

Business Presentations: The Sales Presentation

The purpose of a sales presentation is to persuade a potential buyer to purchase goods or services, and the audience for such a presentation depends on who has the power to make that purchase. Audiences include

- Previous buyers
- “Cold call” buyers (those whom have never purchased the good/service previously)
- Intermediary (who makes a recommendation to purchase or pass to the actual buyer)

To be successful with a sales presentation, you should not only demonstrate how your good/service meets the needs of the buyers, but also show it’s superiority in relation to other options available. This can be accomplished by presenting your sale as a persuasive speech, which should follow one of the common persuasive organizational patterns like Monroe’s motivated sequence, comparative advantage, problem-solution, or problem-cause-solution.

While the motivated sequence is referred to as the basic sales technique, other sales methods can be as effective. If a buyer needs to solve an issue by using your (or another) good/service, the problem-solution or problem-cause-solution patterns is the preferable option for organization, while the comparative advantage pattern is most appropriate when a buyer is choosing between your good/service and a competitor. However, Monroe’s motivated sequence is the most common organizational pattern for a sales presentation. To apply it, you should

1. Identify the needs of the buyer.
2. Appeal to those needs by highlighting the features of the good/service.
3. Demonstrate how the good/service meets the needs of the buyer.
4. Stimulate the buyer’s senses (taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell).
5. Ask the buyer to make a purchase.

The context of the sale determines the amount of time you will spend on each step. If you have been invited to present to a potential buyer, spend more time highlighting and explaining the features of the product itself, taking specific care to note how the product solves the specific issue the buyer is experiencing. If the presentation is a “cold call,” though, more time will be spent accurately determining the buyer’s needs to ensure that the remainder of the sales presentation is effective. Specific information on each of these organizational patterns can be found on the Walton College of Business Communication Center website under Oral Communication Resources.