



## THE BENCHMARK

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# Managing face time

**S**elling has never been more challenging. That's because it's becoming more difficult to get real face time with prospects. Therefore, when you do get face time, it's critical to manage it effectively. Use the following principles to assist salespeople to ensure they don't waste anyone's time.

### When presenting to a prospect

Presenting to prospects can be sensitive. Following these seven steps will make it a little easier:

**1. Provide them with your agenda** at the start. For example, *"My goal is to arrive at a decision today based on your timeline. If that works for you, shall we begin?"*

**2. Review the prospect's desires and needs.** Prospects often forget their own needs, so go ahead and remind them briefly. For example, *"As we discussed, you were interested in ... and indicated that several things were of special importance to you."*

**3. Start with the big picture** to get them excited. Avoid too many technical details; it bores the prospect and saps the energy from your presentation. Above all, be brief and leave plenty of time for Q&A.

**4. Talk about price early** and then recommend that it be addressed at the end during the Q&A.

**5. Watch the body language and eye contact.** If they are not "with you," stop! Address concerns directly. For example, *"It looks as if you have a concern." Or, "It looks as if you are busy and in a rush?"*

**6. Use trial closes** to address disconnects. For example, *"Is this what you have in mind when hiring a contractor for this job?"*

**7. Maximize the visual content** of the presentation. Have pictures and charts and minimize the bullet point slides.

### When closing and negotiating

Don't stop after the presentation. You still have to seal the deal. In doing so, be sure to:

**1. Offer options.** This includes some price negotiation (if you bid it fit), scope and spec adjustments, and benefits that address the prospect's

primary fears, risks and desires.

**2. Validate objections.** For example, *"Price is always critical when making a decision like this. What is your pricing range for budget and enhancements?" Or "There are several ways to manage your cost." Or "That's a real concern shared by many of our current clients when we first we started with them. Might I share an example?"* Always have an example you can share that addresses the particular concern.

**3. Be brief** when responding to objections. Do not defend or justify your service or pricing strategy. Simply state your logical response and ask if this fits their needs.

**4. Use real-life examples** to illustrate your points. Start with the words, *"We faced the same issues on a job last week and here's how we handled it."*

**5. Paraphrase and summarize** at the end to check for agreement before you ask for the close.

**6. Ask for the close directly** by referring to the contracting process and the signature you need to get them started.

**7. Use silence** after you ask. Sit back and let them make the first move.

### When following up

Most of the success salespeople experience is the result of persistent follow-up. Great preparation and great calls only get you about 50 percent of the way to selling success. Follow-up gets you the remaining 50 percent. Here are several strategies for follow-up:

- ▶ Send a handwritten thank you note.
- ▶ Send an email summary of the meeting and the actions you intend to pursue, assuming you did not get a final "no".
- ▶ Follow through on your promises to deliver information and materials.
- ▶ Send "news" items to the customer. These can be scanned articles or web links that refer to an issue that arose in the sales call.
- ▶ Be available. Communicate times for calls and be there.