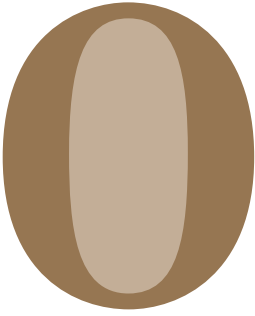


Put Your Value Forward

*Salespeople
looking for a raise
or promotion need
to demonstrate
their value upfront
to management.*





ver the past two decades, Paul DiModica of DigitalHatch Inc., an IT sales strategy consulting and training company, has interviewed and promoted countless numbers of salespeople. And much to his surprise, DiModica has found that though salespeople may be skilled at negotiating

a sale, they're often poor at negotiating a promotion or salary increase.

"For some reason, there seems to be a disjunction between [salespeople's] ability to successfully represent their company in a selling situation and their ability to represent themselves to management within their own company," observes DiModica.

So how can salespeople better represent themselves to management? It starts with attitude and value. Managers look to promote reps who see the bigger picture – the overall goals of the corporation and how they can be a valuable contribution.

Too often salespeople leave their value behind them, relying on the traditional method of simply asking straight up for the promotion. DiModica recommends a "value forward" strategy to demonstrate value upfront and clearly to management.

One method is to change the way management thinks by "parallel imaging," DiModica suggests. This tactic involves learning to parallel management's skills to leverage their desire for promoting someone in their own image. For example, if a rep's boss is detail-oriented, than that rep should ensure all communications such as letters and memos are as detailed as possible.

Another method is to create a 10- to 20-page business plan on how the company or department can grow as a whole. Developing a consultative plan on the rep's own time



Peter Stark

proves to management they're willing to go outside of their job description for the team's overall growth.

How management is approached is important when looking to get promoted. Peter Stark, president of Peter Barron Stark & Associates, a training and

executive coaching company, stresses such meetings should always be planned in advance.

Stark also notes the importance of timing when planning a meeting, "A time when business is going well or improving and the boss is less stressed is usually the time to be asking."

Leading up to meeting with the boss, like any job interview or sales presentation, it's important to prepare, sometimes well in advance. And like a sales presentation, there will definitely be objections that come up. Thus it's important to have

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responses prepared (see sidebar on pg. 13 for responses to common management objections). It may even be a good idea to roleplay with someone before going in to discuss a raise or promotion with the boss, Stark recommends.

In order to record the valuable contributions reps make throughout the year, DiModica recommends they keep a "brag book". It might include a letter from a customer praising the rep's service or emails the boss has sent praising their work on a particular project. And any financial accomplishments included in the book should include not just what's been sold, but how it was sold as well.

"If you've sold \$1,000 in widgets to new customers, that's much more difficult than selling \$1,000 worth to existing clients," DiModica insists. For example, the book might include a note saying, "I hit 110% of quota, 70% of which were new clients."

Right from the start of the meeting is the time to put your value up front by reviewing the book page-by-page with management. "What you're doing is earning the right to ask for a raise or promotion, most people miss that point," says DiModica.



Doris Valade

Doris Valade, president of Malabar Super Spice, a company providing supplies, ingredients and spices to the food industry, recommends a consultative approach to pursuing a raise or promotion.

"When it gets to be as basic as negotiating money, it puts a wall up between management and the salesperson," insists Valade. Instead she suggests approaching management with what extra responsibilities the rep is interested in taking on and the pay scale tied to them. "For example, 'What commission structure is there available

if I were to work on certain accounts?'"

Both DiModica and Stark believe in approaching a raise or promotion as more of a negotiation. And both have developed win-win strategies for the negotiation table.

One key point they stress is that there's nothing wrong with saying no to offers. Even if the initial offer appears to be perfect, Stark encourages the rep to table it. "If the boss proposes \$80,000 and I immediately say 'Great' the boss is going to wish they'd said \$70,000."

So by tabling the offer for a day or two and attempting to tweak it, management doesn't leave the negotiation table feeling as though they've just given up the farm. And the rep might be able to get an even better deal as a result.

A strategy DiModica recommends for creating a win-win situation is to go into negotiations with a concession list. This list would include: As (things to give away), Bs (things that would have to be pulled away) and Cs (must haves). Again, by having items to give up, management won't feel as though they have lost.

And if management tries to take away a C, it's once again important to table the discussion or at the very least gain a verbal commitment from management to readdress the issue in the not-to-distant future.

By putting their value in front of them and carrying themselves as a valuable member of a team, sales reps are sure to stand out more in management's eyes. And whether it's a collaborative approach or a negotiation, it's important that sales reps have a well-thought strategy to approach management with when seeking to advance within their company.

Anticipate Objections

BY PETER STARK

Almost every boss is going to provide some type of objection to giving a raise. Here are some of the classic boss objections, along with possible counters:

A.

Objection: "Right now, you are the highest-paid person in your job category at our company."

Counter: Do not focus on what other people inside the company make. Focus on what other competitive companies are paying people in your job category.

B.

Objection: "There is no room for a raise in our budget."

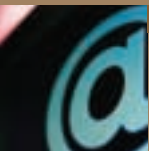
Counter: Focus on the future. Gain agreement with your boss about what you need to do differently to add even more value to the organization and thereby justify increasing the budget and giving you a raise or promotion and also how your success will be measured.

C.

Objection: "You are pricing yourself out of the market. This position does not warrant another salary increase."

(This is the boss's way of telling you that you are becoming more expensive than the value your company attributes to your position.)

Counter: Focus your conversation on what you need to do differently to add more value to your position in the eyes of your boss and the organization.



Web Sources

www.everyonenegotiates.com: Sharpen your negotiation techniques or provide negotiation training for your organization.

www.bettersalesjobs.com: Download the "How To Get A Better Sales Job or Negotiate A Sales Promotion" report and sign up a 30-day email sales coaching and mentoring program.

<http://salary.monster.ca>: monster.ca provides a wealth of resources for negotiating a salary increase and/or better benefits.

www.sellingsolutionsinc.com: Selling Solutions Inc. is a management consulting firm specializing in negotiating as well as strategic customer management.



Book Sources

The Only Negotiating Guide You'll Ever Need,
by Peter Stark