

3 Steps to Reframe Prospect's Thinking

By Jeff Michaels

Note from the Editors: Jeff's tip about depleting the "status quo fund" of your prospect is brilliant. He explains how to do that in a three step Corporate Executive Board (CEB) process.

1. Shut up
2. Pay attention.
3. Go into debt
buying our stuff
in order to make
yourself feel better.



@gapingvoid

www.wittyparrot.com

Capturing the attention of a prospect has become increasingly more difficult. We've all heard the numbers:

- 100 billion business emails were sent and received per day in 2013 – Radicati Group
- 86% of sales rep's messages have no commercial value to buyers – CEB
- 67% of the buyer's journey is now done digitally – Sirius-decisions

With the bombardment of ineffective messaging battling for your prospect's attention, it's no wonder why 6 out of 10 prospects end up in no decision. That number is likely to rise with a 31% increase in email and 44% increase in social media users expected over the next 4 years.

Many sales reps are trying to solve this through increased activity levels while simultaneously looking to improve their efficiency. Unfortunately, this will only result in adding to the noise, and lead reps to believe even more activity still is necessary.

Interestingly, as sales reps work tirelessly to get in touch with prospects to convince them to depart from their status quo, reps are equally guilty of their own status quo. Some are approaching prospects in the same ineffective way that they have done for years.

What so many fail to realize is without changing their approach and message, it is nearly impossible to generate enough activity through voice-mails and emails to prospects, to make up for the poor response rates.

Look at the recent statistics from The Blaire Group and Direct Marketing Association (DMA), respectively:

- “Surprisingly, we’ve never seen a sales team that could achieve more than a 3% callback rate from voice-mail messages. The average callback rate is less than 1%.” – Kraig Kleeman, The Blaire Group
- Yory Wurmser of DMA reports, “Email’s average response rate is 0.12%”

There is a better way to approach prospects in order to reframe how they are thinking about solving their problems. But doing so requires a complete abandonment from generically contacting and emailing prospects en masse.

The C.E.B. Model for Better Reframes

After spending significant time in evaluating the Challenger choreography, not only in face-to-face sales conversations, but also in written form and in everyday interactions, I developed the following easy to remember acronym...C.E.B.

- **Challenge.** The first step in your opening communication to a prospect is where you begin establishing credibility (Warmer Statement) by clearly articulating the 'challenges' your prospect is likely experiencing. The goal of this opening paragraph or statement is for the prospect to say, "Yes, I agree. You really understand my world."
- **Example.** The second step of your communication is to provide an example, demonstrating the traditional or conventional wisdom that everybody else uses to address these issues. This is where you lay the foundation to transition the prospect from Warmer to Reframe. At this stage, the goal is to have the prospect nodding, as if to say, "We've tried that approach too, and it doesn't work." Of course, they are expecting you to advise just like every other rep...but that is not what you will do as you are about to start the 'bankruptcy' proceedings.
- **Bankruptcy.** The third step in your process is to demonstrate the insufficiency, or 'bankruptcy,' of traditional thinking and why it hasn't worked. Your articulation and presentation of the problem with the conventional wisdom is paramount in preparing to offer your unique perspective that they hadn't thought of before. This is the Reframe. The goal of this stage is to get them thinking, "I never thought of it that way before."

I can't stress enough the importance of absolutely bankrupting the prospect's investments (e.g., arguments) for remaining in their status quo. Sales Managers and Reps alike need to recognize that if the prospect has any 'capital' remaining in staying the same, they won't budge until they have completely depleted their investment.

Repeatable Success Prospecting Tip

If a prospect's "status quo fund" isn't completely bankrupted by the end of their conversation with you, their fund will run out with a competitor...and they will earn their business. For the Challenger Sales rep, your job is to 'de-fund the prospect's argument' for remaining the same.

“3 Steps to Re-frame Prospect’s Thinking”

by @IntendedResults

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