

Workplace
Wisdom
For
9 To Thrive

*Proven tactics and hacks
to get ahead in today's workplace*

Nina Sunday

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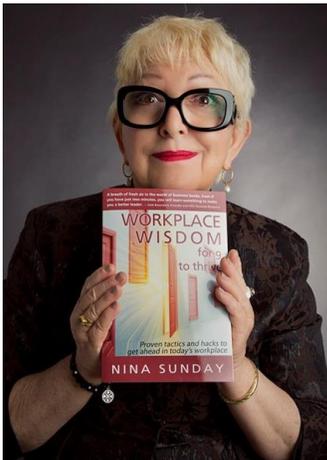
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Nina Sunday, CSP*

BA, Dip Ed, Grad Cert (AustFilmTVRadioSchl)

* Certified Speaking Professional



- Nina Sunday, speaker, facilitator, author on workplace know-how
- 1990, founded Brainpower Training
- pioneered Speed Reading and Memory training Australia-wide
- Won *Innovation in Learning* award from the Australian Institute of Training and Development
- Authored five training videos on workplace know-how
- Member: Mensa Australia
- Past State President and board member Professional Speakers Australia

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INTRODUCTION

Predictions around disruption to the world of work declare there is a new work order. Young people today may have 17 jobs in five different careers. Portfolio careers are on the rise i.e. not one job, one employer, but multiple jobs and employers, perhaps over more than one profession.

In a tech world, it's high social skills that help you stand out and get ahead. The best managers are outstanding communicators who know how to lead a team, collaborate with a diverse range of people and able to influence peers and customers to take action. They know it's not what you say but how you say it that makes the difference. Word choice and how we use language impacts the way we persuade others. In the age of disruption, being adept at human interaction is rewarded with higher wages.

Being average at your job is over. Not being interdisciplinary can harm your career. To thrive in a rapidly changing world, managers and teams need to continuously improve all aspects of their workplace know-how: the art of communication and influence, productivity, sales and service, leading people and creating a conscious and transparent workplace culture.

To future-proof your employability in a VUCA world, (short for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), constant reinvention is the key to keeping up, evolving and staying relevant. Your job IS change. It's up to you to stay change agile and continuously grow and reboot your brain. I trust this book will help you achieve the getting of workplace wisdom.

How to use this book

For managers

Each chapter is a stand-alone piece of micro-learning. Copy a chapter to distribute to your team and invite them to read before the next team meeting. You'll find a list of trigger questions in the article *How to Brainstorm* within the *Stay Curious* section, such as:

- What can we **start** doing?

- What can we **stop** doing?
- What can we do **more of**?
- What can we do **less of**?
- What can we **improve**?

And when you've captured in writing a wish-list of next actions, then rate each suggestion as an A, B, C or D according to its priority, for example:

- A. low effort, high payoff – do first
- B. low effort, low payoff – do next
- C. high effort, high payoff – just get started with the first action-step
- D. high effort, low payoff – don't bother

For individual contributors

Show this book to your manager and volunteer to copy a chapter to send around, with your manager's blessing, to team members with the invitation to read then participate in an ideas discussion at the next team meeting.

You might like to suggest your manager leads that discussion, or if they decline, offer to do so yourself. At the meeting, use the trigger questions and record each suggestion in writing as they come up. Allocate a specific time. After idea generation, go back to quickly rate each suggestion as an A, B, C or D priority.

By you taking the initiative this way, (where there's a positive workplace culture), it will likely identify you as a high-potential team member destined for leadership. (However, if this suggestion is not well-received, ask yourself what can be done to make the culture more conducive to growth and learning; or was it perhaps the manner in which you suggested you take the initiative?)

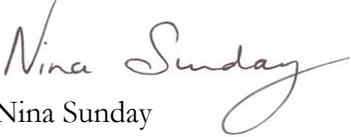
Always be reading

To grow your workplace wisdom read a non-fiction book (digital or print or listen to an audiobook) at least 10 minutes a day. Read at least one book a month, 12 books a year. See the article *Read Your Way to the Top* in the

Gather Wisdom section of this book for reasons to read every day. Leaders are readers. Be a reader.

Feel free to stay in touch by visiting the contact page at www.brainpowertraining.com.au and sharing your thoughts.

The way we did business five years ago can't be the way we do business in the next five. Constant reinvention is the key.


Nina Sunday

Skyrocket
your sales

DO YOU ASK ENOUGH DISCOVERY QUESTIONS WHEN SELLING?

Whether dealing with a customer or a colleague, it pays to ask questions before jumping to conclusions. No matter what your role, seek first to understand by asking questions. Questions help you avoid making incorrect assumptions.

What's the best way to handle an incoming sales enquiry over the phone? Do you open the conversation with a pitch, or do you take time to first discover their needs by asking questions? Do you take time to diagnose what is the real problem rather than rush into offer a solution too soon?

Most salespeople sell products rather than sell a solution. And the best way to diagnose a solution is to stay curious and ask powerful questions.

There's an art to phrasing questions.

In this article we'll explore the best way to create questions, how to ask them, including how to prime your brain before you even take that call, so you ask the right questions in the right order.

Why Ask Questions?

Questions are engaging. To answer a question requires your prospect to converse with you. It gets the conversational ball rolling and opens up the channels of communication.

Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, (1875–1961), refers to 'positive transference'⁽¹⁾, the notion that once someone opens up about their problems or challenges, they direct positive feelings towards their listener, someone who 'understands'. This positive attachment means you become their trusted advisor; cultivates the hope that you will come through with a solution to their situation.

Avoid Talking 'At'

Offering a solution too soon often means you are talking 'at' people about your product or service; you're trying to get them to fit into your solution.

But the moment you say, ‘*Tell me about the problem*’ or ‘*How long has that been happening?*’ you demonstrate you want to get under the surface and truly understand the situation. You’re cultivating the perception you’ll come up with a tailored solution.

During that opening conversation you can ask, ‘Does it make sense to look at the actual issues you want to solve first, then we can see if we’re a good fit.’ The impression you want to give is, ‘I don’t assume I can help you. Let’s first find out what your challenges and issues are; then we can determine if we are a good fit.’ Not only does that approach suggest you are not ‘desperate’ for the business, but also that you don’t automatically say yes to every request for assistance.

This generates trust.

What Questions To Ask?

You might have heard about the difference between open and closed questions? A closed question is one where the answer is either yes or no. We sometimes fall into the trap of asking closed questions. But if you open the conversation with an open question such as, ‘*Tell me about why you’ve contacting us today,*’ or ‘*Tell me about the challenges you’re experiencing.*’

This approach is superior to greeting a prospect with a pitch.

Framing Questions

Don’t just ask them, ‘How long has this been going on?’, add a pain word for emphasis, e.g. ‘How frustrated are you by how long this has been going on?’

More Pain Words

Do you ever feel uneasy when . . . ?

Are you worried by . . . ?

Are you struggling to . . . ?

These pain words emphasise the pain of not taking action, which leads to an opportunity to offer your solution down the track.

What-to-say Guide

I don't call it a script; I call it a what-to-say guide. Use a list of questions using conversational wording as a checklist to guide you through a diagnostic process.

And it is only a guide. Many times it feels right to ask questions out of the usual order and use whatever wording feels natural at the time.

Whether over the phone or face-to-face, prospects don't mind if you ask a series of 'get to know' questions. They feel listened to.

Over The Phone

My question checklist is a simple Word table, with a question in the left hand column, and space in the right hand column to insert the response. Using a headset to keep my hands free, I can simply type in the answers as they speak.

Face-to-face

If meeting in person, I take along a printout of my list of questions and handwrite the answers in the right hand blank column with a pen. (In the past I trialled, during face-to-face meetings, to type their answers directly onto my device. I felt a little silly, like I was typing a transcript of an interrogation. The handwritten document is the way to go; it feels more 'personal'.)

Action

1. Use conversational language.
2. Call it a 'diagnostic'.
3. It's okay to tell them you are writing notes as we go, so if they do decide to go ahead, you have it captured. Save these diagnostic notes in your client folder or CRM to refer to later.
4. To improve your chances of making the sale, summarise the key ideas and add it to your proposal.

One option — before sending your proposal — send first only their ‘confidential brief’. You can ask them to confirm you captured it correctly. You are drip-feeding them your information which foreshadows the arrival of the proposal.

TOP 8 MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN SELLING

Here are some errors people make when selling.

Mistake #1. Not Asking Enough Discovery Questions

Research shows a salesperson should encourage the prospect to speak, not even 50/50, but more than the salesperson!

By asking questions you’re engaging your customer in a conversation. The worst thing you can do is to rush in with a solution and start telling your customer about your product.

Mistake #2. Being ‘Busy’ Instead Of Contacting Customers

One of the biggest mistake salespeople make is getting distracted by activity or ‘being busy’. It might be spending time on a proposal or fulfillment of an order. Are you getting distracted from customer contact by secondary activities?

Call reluctance is being busy with other things other than picking up the phone to call a prospect because of some, often sub-conscious, emotional hesitation. Any time you’re not talking to a customer — phone, face-to-face or email — you are not engaged in *income-generating* activities. If you notice a pattern of avoiding proactive customer contact, ask yourself, ‘*Am I suffering from (what’s known as) call reluctance?*’ And be honest with yourself.

The biggest pitfall for anyone involved in sales is convincing themselves that staying ‘busy’ leads to a sale. Customer contact leads to sales.

When it comes to drafting proposals, avoid perfectionism and get them out quickly so you can move forward to the next follow-up.

The 1 – 7 Method

One way to ensure you fit in your follow-ups is to decide on a number of contacts you're willing to commit to contacting, every business day, come what may. I work with seven.

At start of 'Sacred Contact Time', I write in my daybook numbers 1 through to 7, vertically, down the left hand side. Next I focus on contacting seven priority prospects — whether by email or phone.

If there are 20+ business days in a month, that's 140 touches. That keeps sales momentum going.

Mistake #3. Giving Up Too Soon

So many salespeople give up at the first 'no' or '*we haven't had time to consider it yet.*'

A customer might need eleven touches — eleven contacts from you — before they say yes. If you give up and don't call back after touch number ten, you've lost the sale!

Stay In Touch During the Indecision Period

Sometimes it's all about timing. For some prospects, it's not 'no' but '*not yet.*' If you stay in touch even when they tell you something else has come up, or we can't move forward, who will they think of when suddenly it comes back to being a priority?

Mistake #4. Not Describing 'WIIFM' — What's In It For Me

When mentioning a product feature it's important to also add, '*... what that means to you is ...*' or '*... which means you won't ever have to ...*'

Remember to add the benefit every time you mention a feature of a product or service.

Mistake #5. Not Qualifying

Are you talking to the decision-maker? Are there multiple decision-makers? Remember to ask, '*Is there anyone else involved in making the decision?*' Offer to teleconference with all decision-makers.

(It might make sense to get your own web teleconference account for this purpose.)

Mistake #6. Not Managing Buyer Resistance

Create a what-to-say guide of replies to typical customer objections. Don't accept no; find ways to keep the conversation going.

Mistake #7. Not Asking For The Order

In this customer-savvy world, it's not about hard sell or asking closing questions any more.

A simple question like:

- 'So would you like to take the next step?'
- 'How would you like to move forward?'
- 'It makes sense to me to place an order, what do you think?'

posed at the right time can advance the sale and make a difference.

Mistake #8. Not Giving Post-sale Customer Service

Many salespeople get distracted by the next incoming enquiry and completely neglect a profitable area of repeat business — existing customers.

Existing customers are five to seven times more profitable than marketing to new customers. To forget about post-sale customer service is losing an opportunity to cross-sell, upsell and repeat sell.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO CALL PROSPECTS?

To identify days of the week and times of day that generate highest connection rate, Boston-based Insight Squared analysed thousands of sales phone calls.⁽²⁾

Best Time

Their research pinpointed best time of day is between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Once upon a time, conventional wisdom was to ring early, 8:00 am to 9:00 am, to reach decision makers before reception starts answering the phone. But these days, don't you find their voicemail is on? They won't pick up the phone at 8:00 am. And 9:00 am is still too early.

At 9:00 am the work day is starting in earnest. People are busy checking emails, meeting with staffers, getting the team rolling. People have to be receptive when you contact them, and research shows they're receptive between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. So it's all in the timing.

Best Day

And best day of the week with the highest connect rate? Research indicates Tuesday. Wednesday is next best, followed by Monday, then Thursday, then Friday.

How can we apply this information?

If you are a business development professional, would you suggest a face-to-face meeting at their office on a Tuesday? If that's your best day to MAKE appointments, why would you be DOING appointments on that day? (Unless of course the client specifically requests that day for your meeting.)

Knowing Tuesday is the best contact day, preserve that day for in-office phone or email contact. Similarly, knowing Friday or Thursday are worse for reaching your prospect, schedule your out of office appointments on those days. You can orchestrate weekly activities around best days and times.

Case Study

Let me give you an example of how some salespeople, left unmonitored, do what they *feel* like doing, instead of doing what's best for getting results.

I was leading sales training in Melbourne with a telemarketing team and asked, *'What's the best time of day to connect with the people on your list?'* After discussion we settled on 10:00 am to 12:15 pm, then 2:15 pm to 04:15 pm.

I then asked, 'What time do you go to lunch?'

One staffer revealed she went to lunch after 2:00 pm each day. Why? Because she preferred lunch between 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm.

We went deeper.

‘So, you’re continuing to call prospects through the standard lunch hour, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm, a time of day with a lower connect rate? Then at 2:00 pm, when people are coming back from lunch, that’s when you take your lunch?’

By shining a light on unthinking, habitual behaviour she was able to see it was unproductive and commit to moving her lunch break forward.

Sacred Contact Time

In our business we make 9:00 am to 12:15 pm and 2:15 pm to 4:15 pm Sacred Contact Time. This means working with the calendar of scheduled follow-ups. And a follow-up may be a short nudge email or telephone call.

Outside of those times we fit in operational and admin tasks, compile proposals, or meet as a team. The key contact hours of the day are devoted to staying in touch with the people that matter, our valued prospects and clients.

So, what’s true in your business?

Action

1. Analyse best days and times of day to reach prospects and clients by phone and/or email.
2. Does your sales team focus energy on contacting to best days and best times of day?
3. Display a sign, ‘Sacred Contact Time’, to focus attention and productivity.
4. Make a distinction between sales-generating behaviour and admin support tasks.

SALES HACK: WHAT IS THE BEST OPENING QUESTION?

Phoning a client, have you ever felt as if you were an interruption; it was something about their hurried pace or tone of voice? With email, your recipient chooses when to check their inbox, but a phone call is an interruption.

Therefore it's only courteous to first ask, before going into the reason for calling, *'Is this a good time to call?'* But consider what the response might be if you ask instead, *'Is this a bad time to call?'*

Good time vs bad time — which is better? Author Thomas Freese⁽³⁾ recommends *'Is this a bad time to call?'*, so I tried it. Yes, it works like a charm.

In marketing and in sales — test, test, test, test, test. If you ask *'Is this a good time to call?'*, you've left it open for them to reply, *'No it isn't. Can you call back another time please?'* You've dialled but you haven't progressed the conversation, or the relationship. In sales this is what Neil Rackham, author of *Spin Selling*, calls a 'continuation'.⁽⁴⁾

Compare with, *'Is this a **bad** time to call?'* Even if it is an inconvenient time, you may find the likely response is, 'It's always a bad time, so go ahead anyway.' An advancement!

As a positive person, my natural inclination used to be to open a call with, *'Is this a **good** time to call?'* But after testing both versions, I'm now convinced, *'Is this a **bad** time?'* is more likely to gain a conversation then and there. This one little word change can make a big difference. Freese argues it taps into people's natural inclination to mismatch.

Regardless, if they can't accept your call then and there, remember to ask, *'When should I call back, please?'* When they respond with a time, you now have permission to phone back. An advancement.

This one sales hack, asking *'Is this a bad time to call?'* reduces phone tag, saves you time and unnecessary redialling, and ultimately advances the sale.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE HOLLYWOOD BRUSH-OFF

Do you follow-up possible new clients after they request information? Here's an easy way to keep the door open to an ongoing relationship until the time is right for them to say 'yes'.

Perhaps you've experienced a possible new client shut the door to telephone follow-up with a brush-off statement like 'I'll contact you after I've read your information.' That's what I call the Hollywood objection, 'Don't call us, we'll call you.' After auditioning, aspiring actors in Hollywood were often given this cliché response.

If you respond with, 'OK, I'll wait to hear from you then,' you haven't asked for permission to contact again.

Instead, use this 3-step method whenever you get a DCUWCU — don't call us, we'll call you — response, so you easily gain consent to stay in contact.

1. *Say 'That's Fine.'*

Your automatic reaction should be to agree by saying, 'that's fine.'

2. *Ask Permission.*

'And if I haven't heard from you in say, 10 days, is it ok to call you then?'

Start with 'and'; never use 'but' (which sounds oppositional and creates resistance.)

Judge the right timeframe. It might be one month or three months, whatever feels right.

Nine out of ten clients will say yes, unless they absolutely have zero interest and tell you again, 'No, please don't call.' That's good to know; you can simply take them off your call-back list.

3. *When You Call Back, Remind Them They Gave You Permission.*

'When we last spoke in < May >, you suggested I phone around this time regarding . . .' Now when they hear from you, you are not interrupting them, but following their instructions. This is the elegance of gaining permission.

How you end a sales call determines whether the next time you contact your prospect they'll be happy to hear from you or whether they'll consider your call an interruption.

Selling today is about continuously asking your customer for permission to stay in contact, so they expect to hear from you, keeping the door open to an ongoing relationship.

Action

1. Remember to end every phone call referring to the best timeframe to contact again, and wait for them to agree.
2. Then make sure you make a note of the agreed call-back date in client history and schedule the call-back on your calendar.

HOW TO CULTIVATE A VOICE PEOPLE TRUST

How important is your voice when selling? Do you build trust with a voice that displays energy, confidence and reassurance?

Does a high-achieving salesperson use their voice more effectively over the phone?

Salespeople with more inflection in their voices make more sales over the phone. A bright voice with energy and vocal variety is more persuasive than a boringly flat monotone.

How can we optimise our sales voice for the phone and become more polished in our vocal patterns? Let's consider these five vocal arts:

- inflection
- tone
- tempo
- pitch
- enunciation

1. Inflection

Inflection is the rise and fall of your voice when you speak. Imagine the sound of your voice drawn as a line graph.

A monotone forms a shallow wave line. A voice with energy and interest has a wider range, higher highs and lower lows.

Actors inflect all over the voice spectrum and have energy and drama in their voices.

What is your vocal range? Does your voice have energy?

Exercise 1

Here's an exercise to improve inflection.

Read a children's book aloud and over-inflect. Exaggerate it. The kids will love it, and you'll expand your vocal range at the same time. (The famous English thespian, Sir Laurence Olivier, as a rehearsal exercise, used to exaggerate words and actions of a script.)

Put more energy into it, inflect more, add more emotion and feeling.

2. Tone

'Selling is the transference of feeling', according to master sales trainer, Zig Ziglar.⁽⁵⁾ But a voice with vocal variety is only half the equation.

It helps to believe in your product. Enthusiasm permeating your words adds emotional content.

One way to generate passion is to find a BIG REASON why your product or service benefits people.

For example, you are not simply selling stainless steel cookware, you are also improving people's health and wellbeing by moving them away from aluminium cookware to beneficial stainless steel.

Instead of simply selling stocks and shares, you are ensuring your client's financial future.

If you are only lukewarm about your product, that comes through when selling on the phone. Believe in the big picture benefit of your product so your passion shines through.

Exercise 2

Repeat the name of your organisation aloud in each of the following ways:

- angrily
- shyly

- laughingly
- despairingly
- passionately
- brightly

Did you notice there's a wide vocal range depending on the emotion?

Consider your voice as a musical instrument. And let enthusiasm and passion come through when speaking to clients.

3. *Tempo*

A branch of psychology called neuro-linguistic programming or NLP tells us that you create rapport when you actively listen and slow down or speed up to match the pace and style of the person you're talking to. So it's not whether your voice is too fast or too slow. Be flexible enough to speak a little faster or slower depending on the dialogue.

4. *Pitch*

Voices are high or low. Try humming a few bars of a simple song. That's your natural pitch. Now speak to clients in your natural pitch.

5. *Enunciation*

Do people not catch what you say and ask you to repeat? It could be you are mumbling and have poor diction.

To resolve this, open your mouth wider when speaking and pronounce your words more distinctly.

Do you drop your consonants? In the following sentence, make sure you emphasise the ends of words (in bold) so they can be heard:

'I'm wondering **what** you thought about the information **I** sent you?'

Good diction improves understandability, especially if you have a different regional accent.

Exercise 3

And if you observe you slur an occasional word, here's a simple exercise to fix that. Put your tongue in your cheek and say this tongue twister, 'red leather, yellow leather', once or twice each side.

6. *Breathe*

To increase his lung capacity for singing, Frank Sinatra used to hold his breath while swimming underwater.

Exercise 4

Here's a vocal exercise to improve your resonance.

Take a breath, then say each of these vowel sounds while pushing the air from the diaphragm, (the muscle below your lungs).

- ay
- ee
- ah
- oh
- oo

This exercise makes your voice strong and sure. To avoid your voice trailing off in places, remember to deep breathe when you are on the phone.

7. *Pauses*

If there's silence after you ask a question, stay comfortable with the pause. Your prospect is probably thinking.

And if you've asked a closing question (a question to which the answer suggests they are going ahead with an order) then silence is a good thing. Don't break it. Let them think it through uninterrupted.

Action

Here are eight ways to improve your tone of voice:

1. **Record** your voice and visualise the vocal range, the rise and fall. It is a boringly flat monotone? Or does it have energy and vocal variety?
2. **Listen** to radio announcers. Visualise the rise and fall of their voice as a line graph and notice their wide vocal range.
3. **Smile** when you answer the phone, because a smile can be heard through the phone.
4. As a way to gain rapport, remember to **match** your speed and volume to whoever you are talking. Practice varying speed, tone, inflection and volume for vocal variety.
5. **Gesture.** Wear a headset so your hands are free to gesture, which animates the voice. Or sometimes stand up when on the phone.
6. While on the phone, take frequent sips of **water**. It lubricates your throat and avoids sounding croaky.
7. Display **positive statements** at your workstation, such as:
 - I enjoy talking to new people.
 - I represent a great company and a great line of products.
8. Write out the **big picture benefit** of your product or service.

HOW TO CRAFT A CONVINCING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Have you ever had a sales prospect tell you, *'I now have to convince my manager'* (or boss or head office, or whoever). As a buyer, do you ever have to convince another stakeholder?

When multiple decision-makers are involved, do you know how to calculate an accurate and plausible Return On Investment (ROI) for a product or service?

More sales are lost, not to a competitor, but to doing nothing. One way to move a decision forward is to include an ROI statement in your proposal.

But Business Case templates can be complex and highly structured. What's an example of a sales technique with a simple and quick cost/benefit statement that's easy to calculate and easy to understand?

Scenario 1

Library IT Upgrade

If calculating the benefit of upgrading a library's IT services you might focus on a measurable business problem effecting productivity; time spent by librarians looking for user IDs.

To illustrate how much time is being lost by librarians, (when they could be performing other more useful tasks), you might write:

THE BUSINESS CASE

— If 100 librarians each waste 10 minutes per day looking for user IDs

— that's 16.6 hours of time lost per day
 x \$37 per hour estimated hourly rate
 = \$616 cost per day

— annual lost revenue: \$616 per workday
 x 235 workdays in a year
 = \$144,760 value of lost time per annum

If improved user ID process saves 50% of time, that's a saving of \$72,380.

ROI (RETURN ON INVESTMENT) FORMULA:

Gain minus Cost divided by Cost
 (Gain – Cost) ÷ Cost

If to implement an improved process is \$20,000, then:

ROI formula:

$\frac{\text{Gain} - \text{Cost}}{\text{Cost}}$ or $\frac{\$72,380 - \$20,000}{\$20,000}$

ROI = 2.61 times or 261%

SUMMARY: For a once-off investment of \$20,000 (plus your implementation costs), you can expect to achieve a minimum annual Return on Investment of 261% which will effectively have paid for itself within 6 months.

*Scenario 2:
Presentation Skills Training*

If calculating the benefit of Presentation Skills training for sales representatives, you can draw attention to the value of extra sales due to improved confidence, authority and influence. You might write:

THE BUSINESS CASE

What is one extra sale per person worth in a year?

If, as a result of this training, 10 representatives present with more confidence, more authority and more influence to gain even one extra client each in the next 12 months, with average sale worth \$24,000*, then return in one year is potentially \$240,000.

*My average sale might be a bit high, or low, but whatever calculation you use should produce a significant result.

ROI (RETURN ON INVESTMENT) FORMULA:
Gain minus Cost divided by Cost
(Gain – Cost) ÷ Cost

If cost of training for two days is \$12,000 plus 10 salaries for two days (estimate \$11,550), then:

ROI formula:

$$\frac{\text{Gain} - \text{Cost}}{\text{Cost}} \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{\$240,000 - \$23,550}{\$23,550}$$

ROI = 9.19 times or 919%

SUMMARY: For a once-off investment of \$23,550, you can expect to achieve a minimum annual Return on Investment of 919% which will effectively have paid for itself within a couple of months.

If you then add a statement about *the risk of doing nothing*, you have just created a compelling business case for your prospect to make a decision.

What Is Soft ROI?

As well as hard ROI expressed as dollars, there's soft ROI — emotional benefits, such as:

- reduced stress and frustration
- improved customer service
- faster response
- improved morale.

SOCIAL PROOF AS A WAY TO NEGOTIATE

Can you think of a time when a client considered your product or service too expensive or not right or just had any reason not to proceed?

Here's a classic negotiation tactic that can influence your client to change their mind, yet still 'save face'. Imagine your customer says, 'We would like to go ahead and buy (your product or service), but it's more than our budget allows.'

Using the Feel-Felt-Found approach you might say:

1. 'I can understand how you might **feel** that way.
2. 'Many of our clients **felt** initially it was more than they wanted to spend.
3. But after they went ahead, they **found** it actually saved money on training, overtime, and shrinkage.'

Here's Another Scenario

A not-for-profit organisation seeks a regular monthly donation. They ask, 'Would you consider making a regular monthly gift of \$50 per month?' The possible new donor replies, 'Although I support what you do, I can't afford \$50 a month.'

Using feel-felt-found, the fundraiser replies,

1. 'I can understand how you might **feel** that way.
2. 'Many of our regular donors **felt** that way at first.
3. 'But they decided to give it a go anyway, on the understanding they can cancel their donation any time. And do you know what? They **found** over time, there always was enough money to continue their pledge.'

(Then ask a question. Pause for the answer.)

4. 'On the understanding you can cancel anytime, would you be willing to give it a go?'

Feel-Felt-Found Works More Often Than It Doesn't

There is a human need to belong, to heed the crowd. It's what Robert Cialdini calls, in his book, *Influence: The Psychology Of Persuasion*⁽⁶⁾, social proof. People do things they see other people doing.

Do you enter an empty restaurant, or one that is full of patrons? If you see a crowd gathered, does curiosity compel you to find out what the fuss is about? To test this out, try looking up into the sky in a public place. Notice how many others will then look up into the sky to see what you are seeing. It's a basic instinct.

A tip: Be careful how you say it. Don't say, *I know how you feel.*' This choice of words sometimes produces an angry response. You can't ever really know how another person feels. Say instead, *I can understand how you might feel that way.*' or, *I can imagine how you must feel.*'

Another Scenario

A customer is concerned if they purchase new technology it will be too complex and take too much time for team members to master. They might object with, *I think it's hard to understand and will take too long to get up to speed.*' Using feel-felt-found, you might respond with:

1. 'I can understand how you might **feel** that way, < name >.
2. 'Many of our clients **felt** the same way . . .
3. ' . . . until they started using the platform and **found** it quicker to master than they at first thought.'

What are typical objections with your product or service that could be successfully handled with the 'Feel-felt-found' approach?

e.g. Objection, 'It's too . . .'

Now respond with,

Feel: 'I can understand why you'd **feel** that way . . .

Felt: 'Many of our clients **felt** . . .

Found: 'But what they **found** was . . .

Having a structured verbal template helps you think on your feet and sound confident when a prospect gives you a reason not to take the next step.

REFERENCES

The quotes, anecdotes and ideas described in this book were accumulated from a variety of sources over a number of years. While we've made every attempt to fully attribute the origin of each of these items, the author may have been unable to list some sources in the detail preferred.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nina Sunday is an international speaker, educator and author. Professional Speakers Australia awarded her CSP designation (Certified Speaking Professional), held by only 12% of professional speakers worldwide.

After working in education, the performing arts, sales and television, Nina founded Australian training company, Brainpower Training, and over two decades grew a network of Facilitators delivering business skills to Top 500 companies, SMEs (small-medium enterprises) and government.

After a decade niching in Speed Reading and Memory, she spent the next 17 years developing and delivering programs in Productivity, Communication, Presentation Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, Change and Sales. Nina Sunday is the Workplace Maven, empowering managers and teams sharpen their workplace know-how for different thinking, better results.

Qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma in Education, plus graduating in Direction and Production Management from the three-year program of the Australian Film, TV and Radio School.

After more than three decades based in Sydney, Nina recently relocated to discover a new-found love of her hometown of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia.