



How to Make More Sales With Transformation Experiences

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Hi, it's Phyllis Mikolaitis with a story and some transformation info for you. My friend Sandy was stressed out, eating too much and sitting at her desk. She had stopped exercising and she didn't get enough sleep. Clearly Sandy needed to take control of her life and make some changes. Why is my friend Sandy succeeding at improving her lifestyle? She is exercising at least 3 times per week and meets her increasingly greater walking distance. She's also eating better and now sleeping 7 to 8 hours instead of her previous 5 to 6 hours. How is my friend Sandy succeeding at improving her lifestyle? She has a Fitbit. It measures her steps and tells her how many miles she has traveled each day. It also tracks her food, other exercise, and her sleep. Her Fitbit provides feedback and encouragement. Sandy also earns badges as she meets milestones or successfully completes certain activities for the required number of days. Sandy's experience with the Fitbit is an example of most buyers today.

Most people today are experience seekers. They are on social media, participate in some type of sports activity, perhaps use a virtual reality device, or participate in some other interactive experience. In 2019, we are in the experience economy and evolving to a transformation economy. So, your typical buyer doesn't want to be talked to. He or she wants to be actively engaged in the sales experience. Today's buyer 2.0 also wants a product or service that will transform him or her, the company, or the employees. In other words, they want an experience that will create a sustainable change.

In your meetings that are part of your current sales process, your buyer may not become bored and leave the room for an unnecessary bathroom or coffee break. But, he or she may become disengaged and think of things on her to do list or even daydream about a vacation in the Caribbean. You definitely don't want that to happen. So, in today's podcast, John and I will help you get started creating dazzling dialogues and engaging experiences



that result in transformational sales. There is a lot to discuss so we'll begin here and then continue to provide more information in future podcasts and blog posts.

So, let's get started by comparing how some things have changed. In the old way of making sales presentations, the buyer is simply an observer. It's a one-way conversation. Consequently, there are no senses or emotions involved in the activity. That makes it challenging to maintain the interest of the buyer and to entice her to make a change. In an experiential sales process, there are two-way conversations and the buyer is an active participant. For example, he may provide the current state or the vision for the future state as a part of a presentation.

A transformation experience is different. It's individual, the buyer takes some action that will make a sustainable change in him, his company, or his employees. The product or service you offer guides the person or the company through the change. As a result of the transformation, the person or company cannot return to the previous state. Note the key word here is sustainable. To truly be a transformation, the change must be sustainable. That is why now is the best time to plan your sales strategy beginning with 2019 to make every sales process a series of activities that provide a transformational experience.

Is it worth the effort and does it work? Think about any sustainable change you have made. Did you change your eating habits, stick to an exercise regime, or sustain and early to bed early to rise schedule? If not, what would your life be like if you had sustained any change you tried to make with one of those forgotten New Year's resolutions?

I want to take a minute to provide some examples of changes in the way some companies are now doing business and creating sustainable change in the buyer. Auto manufacturers are not only touting the technology in their cars, but they are also providing examples of how the technology will make you and your teenagers better drivers. Some cars have devices that monitor the speed, location, and time of the driving activity. The information is sent to a smartphone allowing parents to monitor the driving activity and



discuss safe driving behavior with their teenagers. Actual data shows that as a result of the feedback to the parents, the teenager is transformed into a better driver and earns the parents trust.

Many cars now offer technology that includes a backup camera, blind spot alerts, and auto braking to avoid accidents. These technological advancements have not only prevented accidents but also saved money and helped drivers improve their skill. The car purchase is a different buying experience that not only includes the transaction in the showroom but also the post-purchase transformation of the drivers who use the technology.

Here's another example. One of the smoking cessation companies not only offers a product, but it also offers coaching, tip sheets, emails, and website interactions. The result of the total experience versus simply purchasing a prescription was a 50% greater probability of them being transformed into a non-smoker.

As the old saying goes, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." So, let's discuss how you can create the right series of events to inspire your buyer to make a purchase and have a transformational experience.

In their book *The Experience Economy*, Pine and Gilmore state there are three phases to transformation: diagnosing what the buyer wants to achieve, providing experiences to reach their goal, and continuing to provide support to ensure sustainability. I believe the process matches with Selling 2.0 but to apply to the sales process, it should be broken out into more steps than Pine and Gilmore propose. However, I do agree with Pine and Gilmore that it is the way in which the steps are implemented that makes the difference. Let's examine a bit about each area of the big picture as I see it. In other blog posts and podcasts, I'll provide more secondary steps and details.

1. Phase one is diagnosing what the buyer wants. Today's buyer is not looking for a single product but rather a true solution that will provide her desired transformation. A solution is a collection of activities that

include a product or configuration of products, services, and follow through elements to ensure the transformation and eventual enhancements.

Therefore, it is important to dig deep and understand what the buyer is ultimately trying to achieve. There may be levels to the solution such as an immediate emergency fix and the ultimate transformation with a pathway to solve future problems. There may also be multiple dimensions to the desired solution.

You want to get your buyer talking about what is not perfect and what is his vision of the desired state. Questions to uncover the details of the situation will provide a clear picture of the current state and the gap between it and the desired state. Consider a doctor asking just one or two questions and then prescribing some cough syrup only to find that further digging would have uncovered you had a case of pneumonia. Your buyer wants you to dig deep and uncover the root cause and the complete situation.

2. The second phase is creating experiences that build trust. Take a minute and think about your friendships. Your deepest and longest relationships did not occur overnight. They developed over time. Experiences that you shared built trust and earned the relationship. Trust is developed when you demonstrate the customer comes first. What experiences have you provided to show the customer you mean what you say, and he does come first? Have you invested the time to understand the customer and communicate that you truly understand? Have you been consistent? Have you told engaging stories? Both personal and customer experience stories are a great way to demonstrate expertise without appearing to brag.
3. The next phase, which I have added, is sharing ideas and working together. In our current economy, creative ideas are valuable



currency. The idea has to be about something new that will benefit the buyer. It is not about the product but rather about transforming their business. View the idea from your buyer's customer's viewpoint. Then work with the buyer to connect the dots and help her see how your idea will benefit her customer and ultimately her company and its employees. Your solution is the way to implement the idea. Your interactions should be creative work sessions in which you and the buyer work together to define the solution. When the buyer co-creates the solution, she will take ownership of its success.

4. The next phase, again my add, is to motivate the customer to take action by translating the value to his company. This is one of the phases where dazzling dialogue inspires the buyer. By painting a vivid picture of how the solution will be of value to the customer, his company and his customers, you will motivate the buyer to take action. This is also a phase where the power of good business storytelling inspires and persuades buyers to take action.
5. The final phase is post-sale reinforcement and enhancement. It isn't a true transformation if it doesn't last. Often people and companies return to old habits. Salespeople return to old processes when the habits learned in training are not coached and reinforced. Companies have kaizen weekends when they begin their Six Sigma Lean transformation, but without follow up and reinforcement, the processes quickly degenerate, and they are back to the old way of doing things. The same is true for dieters, golfers, exercise programs, and people recovering from addictions. Just as the GlaxoSmithKline smoking cessation program achieved more sustained success with its multifaceted program, your buyer can achieve sustained success if you provide a similar program.



So now is the time to create a strategy that includes experiences, and dazzling dialogues that lead to transformation. I've posted a PDF of a high-level strategic plan. As I discuss more about the elements in today's podcast, I'll post more detailed forms. They will help you assess your opportunities, create, and implement transformation strategies that lead to more sales.

Well, that wraps up our podcast for today. Look for our blog posts and podcasts as well as our upcoming course on Presentation Skills and Storytelling for Business.

Thanks to my business partner, producer, and audio engineer John Switzer, for his excellent work with me on today's podcast. Join us next time when I'll share more hints and tips. I appreciate your feedback so please send your questions, comments or topic suggestions to me at Phyllis@salestrainingolutions.com.

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Thanks for listening!

For more information on the experience economy read: Pine, Buddie Joseph., and James H. Gilmour. *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*. Harvard Business School Press.