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BUILDING BUSINESS BY BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The quantity of your sales is dependent on the quality of your communication. Most sales people will agree that it is no longer enough to have just technical knowledge of your product or service, most people buy as a result of "relationship selling."

At the April SEC meeting, we discussed one of the barriers to effective communication. It is the fact that we hear half of what is said, listen to half of what we hear, understand half of it, believe half of that, and remember only half of that. Translated into an eight hour work day, it means:

You spend about 4 hours listening.

You hear about 2 hours worth.

You actually listen to 1 hours worth.

You understand 30 minutes of that hour.

You believe only 15 minutes worth; and you remember just under 8 minutes worth.

After understanding what you are up against with our competition as well as the time pressures, deadlines and multiple demands on our customers, we learned an innovative technique from the science of NeuroLinguistics Programming (NLP) to improve our communication skills. If implemented, this technique helps us listen more effectively to our customers by building rapport with them which results in stronger relationships and increased sales.

The technique is called mirroring. It is a very powerful technique because our non-verbal communication occurs at the subconscious level and is worth 93% of our total

communication (our words are only worth 7%). Another reason why mirroring is so helpful in increasing our listening effectiveness is the fact that people speak at a rate of approximately 150 words per minute, however, we can listen at 500 words per minute. This technique gives us something to do with that lag time.

Mirroring is the art of copying another person's behavior to create a relaxed communication situation which enables us to listen to the person more fully thereby understanding their needs and selling to them more effectively.

Key Concepts

- Match the other person's voice or tempo. If the other person talks slowly, pace your voice similarly to create comfort.
- Match the other person's breathing rate. Pace yourself to it.
- Match the other person's body movements. If they cross their legs, you cross yours.
- Match the other person's body postures. If they lean forward, you lean forward.

Sales people who have implemented this strategy have reported major increases in sales.

This article was written by Patti Hathaway who spoke on this topic at the April, 1994 SEC meeting. Patti is a Certified Speaking Professional (CPI) in leadership, communication and customer service. Call Patti at 523-3633.