The Skillset Needed for Sales Success
Charles Fifield, MBA

What's the Best Thank You?
Peggy Liu, BS, Cait Lamberton, PhD, and Kelly Haws, PhD

Picturing Yourself In and Out of the House
Yuwei Jiang, PhD, Rashmi Adaval, PhD, Yael Steinhart, PhD, and Robert S. Wyer, Jr., PhD

Peer-Based Learning and its Implications for the Real Estate Market
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Are Salespeople Born or Made?
James M. Loveland, PhD, John W. Lounsbury, PhD, Soo-Hee Park, PhD, and Donald A. Jackson, PhD

INSIDER: How the World Sees You
Margie McGregor, MBA Candidate

INSIDER: Being Real in Real Estate
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“It’s not right for me.” “We just aren’t interested.” “I’m sorry but we are going with another offer.” How do you convince potential clients that what you’re selling is best? How do you bridge that gap between real estate salesperson and my real estate agent? Ron Willingham says it is in how authentic you are with your potential clients. In the book *Authenticity: The Head, Heart and Soul of Selling*, Willingham chronicles how those in a selling role can cultivate and define “being real” within themselves while generating and affirming their buyers.

Think Point 1: Convey Your Purpose for Selling

Willingham describes how important your drive for selling has to be. Your internal desire for selling determines not only the happiness you will achieve once a sale is completed, but also is easily perceived by potential clients. If you are selling just to meet a quota or just to make money, then your potential clients pick up on certain cues you exhibit. Willingham stresses that when selling, you should not only sell a product because you believe in it but also sell to clients because you want to help them. You want your buyers to succeed and you feel you can be a part of that process. In real estate, you are selling to help people find and create new homes, grow or start their new or existing business, find a new productive work environment, and many others. Clients will pick up on whether you truly care about them. Find your purpose for selling and make sure it is one you would want your clients to know. Find that passion for helping others and channel it into your client interactions.

Think Point 2: Follow the CLIENT Method

With the purpose of keeping the client in mind and wanting to be as genuine as possible, Willingham gives a salesperson a six-step process to follow:

1. **Connect**

Don’t begin with your product or a sales pitch; instead, get to know your potential clients first. They want to know whether you care about them. Use questions to get them talking. Make sure there is value for them in what you are selling. Really try to form a connection, because you may not make the sale the first few times you talk.
2. Listen

Willingham says listening is guided by your questions and your desire to learn. If you want to learn, you do so by listening, not by rehearsing a predetermined formula. Focus on what and, more importantly, how clients are answering your questions. You never know when a long-winded answer can turn into just the right way of creating value.

3. Illustrate

Let their motives determine how you sell. Willingham points out four motives for why people buy: pride, profit, pleasure, and peace. Determine where your potential client is and relate your sale back to this motive. Make it easy for clients to see how what they are buying will fill this desire.

4. Evaluate

Take a moment to always make sure you have progressed appropriately in your connection. Have you focused on the right motives? Are you creating value for them? Let the client in on this process as well by getting further input and clarifying any issues they may have.

5. Negotiate

Don’t manipulate your client; make sure everyone is leaving happy and satisfied. This is where your purpose for selling shows. Clients can tell when you are looking to help them or suck out as much money as you can. Willingham describes how agreeing with clients and convincing them you are on their side is an important part of the negotiation process.

6. Transact

Finally, Willingham describes this transact step as not the end or close of the sale, but as a transformation. You should truly help your client in the end and should have created true value by the close of your exchange.

The acronym CLIENT reinforces your sales approach. Willingham points out that this system can be applied anywhere. Leaving out one or more of these steps or focusing on the end negotiation or transaction could cause potential clients to become former clients. In an industry that is driven by reputational assets, leaving a customer unhappy is a significant issue. Using Willingham’s CLIENT system as a backbone for your selling process will have a positive impact.
Think Point 3: Learn, Persevere, Mature

The final steps are important for the sales agent to reflect on, which helps prepare for the next client exchange. Willingham describes how important the soul of the sales agent is and getting the soul in line with the right purpose for selling. Reflecting on how a sales exchange went afterward may reveal a number of issues that occurred during the process, and may also reveal personal issues that should be resolved before approaching another sales exchange. He specifically argues that losing a sale is not a loss, but a growing opportunity. Learn from what went wrong and adjust. Every client is different and every sales exchange is different.

All real estate agents face the opportunity to change for the better every day. Being real and authentic with your clients takes practice and patience, but Ron Willingham explains it is worth the time and energy. He drives home this point in his book, making Authenticity a great read for any new or seasoned real estate agent.

Recommended Reading


About the Author

Wesley Bryan, Healthcare MBA Candidate, Baylor University

Wesley is a graduate student from Waco, Texas. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Baylor University. Before beginning Graduate School at Baylor, Wesley worked as a Merchandise Manager at Barnes and Noble. Wesley is currently seeking an MBA degree with a concentration in Healthcare and plans to work within the healthcare industry.