traffic. Telling me that you'd like to take more time makes me think we didn't really do such a good job. Can you tell me what it is about the commercial that we ought communicate a little clearer or better?"

This second step involves the prospect. It allows you to keep the selling dialogue open.

Keep asking questions. As he tells you what's bothering him, listen attentively. Really pay attention. Let him do the talking. Use phrases like: *"When do we start?" "Why do you want to wait?" and "How can you postpone this opportunity to make money?"*

Recognize the 'go' signal. Realize when you're back on the selling track and take advantage of it. For example, let's look at this sequence.

Customer: *I'd like to think it over.*

Prospect: *I can understand that. It's a big step. But we both know the commercial you just heard is right on target. Isn't this your busy selling season?*

Customer: *Well, in about a month.*

Prospect: *That's not a lot of time. Don't you think it's important to start building momentum now?*

Customer: *Well, I suppose so. Let me hear that spot again.*

That was it - the signal you've been waiting for. An indication that you've sidetracked the objection and are back in a positive selling process.

- **Neutralize** the objection by empathizing with the prospect's position.
- Keep the dialogue open.
- Keep asking questions.
- Recognize the go signal and get back to the selling track.

9. FOUR ELEMENTS IN A SUCCESSFUL SALES PRESENTATION

What is a sales presentation? A presentation is a formally, organized, logically sequenced series of facts and ideas to persuade a prospect to buy your product or service. Here are four steps to follow when putting together your presentation.

First step: accentuate the positive. First, sort out the prospect's basic preoccupations. You've interviewed him via the Consultant Sell. You've talked to his customers, employees, friends, competitors. You have a good idea of his most immediate concerns. Your presentation should remain within the following areas: (a) his marketing situation, (b) his advertising and media philosophy and strategy; and (c) his immediate copy or promotional needs. Once you've determined his concerns, make a balance sheet of his positives and negatives. Then...

Begin your presentation on an upswing. Start by complimenting the advertiser on his positive gains. Can be sales, new stores, favorable community image, etc. Then swing into the crucial second phase of the presentation, the phase that begins with the big word... *but...*

Second step: move to negatives. Move politely but firmly to his negatives. These should be Marketing negatives, things like... unfavorable customer demographics... a slower than average sales gain... a relatively poor awareness image.

They should reflect what you've learned via the Consultant Sell. Don't dwell on negatives that are outside the power of advertising to correct. Example: You can't do much about taxes, or the higher costs of goods, or the fact that the advertiser's brother-in-law is a rotten store manager. But advertising can answer most marketing needs. For example, his problem may be bad location. Advertising can turn that into a positive. Tell listeners that the advertiser's great values and lower prices make his out of the-way location worth the trip.

To repeat... start with the positives, then proceed to the advertiser's negatives. Now the third step.

Third step: propose solution. Move to the solution. Start with your best proposal, but have an alternative ready. The solution can be the playing of a spec tape. It can be a detailed Radio schedule stressing times and/or program sponsorship. In every case the solution should be your answer to the advertiser's problem.

Final step: The close. Now press for the order. You've pinpointed his problem and offered the solution in terms of creative or marketing strategy. Have the contract ready to sign.

Ground rules. The presentation should be available in writing. It should be neat, clean, typed. Use charts and graphics - if applicable. Always give sources for any data you provide. If you leave the written proposal with the advertiser, make sure you keep a file copy.

What about spec spots? Don't give him too in any to choose from - two or three commercials at the most. Let him know you've hand-picked the *best* ideas from many available. Play spec spots for the advertiser with a simple, good quality cassette player. Let him hear the spots the way his customers will. Also have a written version of the spot. It lets the advertiser make changes or suggestions - gets him actively involved.

The presentation should run to 20 minutes at the most. Be prepared for questions... to answer objections... and defend your position.

10. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE CLIENT SAYS 'NO'

How do you act when, after a hit of preparation and some optimism, you strikeout? There is a pattern you should follow, particularly if the call represents good potential revenue

Take this situation. You've been working on a prospect for six weeks. Then when you came thick with the final proposal, including a spec spot that really took off, he wouldn't get off the dime. No sale. No response. And, not even any real objection to get around. He just wasn't interested.

Sleep on it. Don't go back looking for an argument. Don't win a battle and lose the war. Nobody ever closed every sale.

Discuss the situation with the sales manager.

Go over your presentation objectively. Did your proposal really answer his needs, as indicated by the Consultant Sell interview you did prior to the presentation?

Did you really isolate his reason for not buying and answer it in your proposal?

Was the prospect really the decision-maker? Maybe he said no because someone else makes all the decisions and he's reluctant to admit it.

Did you really ask for the order? Did you come down hard with a question like: "Should we start Monday?" Too many sales get lost when the salesperson is too timid to close.

Was there personal animosity? Could another salesperson do better?

Look for another advertiser. You've invested a lot of work in the proposal. Is there another advertiser that might be receptive to basically the same idea or spec spot?

File the prospect for future work. And a review in 30 to 60 days. Meanwhile, keep track of his advertising. Start building your next proposal.

Bite the bullet... but send a personal note thanking him for his time. Courtesy always pays in the long run.

11. TIME-SAVING TIPS

Of all professionals, salespeople may spend less time actually doing what they're paid to do than any other. Take away travel, planning, waiting and most salespeople are lucky if they spend as much as 20% of their day in actual face-to-face discussion with a client or a prospect. Now what can be done to increase your selling time? Cut down on other time-consuming parts of your job.

Start your day on time. Make your first call at 9:00 a.m. You're fresh and it's a good time to catch a busy retailer. Too many salespeople waste that first hour. Remember, that first call for you is also likely to be the first contact the retailer has with any media representative.

Avoid unnecessary contact with other salespeople during the day.

Have coffee breaks with clients or prospects. One salesman gave us this rule of thumb: "I have coffee breaks with agency people and lunch with retailers." The reason: agency people generally have more time, so you limit them to a cup of coffee. Retailers, on the other hand, are busy and appreciate a fast, business lunch.

Use travel time to listen to spec spots you're about to play – or the RAB training cassettes.

Avoid driving around. Schedule calls so you can park and make a number of consecutive calls on foot. After you've set up the key appointment, schedule a lot of other calls within walking distance, if possible.

Use driving time sensibly. You're going out of town. Try to schedule the appointment in the middle of the day. Reason: use the driving time both coming and going for prospecting. Drive one route out, another back. If you schedule the call at the end of the day or first thing in the morning, you only make prospecting calls on one half the journey.

Make calls on similar categories. If you can't schedule appointments in the same area, then set up a series of calls with similar business categories. But always try to start with the smallest prospect and work toward the advertiser with the biggest dollar potential. The reason: after you've done the pitch a few times, the more expert you'll become. Also if you make a sale early on, it will give you added confidence in your presentation.

Don't waste a client's time with small talk. Be businesslike and get to the point. You'll make more sales and expand your selling time with other prospects.

Plan what you're going to say. Always walk into a client's office or store with a positive idea or plan that will make him money. One manager insists every salesperson open every call with these words: "I have a plan that will make money for you."

Keep track of your selling day. Record every appointment, all travel time and time spent not selling. See if you can cut down on non-selling time by planning and conscious effort.

Review and advance planning. Use the last hour of your day to review that day's performance and schedule and reconfirm appointments for the following day.

These are suggestions but not hard-and-fast rules. You'll come up with others based on your own experience, work patterns and station rules.

12. BRAINSTORMING: CREATIVE ANSWERS TO SALES PROBLEMS

Brainstorming, introduced in advertising many years ago, remains an effective way to find creative solutions to tough selling problems. Here's how brainstorming works.

Select a leader. Let the leader take all responsibility for contact with reality; everyone else in the brainstorming meeting is to "think wild." The duties of the leader are:

- Take notes on all the ideas expressed.
- Set a time limit on the meeting, such as 60 minutes.
- Set a quota on ideas to be generated, such as 60 ideas in 60 minutes.
- Admonish any critical thinkers in the group - no negative thinking allowed.
- Say "stop" when an idea has been built up enough.
- Help start new ideas if things lag.

Rules during brainstorming:

- Suspend all critical judgment on any ideas expressed.
- Let the leader handle all contact with reality. The rest of the group should "let go" at all times and just react to ideas.
- As each new idea comes, let the leader express the simple meaning.
- As each new idea is expressed, the participants should begin to build up the idea expressed.
- Keep building each idea till the leader of the group says "stop."
- Remember, humor and "play" atmosphere are desirable and important to the process. Don't be afraid to have fun!

Three-phase process. Brainstorming is part of a three-phase process. Make all preparations before the brainstorming starts. Do all critical analysis after brainstorming stops.

- Before you start, carefully define problem(s) in writing. Set quotas for ideas. Set a time limit. Review the house rules before the brainstorming session.
- Establish the “formal setting”, then *brainstorm*.
- After the session is over, use your normal everyday judgment to logically develop ideas, selecting the best ideas from all of the alternatives available.

13. SELLING WITHOUT RESEARCH

If you lack local audience research for documentation, try these techniques:

Use national averages. They are available from a number of sources including the RAB Radio Facts Pocket Piece.

Sell your own advertiser success stories. Get retailer testimonials, listener response, results of Radio advertised promotions. Put them on tape or on handouts.

Sell your coverage. Get postmarks and phone response from all over your coverage area to prove your pull beyond the immediate trading limits.

Stress your long-term advertisers. The relationships you've built up can be impressive to other local advertisers. Remind your prospects how many advertisers have stayed and expanded their schedule with you over long time periods.

Sell with ideas. Ideas are a big advantage that most local competition doesn't provide. And ideas can close a sale. An analysis of RAB feedback cards shows that 68% of sales – two out of three were made with the help of ideas.

Sell your community involvement. It's a big factor, particularly in smaller markets.

Sell your market's buying power. RAB Research will give you a report that compares your community's growth against the national average. It's a great way to document the importance of advertising to retailers who aren't running ahead of matching local growth.

Sell your RAB membership. You're part of a national Radio organization to make local Radio more effective. Tell your prospects you'll get professional broadcast resources to help with their specific problems.

Sell your own sales consultancy. Your personal service – the fact that you're a professional who can help on ideas, copy, scheduling.

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