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Techniques and Strategies For the Sales Professional

What is NLP Sales? or What is "The Competitive Advantage" and Why Should I Care?

By Kevin J. Barrett
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Everybody has competition--competition for sales and competition for time.

When you call someone or make a sales presentation, you are competing against hundreds of other things that are trying to get the attention of that person, things that may look or feel more important than your call, right now.

So how do you get a customer to decide to "buy" from you or even just listen to you? You need a competitive advantage--a reason that makes you more attractive to the customer than your competition. You need an advantage that allows you to 'speak' in a more persuasive way. That advantage will not be your engineering excellence, your service quality, or your prices. You have only one advantage YOU! The only real "competitive advantage" you can have is a better way to sell YOU, because the customer will always buy you before he/she buys your product. You must shine brighter and more powerfully than your competition, or no one will hear what you have to say.

What is NLP?

Some people sell themselves more effectively than others. They seem to know naturally how to influence and persuade. As much as they might want to believe this ability is part of their personal charm, it is really the result of using a set of skills effectively.

In the 1970's, a project was begun to identify the skills that enable one person to quickly and consistently persuade another. This collection of skills was eventually called "Neurolinguistic Programming" or NLP. (The name implies the power of the skills: the way the mind or neurology works has an effect on what we say, feel, and think.)

Also, the way we speak to ourselves or others effects how our mind works. Hence, one can "program" the other. If you want proof of this, the next time you are about to hit a golf ball, say to yourself, "I don't want to hit it in the lake" and watch where the ball goes!

Identifying the skills of NLP was a marvelous accomplishment, but it was not enough. To make NLP truly useful, it was necessary to prove that anyone can learn these skills. This, too, has been accomplished. Anyone who wants to learn to be more effective in "motivating" himself/herself or in persuading others can discover the power of NLP.

NLP has been successful as a guide for therapists (Grinder and others) and a self-help motivator (Tony Robbins, Brian Tracy, and others). But sales professionals needed more than self-motivation. They needed NLP to be a real tool to help them sell.

I have been working with adapting NLP skills for sales and marketing professionals since the mid-1980's. I have worked with these techniques with a wide range of Sales professionals and also with a group of people in Australia that were considered, by most as losers and no hopers, "The Unemployed". The vast majority these "Unemployed" discovered that by using effective communication techniques they were able to gain active employment. Over 90% of these people found work or started their own businesses after discovering how much more effective they can be with the "Competitive Advantage" of these techniques.

Recently, these NLP techniques have been applied to telemarketing and obtained sales increases of 16-35% by "engineering" scripts through NLP. These NLP techniques can also be applied to inbound customer-service settings to increase problem-solving effectiveness as well as add-on selling opportunities. They are "Highly Effective" in building "On Line Internet Businesses", by integrating these techniques into Brochures, Web-Pages, Newsletters and e-mails.

How does NLP work?

At the most fundamental level, NLP skills help you make the other person feel comfortable and trust you. This process can be as simple as matching your verbal speed to mirror your customer. It can also be as complex as recognizing attitude biases or language preferences. By learning to talk the way your customer thinks or talks, you truly begin to "speak their language". When people are comfortable with one another and are no longer competing or posturing for power, the process of rapport happens automatically, even over the phone. In the typical selling or survey interaction, rapport is hard to achieve. By knowing how to make the other person feel comfortable with you, you are gaining the advantage.

NLP skills can also be used to help a person mentally rehearse buying from you. NLP can direct the action of others in a subtle but effective way. By making what was once called "subliminal suggestions", It is possible to help a person think BUY before you even offer a trial close. You can also command a person to TALK to you when conducting telemarketing, RECOMMEND you when you are presenting to a non-decision maker, or CALL you when you are leaving a message on voice mail.

Where can NLP be useful to me?

NLP skills are valuable for influencing anyone anywhere. Whether through mail, on the phone, face-to-face, or in a group presentation, NLP skills get results. You can get a person to listen to you. You can leave voice mail messages that get a response. You can get more information from a secretary or gatekeeper, and you can help people remember and feel good about your company even though you are making only a survey call for information. Any time or place you want to be persuasive, there are several NLP skills that are available to you.

NLP will give you a Competitive Advantage in:

- Direct face- to-face selling
- Client interviews to get information
- Selection interviews for hiring
- Voice-mail messages so they are answered or remembered
- Survey calls to generate interest
- Cold-call interviews with prospects
- Letters, memos, or conversations to influence
- Direct mail or brochures to create interest
- Phone solicitation or telemarketing
- Formal presentations to sell an idea
- Handouts to help keep a prospect interested

Do I need to be an expert on NLP to be effective?

It is not necessary to know why or how NLP works. It is only necessary to have the courage and perseverance to try the skills.

Therefore, you can enjoy the results of NLP without even being particularly good at using the skills. NLP skills get positive results even when you are still learning how to be smoother or more elegant in their use! Some practice is necessary for most of the skills, and a lot of practice is needed for a few of the skills. Like any skill, the more you practice, the better you get. But once you see what happens when you try one or more of the skills in *The Competitive Advantage*, you will be hooked. You will not need someone to talk you into practicing.

Do you need to use NLP techniques all of the time? No. You only use them consciously when you need them. When do you need them? When you are not happy with what is happening. As you learn to notice when an interaction is not going smoothly, you will see when to apply one of the NLP skills. When things are going well, you do not need to think about NLP.

Discover the power of NLP Give yourself the power of the real Competitive Advantage -- YOU

"The Competitive Advantage" is a program developed to apply NLP to selling and marketing. It is about selling yourself and your product or service. It is not about motivation or self-help. *"The Competitive Advantage"* gives you the tools to sell yourself in any setting to any audience. Contact **Kevin Barrett** at kevinjbarrett@kjarrett.com for information on *"The Competitive Advantage"* program for you and your company.

Remember--most sales people have a good grasp of their product and how to talk about it. See the difference when you learn how to effectively use these people skills to sell it.

I would like to close by saying that in the past many of these skills have been used to manipulate people into choosing their products. Those that used these techniques in that way were not adhering to one of the fundamental principles of N.L.P., which is that it must be used with Integrity and in an ecological manner. We profess in using these techniques to build and strengthen long-term relationships with your clients and customers.

When used in this manner it builds an effective loyalty ladder for long lasting repeat business and the ability to create a strong **REFERRAL BUSINESS**. Many companies use "Telemarketing", e-mails, and written brochures as a means of generating initial leads. When **N.L.P. techniques** and *"Script Engineering"* techniques are used for Sales Presentations, Telephone Communications and all forms of written communications the results are incredible. However, by not **taking the next step** they are often only maintaining a "Revolving Door" business and not truly developing a *"Loyalty Ladder"*. When this technology is used at every step of the "Sales Process" a **self-generating Referral Business** is the natural by product. Everyone **WINS** and the cost of sales reduces proportionally to the increase of customer satisfactions. **Now.....**

All of these benefits and more will be yours, **"just for the asking"**.

You will be able to assist your customers and clients in making the best possible decision and your business will **enjoy** and **experience** the *"Competitive Advantage"*.

For further information and training in how to effectively anchor these into successful behavioural strategies please contact Kevin Barrett at kevinjbarrett@kjarrett.com.

Kevin Barrett is a Business & Training Consultant, N.L.P. Practitioner and Silva Method Lecturer. If you would like to subscribe to receive more Free "Tips and Strategies" visit www.kjarrett.com and sign up for our Free Newsletter. We welcome your response and suggestions.