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WHY NOW?

Because your prospects
should have been
customers yesterday

**Lannoo
Campus**

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*WHY
THIS BOOK?*



Why this book? And why just now?



Well, because of sales pitches like this:

Good morning. Hey, John and Britt, right? Good. Good. Great to come and pitch to you guys so early in the day. Hope you guys will stay awake. (Laughs)

So, I'm going to talk about my product X. A winner. You'll see. But it might be useful if first I tell you about myself. It's a bit easier to talk about myself anyway. So, I'm Steven and I've seen my share of meeting rooms. Like, a lot of them. I have twenty years of experience in various industries, so I know what makes a good product. So, I'm not going to sell you any nonsense. I promise you. Before I started my career, I did an internship with Jan from Very Large Company Y. Before that I interned at an Education programme, and even back then, everyone said I was a born salesman because I always got my way. (Winks)

But look, so, here I am now with you presenting my own product. This is my big dream. I've walked through the trenches to get to this point. Trust me. All this is possible because my product really works. Over the next one and a half hours you'll learn all about it. Naturally, I'm going to give you a brief explanation of how it works. After all, that's why we're here. But because one picture says a thousand words, I'll show you pictures of each of our offices, so you can also see my working environment. Especially our new office in Dubai. It really is worth a closer look. We've made a video about it that I will show to you later in my pitch.

By the way, I don't make product X on my own, I'm not that good. (Another wink.) So I mustn't forget the team of engineers and IT guys who back me up. Except for Femke. She also stands behind me, but as one woman.

So, before we start let's be clear about what you can expect from this meeting. First, I'll do a short introduction, then a word about my background and where my passion comes from and then the crazy story of my product and how we developed it. I'll give you all the details straight away because it is the details that make my product so special.

Next, my team will introduce themselves and then, of course, there will be a demonstration of how my product works. I have deliberately kept the presentation brief so that you will have a chance to ask questions during the final ten minutes. But no need for panic. I'll send you a copy of my slides and I have product brochures for you. Otherwise, are there any questions now? No? Then we can start with a short video on our Brussels office. Roll it!

This doesn't work

Your prospects have changed. Have your sales techniques changed too?

A sales pitch like the one above just does not work anymore. I wonder if it ever did? A sales pitch does not begin with a logo slide and end automatically with a closed deal an hour later. What your customer wants to hear is a story. A 'Sales Story'. A story that focuses on their needs and shows them how their business would benefit from your product or service.

Maybe your prospect does not need your solution today. That is not a problem because you are patient. You know your prospect might call you the moment they do need you. You will be there, with solutions designed for them.

You are probably thinking, 'I have a good product. There is interest in my product. I have made offers, hundreds of them.' And yet after your sales pitches, you are often met with ... silence. No response. Or much less of a response than you would like. This leaves me with one question: WHY would a customer buy your product or service NOW? If you do not have an answer, or if you can only come up with an answer after mulling over the question, then your Sales Story does not have traction. This problem is widespread and was present in 90% of my clients' companies before I began to work with them.

I have helped companies transform over five hundred sales pitches into highly effective Sales Stories over the last five years, in addition to teaching this subject at conferences and on numerous webinars. The basis of my approach to building a Sales Story is my *Why Now Model*, where a focus on five elements is needed to convert prospects into customers:

- **Attention**
- **Problem**
- **Trust**
- **Structure**
- **Next Actions**

Consideration of these five elements eventually coalesces into a single concept, a flow of information, tailored to each client.

If you have ever seen me in a webinar or on a stage demonstrating the use of my *Why Now Model*, you will know that I am a pragmatic person. In my view, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. That means that this book is not full of pure theoretical strategies. It describes real-life cases where my time-tested *Why Now Model* has yielded effective solutions for my clients. Before and after case studies are used to illustrate the weaknesses of conventional sales pitches and how to overcome them.

This book is not intended as a substitute for a lecture or a training course. I have already given plenty of those. Instead, it provides a blueprint for making your sales pitch, presentation, website, and brochure ... sharp. It is intended for everyone, in any setting, to develop and fine-tune their Sales Story and, overall, to convert sceptical prospects into loyal customers.

It took me a long time to finally write this book. The many questions I get every day about my *Why Now Model* finally made me stop procrastinating. Why now? Because your prospects expect something much better than the pitch described above. This book captures all my experience and knowledge, both theoretical and practical so that you can develop your own ultimate sales process. Get your pitches right from the very first contact. Get your Sales Story on point from the very first letter.

It is closing time.

**BECAUSE
YOUR
PROSPECTS
SHOULD
HAVE BEEN
CUSTOMERS
YESTERDAY**

**WHY
NOW**



CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM



Under pressure: how to create your Why Now



'Michael,' you may be thinking, 'there are no problems. There are only challenges.' That is fine for a book about coaching, but what you are holding in your hands is a book about sales. You need to get your prospects to the Next Action, in other words, one step closer to a sale. You are building a relationship here, you know.

Now then. Problems. Problems can be used to your advantage. A good sales pitch defines your prospect's problems in a way that builds intrinsic pressure for your prospect to find a solution. Why should your prospect buy your product at this time? How do you make them feel that internal pressure requires them to jump on the bandwagon ASAP, no hanging about, snap to it? That is what the *Why Now Model* is all about.

If I tell you what to do, you probably will not do it. That is human nature, and prospects are no exception. You can say 'buy now' but that will not make a prospect do it. They will want to do things their way which usually means they will do nothing.

That 'nothing' is the major stumbling block in social selling (bringing in leads by addressing prospects directly via social media). Despite the attractive scalability of digital social selling, the impassiveness of your target audience has equal scalability. No-response is now the norm with social selling, but it is just as problematic with other types of selling.

What can you do to avoid the Big Nothing? Well, you can create pressure or push them. Not a good idea. The pressure that people put on themselves elicits intrinsic motivation. You are more likely to train for a marathon because *you* want to do it than because your sweetheart thinks you need to exercise. You want your prospects to be motivated by intrinsic pressure. Nurture this by helping your prospects to understand that they need your solution and that they need to act now. You will not be successful if you take a commanding stance towards your prospects, call them frequently or tell them what to do. Be subtle but be clear and make some irresistible suggestions

A strong internal motivator is the famous FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), but there are other techniques. Use a variety of techniques to encourage your prospects to move in the direction you want. A description of these techniques and an explanation of how to use them to build in and accelerate pressure (the Now part of the *Why Now Model*) appears later in this chapter.

The shortest sales lesson ever

Selling is very simple. After all, there are only three possibilities with sales. You will be either

1. Too early
2. Perfectly on time
3. Too late

**TOO
EARLY**

**PERFECT
ON TIME**

2%

**TOO
LATE**

If sales is so simple, then why is the internet teeming with sales gurus claiming that they have found the ultimate sales method? Why have film clips of sales pitches reached icon status, like the 'Sell me this pen' skit from *Wolf of Wallstreet* or Alec Baldwin with his 'ABC' sales method (Always Be Closing) in *Glengarry Glen Ross*? Because they are pretty good methods, but only IF YOU **arrive at exactly the right moment**: that brief sliver of 'the moment' when your prospect already needs a solution like yours and you are lucky enough to be there to sell it.

Like George.

Panic! George's house is on fire. The good news: you sell fire extinguishers.

George feels extreme intrinsic pressure to solve his problem. He knows what his problem is and what the consequences could be. The *Why Now* of your fire extinguisher is irrefutable. When you stand at George's burning door with a competitor, you should debate value (keep it short though, think of poor George). Who has the best value proposition? Is the green or red extinguisher better? The one with powder, water, air or foam? It is certain that George will buy one or the other.

But what if you are too early? What if there is nothing wrong with George's house when you arrive? Would you be able to sell him a fire extinguisher at that moment? Possibly if you are good at 'cold' prospecting: cold calling, cold mailing, cold visits, cold outreach on socials ... But you will need to be a magician: cold sales have a conversion rate of less than 2.4% (on average, across all industries).

In most cases, salespeople present their sales pitch too early, missing out on a huge potential. (Too late is also possible, but other books have been written about that). It is essential that you use other techniques for prospects who are not urgently looking for what you are selling. Your Next Actions – a next appointment, please – are radically different than for George and his house on fire.

Beware: if you are too strident about closing the deal, you should be prepared for an (ice cold) 'no'. The Inuits may have 35 words for snow, but we people are very creative when saying 'no' in 35 different ways: just make me an offer; I'll call you later; yes, interesting; feel free to forward the slides; I'll put it to my colleagues or icy silence. Rejection is commonplace in sales. But there are ways to avoid losing your self-esteem and your prospect.

Sales is like swimming in a lake of rejection

With only a sliver of a chance that you will land in front of your prospect at just the right moment, you must bet on one of the two remaining choices for the timing of your pitch: too early or too late. Skip this step and you increase your chance of drowning in a lake of rejection.

Arriving with your pitch too late has obvious disadvantages, so with only one choice left, I will focus on arriving early with your pitch. The most efficient route to sales is to make an early connection with your prospect and carefully grow the relationship over time (nobody likes pushy). The success of this approach is demonstrated in B2B, where most deals are closed by roughly the fifth meeting. So, relax, you do not have to push for closing at the end of meeting one. Instead, you want to get your prospects to your Next Action (the next meeting). A relaxed next meeting with ample time and sandwiches. And with the case studies in this chapter.

Phew! Time for the basics in the shortest sales lesson ever.

There are 27 or so well-known trends in sales methodologies. New ones appear every day. If you have plans for world conquest through B2B sales, three of these are particularly relevant for the *Why Now Model*.



**'Sales is like
swimming in the
lake of rejection'.**

SALES METHODOLOGIES



1.

Solution Selling

Customers already understand their problem and want sales to address specific issues with products and services. Customers buy in days to **weeks**.

2.

Consultative Selling

The customer does not fully understand the problem. Sales has to diagnose the customer's situation to determine the right solution. Sales can take **6-18 months**.

3.

Provocative Selling

Sales experts can identify clients who will face a problem before the client themselves knows. They provoke an executive client into action. Often applied to innovative solutions, this B2B sales methodology takes anywhere between **3 to 9 months**.

Solution selling (solution-oriented selling)

In the 20s (that is nineteen-hundred and twenty, so more than one hundred years ago), Dale Carnegie wrote the book: *How to Make Friends and Influence People*. It is so modern in outlook that it could easily be an Instagram manual. He describes techniques that we now call 'solution selling'.

Let us examine the case where the prospect comes to you with a problem. **They have done their homework, diagnosed the problem and they understand in detail what solution** is required. This suggests that they have examined the solutions offered by your competitors and may have already met with them. All you need to do is position your value more strongly than the competition. Because value is the only thing that you really own.

The advantage of solution selling is that it moves projects quickly forward with a sales cycle of a few days to weeks. The disadvantage is that your prospect already knows a lot and can compare solutions. This makes it difficult to stand out in a competitive market. If you fail to do so, your margins will come under pressure (margin erosion, for those who want the right term) and the consequences can be disastrous.

Most sales training courses focus on this technique, with 'Sell me this pen' being a poster child example. Salespeople may go out on a limb and wave the puniest USPs around trying to prove the added value provided by their solution. They often make the mistake of overexplaining to the point that they exhaust their prospect and lose the sale. Nobody has time to listen to the glories of 28 features. Despite detailing your product's USPs, the sale may still go to your competitor with the highest award factor or the best-sounding name (hence the saying: 'No one has ever been fired for choosing IBM').

'But Michael, it won't always be that bad, will it?'