

Communicate Value to Your Targets

*Although you feel proud of the things you sell,
If their value is secret, they won't sell well.
So your job is explaining the reasons to buy,
When folks understand them, they'll give them a try.*

IN THE TWO PRECEDING CHAPTERS, we focused on two essential comfort zone strategies: developing confidence in your ability to offer value, and identifying quality targets. Now, we turn our attention to what we believe is the core of selling in your comfort zone: communicating value to quality targets. To sell in your comfort zone, you must develop communication strategies that give you a high expectation of safety and effectiveness.

Increase Your Expectation of Safety

In this chapter, we help you identify communication strategies that will increase your expectation of safety. Selling doesn't require the stereotypical behavior described in Chapter 2. You don't have to be pushy, sleazy, or abusive in any way. You don't have to feel awkward about selling. Rather, you have to learn how to communicate your ability to offer value. Communicating value gives you valid reasons for reaching out to your targets. It allows you to you feel good about yourself and proud of what you offer.

Increase Your Expectation of Effectiveness

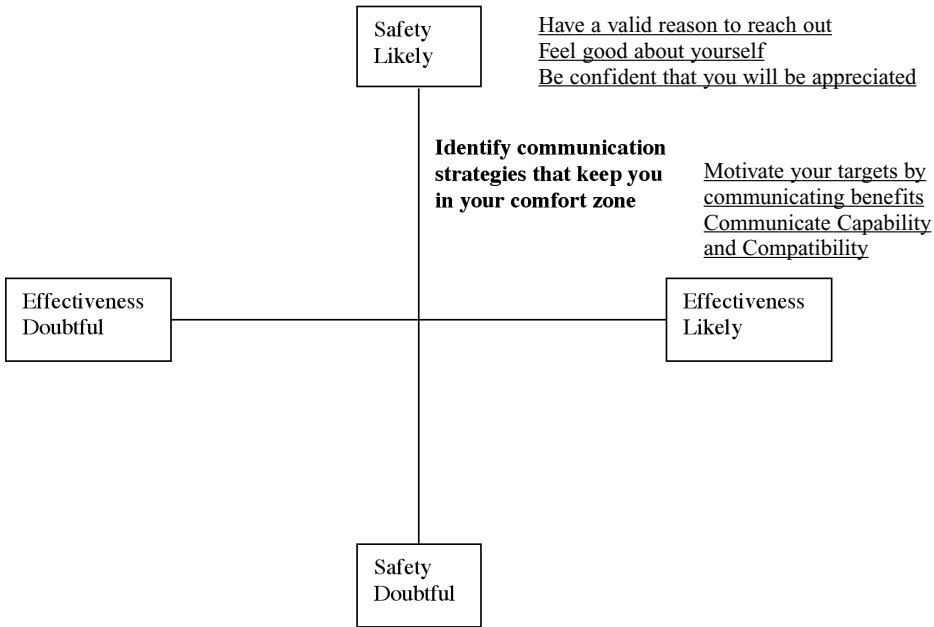
You can increase your expectation of effectiveness by communicating the benefits you offer. By communicating benefits, you

communicate two qualities that are particularly important for increasing your effectiveness: capability and compatibility.

Communicating capability is the process of inspiring confidence in your ability to help your targets. Communicating compatibility is the process of revealing your ability to work and communicate well with your targets. The more effective you are in communicating capability and compatibility, the more effective you will be in motivating your targets to hire you and refer you to their contacts.

The relationship between your comfort zone and comfortable communication strategies is reflected in Figure 4.

Figure 4



Review the Benefits You Offer

Before you can accurately communicate your ability to offer value, you must be clear about what that value is. Take a moment and review Chapter 4 and any notes you took which identify the benefits you offer.

Select the Benefits You Want to Communicate

Once you are clear about the benefits you offer, the next step is to decide which benefits you want to reveal. Keep in mind that whenever you communicate with someone, you reveal *something* about yourself. What you re-

veal may be positive or negative. It may be accurate or inaccurate. It may have been communicated intentionally or unintentionally. But, every communication reveals something. So, you may as well try to communicate the things you *want* people to know.

Think about the personal qualities you possess which you want your targets to notice. For example, you may want your targets to know that you are knowledgeable and skilled in your practice. Think about your systems—your guiding principles and procedures that insure quality service. From now on, every communication with your targets should have the goal of communicating these benefits, whether it is by phone, in-person, via the Internet, through your promotional materials, or through the media.

Three Mediums of Communication

There are three mediums for communicating the benefits you offer:

1. Your deeds
2. Your dialogue
3. Your documents

1. Your Deeds

The first medium for communicating value is your deeds or actions. It is often true that actions speak louder than words. Instead of merely talking about the value you offer, your actions allow people to experience it first hand. When people experience the value that you offer, they are more likely to understand and appreciate it.

Give “Value-in-Advance”

One of the most effective strategies for communicating value to your contacts is a strategy called “value-in-advance.” Ever since we began consulting our clients in 1985, “value-in-advance” has proven to be the most significant concept for professionals to promote their services both safely and effectively.

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“Value-in-Advance” is one of the most important strategies for selling in your comfort zone.

“Value-in-advance” is the strategy of offering something for free as a way of allowing your targets to experience a sample of the benefits that you offer. If you were selling a product, then “value-in-advance” might be a sample of the product.

When Gillette Mach III came out, they sent out free razors and blades. Grocery stores regularly give away sample foods they want you to try. Giving free samples is a common retail marketing strategy. As a professional service provider, you should provide something of value that allows you to interact with your targets and paint a picture of what it is like to work with you.

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“Value-in-Advance”
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what it is like to work
with you.

We divide “Value-in-Advance” into five main categories:

- Education
- Entertainment
- Introductions
- Leadership
- Inspiration

You may recognize these categories from our discussion on added-benefits in Chapter 4. The difference here is that instead of giving additional benefits to current clients, your goal is to give value to prospects and other targets as a way of demonstrating to them what it is like to work with you.

Giving “value-in-advance” helps you sell in your comfort zone because it increases your expectations of safety and effectiveness.

Safety

A fundamental reason why professionals are uncomfortable with selling is that asking for business feels embarrassing. It can feel needy, pushy and greedy. There is the risk of rejection.

A way to overcome your discomfort is to have a comfortable reason for reaching out to your targets. Instead of asking for business, you can offer something in one of the five categories of “value-in-advance.”

Offer to provide some education. Conduct a complimentary seminar. Send an article that you have written.

Offer some entertainment. Invite someone to lunch or dinner. Invite people to participate in activities you enjoy.

Offer to introduce some of your contacts to each other. Look at your target list and identify the individuals who would benefit from meeting each other.

Take a leadership role. For example, volunteer for an assignment in your target’s organization. You may have targets who would appreciate your being of service to causes they support.

Inspire your targets. In Chapter 4, we defined inspiration as the ability to instill self-confidence. We gave examples of how to be inspirational. People crave inspiration in their lives. The more you can inspire your targets,

the more they will appreciate you and welcome your efforts to communicate with them.

By giving “value-in-advance” you are not directly asking for business and therefore, less likely to feel needy, pushy or greedy. Conversely, you will feel proud to reach out to your targets when you genuinely believe in the value you offer. When your targets perceive your offer as valuable, they are more likely to be receptive, and so the risk of rejection is minimized.

Effectiveness

In addition to reducing your embarrassment, “value-in-advance” is an effective strategy for motivating targets to hire you. We said earlier that your targets hire people they see as compatible and capable. Giving “value-in-advance” helps communicate compatibility and capability.

When you give a speech, you have an opportunity to reveal positive personal traits such as knowledge and expertise. Through your body language and your voice you can reveal qualities such as your energy, enthusiasm, confidence, and other positive personal traits that we described in Chapter 4.

These are qualities that you might otherwise feel awkward discussing. It sounds funny to say, “I’m smart. I’m energetic.” But, when you speak in public, these qualities can be revealed. In Skill Module 1, we provide many tips on how to reveal these traits through public speaking.

Entertainment helps you communicate compatibility. Doing fun things such as golf, tennis, or dining out with your targets helps you build rapport and reveal positive personal qualities.

Introducing quality people to each other communicates compatibility and capability. It demonstrates that you know quality people. And, as those people interact with each other, it strengthens their emotional connection to you.

There is no question that taking on a leadership role communicates compatibility and capability. When your targets see you in a position of authority, it communicates capability. Your leadership role may not have anything to do with your practice area. For example, the task of helping plan a fund-raising dinner may have nothing to do with what you do for a living. However, many of the qualities that are needed in leadership are the same as those required for your profession. You need to be organized, persistent, and energetic. When your targets see you as a capable leader, it is logical for them to assume that you are also capable in your line of work.

Being inspirational is an effective way of revealing positive personal qualities. It can reveal qualities such as compassion, empathy, good communication skills, and knowledge.

Other Benefits of “Value-in-Advance”

So far, we have described two main reasons why “value-in-advance” helps you sell in your comfort zone: valid reasons to communicate with your targets, and the ability to communicate the benefits you offer. There are other reasons why “value-in-advance” helps you sell in your comfort zone. In Chapter 7, you will see how “value-in-advance” helps you reveal your interest in doing business. In Chapter 8, you will see examples of how “value-in-advance” helps you comfortably meet new people. And, in Chapter 9, we show you how to use “value-in-advance” to stay in touch with your targets.

The Obstacles to “Value-in-Advance”

As with other selling strategies, there are obstacles to giving “value-in-advance.” Here are some common obstacles and suggestions for overcoming them.

The Fear of Public Speaking

Many people are uncomfortable with the thought of public speaking. The thought of getting up in front of an audience can be terrifying, especially if you don’t have much practice.

In Skill Module 1, we give you several tips for overcoming your fear of public speaking. However, we feel it worth mentioning now that our philosophy for overcoming your fear of speaking is based on writing quality content. The fear of public speaking comes from the fear being embarrassed in front of people. When you develop content that you are proud of, you are less likely to feel embarrassed when you present it.

In Skill Module 1, we will show you how to write speeches of which you can be proud. We also give you some tips on how to present yourself effectively. Once you are confident that your speech will be well-received, you will feel less afraid of embarrassment.

Too Many Seminars

Many people say that they don’t like the idea of conducting seminars because there are already too many competitors that do them. However, we believe that this is self-defeating thinking. Even if your competitors are actively giving seminars, it is unlikely that your targets have had their fill of

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Don’t let your competition own the seminar territory.

quality speakers and programs. If your competitors are doing seminars, it is because there is a good reason. By refraining from doing seminars, you are allowing them to own that territory.

Lack of Time

An obstacle for both speaking and writing is that they can require a lot of time. If you are busy, you may feel reluctant to pursue these tasks unless you are confident that they will be a wise investment of time. In Skill Modules 1, 2, and 3, we provide valuable tips for maximizing your success.

Lack of time is also an obstacle for leadership. Volunteering for committees can be time consuming. However, you need to consider the potential rewards. Many of our clients have become active in the trade groups of their clients and referral sources. In time, some of them went on to chair committees. One of our clients, who got referrals from lawyers, became president of his local bar association and generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in business.

In Chapters 5 and 8, we discuss strategies for selecting good targets to use your time wisely. In Skill Module 8, we give you tips for freeing up time.

Use your time wisely by selecting well-targeted organizations.

The Risk of Making Introductions

Many people are afraid to make introductions because of the possibility that the people you introduce may not get along. Or worse, they may do a deal that goes badly. It is important that when you make an introduction, you are proud of the people you are introducing. Also, you don't need to

When you make introductions, select people you are proud of.

make warranties. Rather, you should state that you are introducing people with the understanding that they get to know each other and decide for themselves if they feel comfortable working together.

Discomfort with Entertainment

Many people are reluctant to blend business and entertainment. You may not enjoy social interaction. It may feel awkward or insincere. You may be concerned that your targets will find it manipulative. And, you may not be confident that it justifies the cost. Here are some tips for overcoming your discomfort with entertainment.

1. Do things that you enjoy.
2. Get people to talk about themselves.
3. Reveal your interest in doing business.
4. Use entertainment when appropriate.
5. Make a cost-benefit analysis.

Do Things That You Enjoy

We always recommend that you blend your business entertainment with the activities you enjoy. We have had many clients who have thought of

themselves as social introverts but who have effectively used their hobbies and interests as a vehicle for entertaining their valued contacts.


We had a client who was an avid fisherman who took his business contacts on fishing trips. We had a client who used her love of playing the harp to invite prospects and clients to harp concerts in her home. We had a client who was passionate about wines and invited his contacts to local restaurants to sample wines and listen to wine-tasting experts.

We have had many clients on the boards of symphony orchestras, museums and theatres who have hosted special gatherings for their business contacts. Many of our clients who have children involved in school sporting activities have invited the parents of their children's teammates to barbecues as a way of bonding with the other parents.

The authors of this book love giving parties. One of our parties was in an art gallery. At one point during the party, guests were furnished with laser tag pistols. It was fascinating to see successful lawyers, doctors, accountants, and other professionals running around and hiding behind sculptures like little kids shooting their laser tag pistols at each other. The more fun or interesting your idea, the more people will be likely to attend, remember, and appreciate your invitation.

Your entertainment idea doesn't have to be a hobby or a passion. You may think of a creative idea that people would enjoy. One of our clients hired a famous dessert chef to give a presentation on chocolate desserts at a local cooking school. We had another client who asked a friend who was an authority on "Ancient Spice Routes in the Middle East" to give a lecture on a recent excavation that he had led. Over two hundred people came to hear the presentation. Not only was the evening a success, our client developed a lot of new business.

You do not need the personality of an outgoing socialite to entertain. Once you learn that selling can be fun, you are more likely to feel enthusiastic about using entertainment in the sales process.

 Comfort zone task—Make a list of fun activities you would like to share with your targets.

Get People to Talk about Themselves

The question comes up frequently, "When you entertain someone for business (for example, when you take someone to lunch) what do you talk about?" A good technique is to get your contacts talking about themselves. Given the chance, most people love to talk about themselves. You simply have to develop the skill of asking good questions.

You are not required to ask people for business. You don't have to boast about your service. Don't push yourself to sell. Your primary goal in entertaining people is to build rapport and trust. This not only takes the

pressure off of you to be a good conversationalist, but it can actually be a more effective strategy for building rapport and trust.

Many years ago, Dale Carnegie, a famous author and teacher, inspired millions in his book “How to Win Friends and Influence People.” (Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1981). Carnegie frequently made the point that becoming genuinely interested in other people is the most effective technique for building rapport. He says, “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.”

The key is “genuine” interest. Don’t try to feign interest. That will only feel manipulative and insincere. And, people can often see through a veiled attempt at interest. Find something about the person that genuinely interests you. Then, the interaction will be enjoyable for both of you.

Reveal Your Interest in Doing Business

Another question that often arises is, “How do you use entertainment without the risk of either feeling or appearing to be insincere?” You may have friends who are in a position to help you generate business. For example, you may know people who work for companies that need your services. But, there is the risk that approaching your friends may inadvertently damage your friendship. Some of your friends might think that you were only using them to get business.

The solution is to reveal your intentions to do business. You explain that there is a business component to your relationship. You might say something along the lines of: “I would like to invite you to lunch to talk about business.” There are other effective techniques for revealing your interest in doing business that we discuss in Chapter 7 that will minimize the risk of your appearing insincere.

Use Entertainment When Appropriate

While entertainment is a highly common and absolutely appropriate technique for generating business, not everyone thinks it is appropriate. Some people are annoyed by vendors offering to take them to lunch. We had a client who said that one of his clients made it clear that he only wanted good work and no entertainment.

Some businesses actually prohibit entertainment by vendors. They don’t want their employees selecting vendors because of personal benefit.

One solution to this obstacle is to not use entertainment for people who don’t approve of it. Instead, look for people who are open to it. And, for those people who don’t want to be entertained, find some other method of value to offer that they would appreciate. Many companies like seminars because of their educational value.

Make a Cost-Benefit Analysis

Of course, as with other forms of “value-in-advance,” entertainment requires time and expense. So, you want to maximize its value to you. Here are some pros and cons of business entertainment methods.

Breakfast is a relatively quick and easy method to get to know someone, and you can get back to your office early so that the meal doesn’t interfere with your day. Lunches are probably the most popular, because most people have lunch. But, a drawback of lunches is that they can take time out of the middle of the day.

Dinners are more expensive and time consuming, especially since you may be inviting spouses and dining at nice restaurants. But, with important targets, it may be worth the expense. One way to keep the dinner cost down is to entertain at home. An additional benefit of home entertainment is that it is more personal. You can reveal more about who you are in your home environment. People coming to your home can see your photographs, meet your family, and see your home. In this way, they can get a clearer sense of who you are and feel more connected to you.

Hosting large events can be a highly economical way to entertain. As you add people to your events, your cost per person often goes down. An added benefit of parties is that your contacts can meet each other. A drawback is that they may be difficult to plan. You have to select a venue and find a time when most people can attend.

Conclusion to “Value-in-Advance”

“Value-in-advance” is a proven method for safely and effectively communicating the value you offer through your deeds or actions. It gives you a valid reason to call your targets and it communicates the benefits you offer. Rather than merely saying that you offer value, it proves it. People can experience first-hand what it is like to work with you before they hire you.

2. Your Dialogue

Your dialogue is the second medium for communicating value. As with “value-in-advance,” your dialogue can help you sell in your comfort zone. It can give you valid reasons for communicating with your targets and it can communicate the benefits you offer.

In Chapter 7, we show you how to use dialogue to develop valid reasons for communicating with your targets. In this chapter, we focus on dialogue that communicates benefits.

We focus on five methods of dialogue that help sell in your comfort zone. These are:

1. Describe your methodology.
2. Share your experiences.
3. Ask insightful questions.
4. Describe the obstacles your prospects are facing.
5. Quote fees in relation to benefits.


Describe Your Systems

One method of dialogue is to describe your systems that we outlined in Chapter 4—your guiding principles, policies and procedures, staff, training, and technology. An example we gave was the 24-hour call-back rule. As a way of instilling confidence, you could explain this rule. Instead simply saying that you are responsive, it feels less like bragging, and is more convincing to say that you have a rule that all calls are returned within a 24-hour period.

Share Your Experiences

Another method of dialogue is to give examples of experiences in which you helped other clients. However, make sure that you don't reveal confidential client information. Even the name of your client may be confidential in certain circumstances. Examples are more effective in revealing your experience than simply stating that you have experience. People are engaged by stories, and they create greater confidence in your skill.

We recommend that you spend some time thinking about situations in which you helped your clients. This will help you to be prepared when prospects have problems you have experience fixing. Instead of saying, "I have experience with that," you will have concrete examples of how you helped someone with a similar problem.

 Comfort zone task—Accumulate stories about how you have helped clients solve problems.

Ask Insightful Questions

Asking insightful questions is a third method of dialogue. When you are meeting with a prospect, instead of telling them how knowledgeable you are and how much experience you have, ask questions that reveal your in-depth understanding of their problems. Insightful questions are more effective in revealing your knowledge than boasting about it. After they answer your questions, then you can give your opinion about how you would solve their problems.

Describe the Obstacles Your Prospects Are Facing

It is helpful to your prospects to explain the obstacles they are facing. It reveals an in-depth knowledge of their situations. It demonstrates empathy. It gives them hope that solutions are available. And, it positions you as someone who can assist them.

Quote Fees in Relation to Benefits

Quoting fees is another part of your dialogue. When you quote fees, it is important to quote them in relation to the benefits that you offer. If people are going to spend money, they have to feel confident that they will receive sufficient benefits. So, when you quote your fees, don't give your rates in a vacuum. Remember to precede your fees with a reminder of the benefits you offer. If possible, describe the monetary benefits your clients can expect. Explain how much you can help your prospects either earn or save. And, discuss the non-monetary benefits, which are your systems and any added-benefits you regularly offer. Discuss your methodologies and resources. And, if possible, describe how your services are differentiated from the competition.

Remember that value is a ratio of benefits to fees. The more benefits that you describe, the more likely your prospects will perceive to be getting a good deal.

3. Your Documents

The third medium for communicating value is your documents, including your brochure, Web site, bios, published articles, and newsletters. These techniques will be discussed at length in *Skill Module 4: Tips for documenting the value you offer*.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to help you identify strategies for communicating value to your targets. There are three mediums of communication: your deeds, your dialogue, and your documents. In using these three mediums, you can develop strategies that will increase your expectations of safety and effectiveness.