

Less is More! Remember the Rule of Three.

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When salespeople finally land a meeting with that all important customer, they want to capitalize on it. Their tendency is to tell the customer everything possible about their product or service and to describe the company's many additional offerings. That approach almost always is a mistake since it overwhelms the customer.

First, remember that customers have needs, and they base their buying decisions around those needs. They could care less about a company's full suite of products. Their concern is solving their immediate problem, nothing more. In addition, detailing all the wonderful features of a product may make them wonder if they are paying for features that aren't applicable to their unique situation. Ultimately, it could cause them to rethink their purchase.

Secondly, if the product or service is very technical and the customer doesn't have a technical background, the depth of the salesperson's explanation may cause confusion. The person may decide that if this seems complicated to him or her, surely the end user will find the product or service also confusing.

Thirdly, despite how high the client is in the organization, chances are he or she may have to sell the solution to someone else. If the service is costly, many people may have to approve of the purchase. Going into too much detail makes it difficult for someone to explain the process or solution to someone else.

Salespeople can eliminate any possibility of overwhelming their listeners with too much information by following the **rule of three**. Since it is a researched fact that people remember best in groups of three, three well supported, key ideas maximize retention. For example, people almost always remember the names of the three Stooges. They rarely remember the names of the seven dwarfs. The rule

of three is the brain's way of codifying and organizing data to retain it. With more than three points, there is a risk that information will fall to the way-side. On the other hand, it doesn't mean that there can never be an exception. There may be times two ideas seem sufficient or times when four ideas are absolutely essential. However, the more points one make, the less likely they will be retained by the listener.

To apply the rule of three, salespeople must think through their material and focus on what is really important to the client, then clarify and organize the appropriate data. The beauty of the rule of three is that it provides a structure for grouping information into organized categories and eliminating unnecessary information. Not only are clients left with a message they can retain and assimilate, but with less information, the salespeople can communicate more clearly and effectively.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. To reach us, phone (847) 438-4480 or contact our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.