



STOKE B2B SERIES

EPISODE 4

Sales Motivation States

At Onemata, as we have previously discussed in the Unknown, we prefer to make “closer to the close calls” versus cold calls, and one of the key factors in determining if you are entering the sales process closer-to-the-close is the prospect’s current state of mind.

We like to visualize prospects as being primarily in one of the five following states of urgency:

Crisis	Problem Now	Problem Future	Reward Now	Reward Future
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Your prospects typically have issues that come out of one of these states. Each state has a different sales cycle and requires different messaging and different time-to-close expectations. The one exception is Crisis, as this motivation state tends to harness the attention of the entire organization around solving the immediate crisis. People at different positions at your prospect organization have tendencies to deal with one state on a reoccurring basis; as they move up the food chain, motivation states tend to be more future oriented.

Crisis

First we have the Crisis motivation state. This is where an organization has an existential threat; all hands are on board to solve the issue, from receptionist to CEO. If you are fortunate enough to have a solution, or set of solutions, that can address a crisis, you will likely have a great payday and a customer for life. However, you need to be aware of the crisis within the first 48 to 72 hours as the prospect will be looking to solve the crisis as soon as possible.

Problem Now

As an organization it is clutch to develop the ability to rapidly ascertain which state your prospects are in and why they are there. Is the CEO at your target company working on Problem Now issues or rather what happens 1- 3 years from now? Being able to determine this and where your product or service lives on the urgency scale is important to the kind of interaction you have with the prospect and what is to be accomplished in the call.

For startups and businesses seeking to gain traction quickly we love Problem Now prospects as they have an immediate problem that your company solves. These are great conversations and usually lead to a new customer. The business is often transactional, around a specific problem that has to be solved today, but it's a great opportunity to provide proof of concept and build credibility. It can also lead to reoccurring revenue relationships that address the other motivation states. A disciplined organization always has its antennae tuned for Problem Now opportunities. We like to say, no one ever shops emergency rooms, and Problem Now prospects are the emergency room patients of business. When selling to these prospects, you have a captive audience in search of a solution. The good news is that many organizations, or at least parts of organizations, don't deal with issues until they become Problems Right Now. So, having a system geared toward enabling prospects to find you, the solver of their Problems Now, leads to great sales acceleration. Prioritize your mix of prospect outreach efforts to two-thirds Problem Now connections and your organization will have difficulty responding to the demand you generate.

The ability to understand your prospect's sales motivation state emanates from a strong understanding of the problems you solve as well as where and how your solutions are relevant. When you understand your solution's relevance to each motivation state, then you'll know where your prospect is coming from. You can communicate to them in relevant concepts and vocabulary, and then schedule follow-up with your prospect in time frames that fit with their motivation state timetables, which are different for every prospect.

Reward Future

When addressing future (non-immediate) sales motivation states, you are addressing a prospect that is achieving many of their objectives and is not in fire drill mode. These businesses are more toward the visionary end of the spectrum and spend time on how they can improve their business, and/or enter new markets or launch new products. They are looking to the future and anticipating future needs.

When selling to these prospects, your content, outreach, and vocabulary, must (1) resonate with the problem or opportunity set and (2) take into consideration that you will likely be communicating with multiple decision makers over prolonged periods of time. This is why a set of sales automation tools – specifically your CRM – must be set up to prompt the next action in the sales process so you are moving prospects through your sales funnel no matter what sales motivation state they are in.

Things to Think About / Implement

1. Have a common vocabulary in your organization to describe your prospect's different motivational states. We don't care if you don't like ours, but you have to create your own. Everyone in your organization has to be able to identify where a prospect is on the motivation spectrum and what actions are appropriate to take given the motivation state. This allows for appropriate deployment of internal resources and attention to landing the opportunity.
2. Different sales motivation states require different messaging and tactics as well as different timing for applying sales pressure.

3. Understand each motivation state and develop a well-thought-out sales process and a set of corresponding content and sales collateral for it.
4. Have your CRM customized to allow for prompting, tracking, and reporting of sales activities that correspond to sales motivation timelines.
5. A disciplined organization always has its antennae tuned for Problem Now opportunities as this allows for gaining traction quickly. Invest in prospecting and sales automation tools that can help you find and develop prospects with Problem Now motivation.
6. The reason for understanding the states of sales motivation is that you can't move forward until you get agreement that the business has an issue, that this is an issue that they want to solve, and that they consider you a resource to solve the issue.