**Trilogy Part II:**

**What We Tend to Do vs. What We Should Do**

**The Default Mode: Pitching Too Soon**

It’s a common habit among sellers: we pitch. We pitch when we’re supposed to, and even when we’re not. Often, the pitch comes in the form of an elaborate, yet vague, story about how we’re “helping businesses like yours fully realize the value of their data.” Sounds impressive, right? But let’s be honest—what does that *actually* mean?

The truth is, pitching without “Selling Power” (see **Trilogy Part I**) sets us up for failure. Buyers today are increasingly frustrated by the generic soundbites and empty buzzwords that make sellers sound rehearsed rather than relevant. It’s time to stop this cycle and start focusing on what truly matters: understanding your customer’s needs before saying a word about yourself.

**The Common Pitfalls**

 1. **Jumping to Conclusions**

Picture this: the customer shares a challenge. You ask a question or two, and they respond. Excited by their engagement, you jump in with a loosely relevant fact or half-baked solution. Just as you start building credibility, you derail the conversation by making it about *you*.

 2. **The Self-Centred Presentation**

We’ve all seen it—the infamous opening slide deck. It begins with a flourish of gratitude for the opportunity, followed by six slides all about your company: its history, accolades, and market position. Meanwhile, the customer, eager to address their pressing problem, tunes out.

The lesson? Your customer isn’t here to learn about *you*. They’re here to solve a problem. Until you’ve demonstrated that you understand their challenges, talking about yourself is counterproductive.

**A ‘New’ Approach: Focus on the Customer**

Customers engage with you because they need help solving a problem or gaining insights. Your primary goal is to demonstrate that you *get it*. The more they feel heard and understood, the more they’ll trust you to provide the solution they need.

Here’s how you can flip the script

 • **Ask, Don’t Tell**

Your discovery phase isn’t just a formality; it’s where you build credibility. The questions you ask and the way you guide the conversation demonstrate your expertise far more than any slide deck.

 • **Make It About Them**

Instead of launching into your prepared pitch, frame your questions around the customer’s specific goals and challenges. Let them do the talking and use their answers to craft a tailored solution later in the process.

**The Power of Discovery**

Think about the kinds of questions that can help you uncover the root of the customer’s needs:

 • How many people are currently involved in this process?

 • How long does it take, and are there errors?

 • What’s the impact of those errors on cost or productivity?

 • Is this a process people enjoy, or one they’d rather avoid?

 • What outcomes are you hoping to achieve with this solution?

By framing your questions thoughtfully, you’ll not only gather valuable insights but also show the customer that you’re genuinely interested in their situation.

**Avoiding Common Missteps**

Here are some practices to steer clear of during your discovery phase:

 1. **Talking About Yourself**

Resist the urge to dive into how amazing your company is or how many other customers you’ve helped. Instead, use your knowledge of similar cases to frame intelligent questions that focus on your current customer’s specific needs.

 2. **Drawing Premature Conclusions**

Don’t assume you know the customer’s problems just because you’ve done your research. Use your findings to ask better questions, not to lecture them on what you think they need.

 3. **Skipping Metrics**

Help the customer quantify their challenges. Ask about time, costs, errors, and productivity, and explore how improving these metrics could benefit them.

**Audible Ready: Listening with Purpose**

Preparation is key. Being “Audible Ready” means you’ve thought through the questions you need to ask and the direction you want the conversation to take. You’re listening not just to respond, but to uncover the insights that will shape your pitch later.

Once you’ve gathered the information you need, you can transition to being “Articulate Ready.” This is when you craft a pitch that’s directly tied to what the customer has told you. Your proposal won’t feel like a sales pitch—it will feel like a solution tailored just for them.

**The Bottom Line**

To master the art of selling:

* Focus less on yourself and more on the customer’s challenges.
* Use intelligent, tailored questions to guide the discovery process.
* Let the customer provide you with the insights you need to craft a meaningful, relevant pitch.

When you pitch based on what the customer has already told you, your message resonates more deeply. You’re no longer just another seller—you’re a problem solver.

This is how you achieve true *Power Selling*.