



ProActive Selling



3 Levels

3 Languages

Excerpt - "ProActive Selling" by William "Skip" Miller. Published by AMA



Speak the right language to the right person and you
will communicate your product / service value proposition
much more powerful than ever before.



← Speak the Right Language →

The physical act of prospecting, dialing the phone or knocking on a door is something anyone can do. That is not the issue. You know how to do that. The real issue, or better yet the question that needs to be addressed now is:

“What do I say to the person when I start to talk to them? I can dial the phone or knock on a door. When I get them on the line or see them face-to-face, what do I say? How do I begin the conversation so they are interested in what I have to say?”

Many sales people have a fear of prospecting. What they really fear is the frustration and hassle of rejection. Good sales people know the first minute of prospecting is crucial, since rapport is built early and the conversation is built on that first minute. So why do sales people avoid prospecting? What is this big fear of prospecting?

First Minute of Prospecting Fear

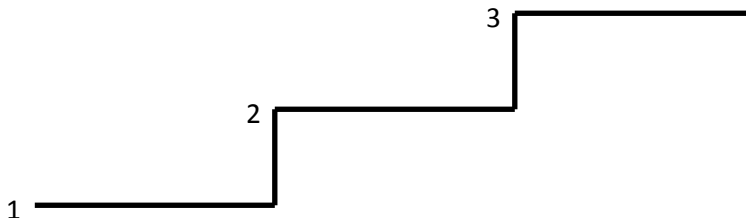
“You know, my problem is not prospecting. I can do that. My problem is the first minute. If I can get their attention for a minute, and then build rapport off of that, then I know I’ll be OK. It’s that first minute, or even the message I have to leave on voice mail to get them to call me back...that’s what I struggle with. Get me past that first minute of conversation, or give me a voice mail message that will get them to call me back, and then I am set.”



It is easy to overcome this fear and become very powerful during the first minute of your prospecting, as well as during your entire prospecting process. It all lies in how effectively you communicate to the person you are talking to and your ability to speak the right language.

Did you now companies speak three languages? They do. Companies speak three languages and it is a salespersons’ job to speak the right language to the right person at the right time.

Visually, three languages look like this.



The First Level

The first level is the person who in the customer's organization you would typically call on all the time. Typical titles these people have would include:

Manager	Manufacturing Manager	Engineer	Purchasing Agent
Director	Engineering Manager	Buyer	Office Manager
IT Manager	Marketing Manager	Store Manager	

First level buyers are called the manager level. Managers speak a language all their own, and it is the language of *Feature/Function*.

"Does your solution come with training?"

"Does the system have the latest features on it?"

"Can I get expedited delivery?"

"How does this compare with last year's model?"

"Where can I see one working?"

Managers are very interested in feature/function of the product/solution on its own merits. Feature/function is the language the *manager* level or first level language people speak, and is a very important language. Sales people must sell to, discuss with, and answer their questions. Sales people, because of the demands of these managers, attend product and services training sessions ad nauseam to make sure they do not have to say, "I don't know" which are words sales people would rather not have to utter. Product and technical competence are at issue here and sales people want to be fully prepared, so they learn the product or services they sell. This product/service training translates into:

1. Features knowledge
2. Feature/Benefit Statements
3. Feature/Advantage/Benefit Statements
4. Competitive features
5. Product-focused Value Propositions

They are given a host of information on these topics so when they have a dialog with the manager who speaks *feature/function*, they can say the right thing to the right people at the right time.

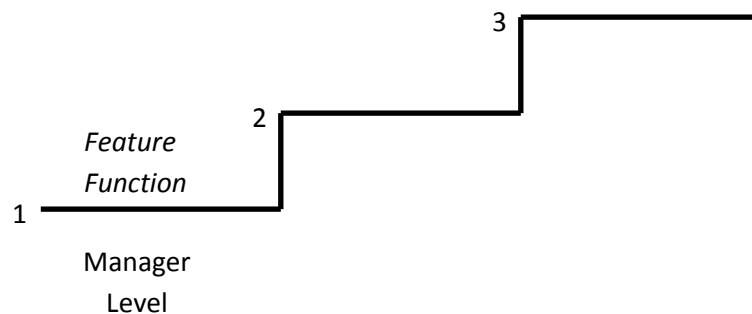
“Our product can do this 20% faster than your current product you are using, because our product has a special feature called...”

“Using this new feature on the GL-3000 will allow you to really make the system hum.”

“By using our GLM, GSM, and GMAX modules, you will be able to manufacture those parts much faster than before.”

“Our methodology and the way we deliver our service to you will allow for a much smoother integration.”

The manager level is where most sales people make their calls and spend most of their time, so it becomes obvious that sales people become very fluent in this language. Company resources therefore are focused on this language since this is the language sales people demand the most from their company, including the marketing department and other support areas.

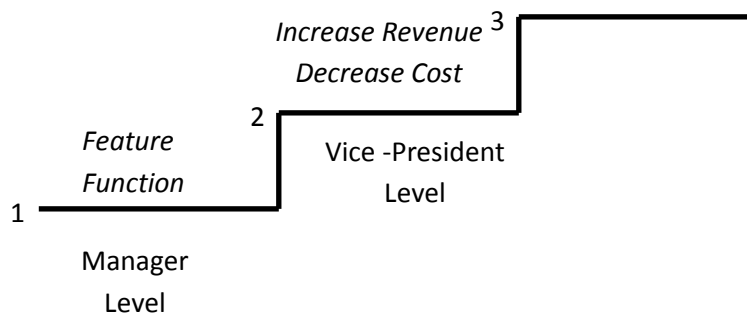


The Second Level

There is a second level language companies speak, however. This is the language most Vice Presidents speak. Vice Presidents have a language all their own. Vice presidents say:

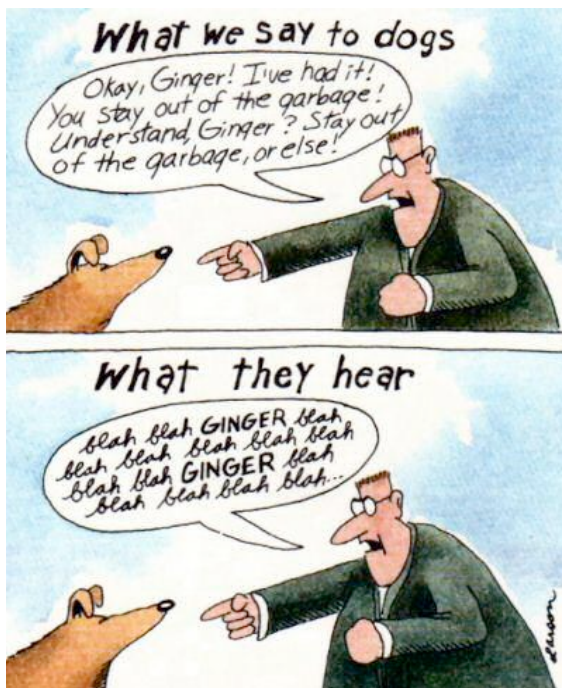
*“Thanks for coming...really, thanks for coming. You are 20% faster than xyz...
I didn’t know that...really...and you are 30% smaller than previous
models...really?...I didn’t know that...and you are x.556.75z
compatible....really?...I didn’t know that...wow...thanks for
coming...really...thanks for that information....really, thanks... BUT...If you can’t
make me money or save me money, why am I talking with you?”*

There are only two reasons to do anything in business, and that is to *increase revenue or decrease cost*. That is it, and it is what all VP’s are interested in. How are you going to **increase their revenue or decrease their cost?** That’s it!



A Vice President is chartered to make corporate goals. Corporate goals are always stated in fiscal terms. Earnings, earnings before insurance and taxes (EBIT), net present value of investments (NPV), revenue per employee, compound annual growth rate (CAGR), as well as a host of other fiduciary measurements. A Vice President is chartered with the health of the business, and along with that mandate is the responsibility that all major decisions that affect their organization be fiscally sound ones.

You need to know what a Vice President is really interested in as it relates to what you are selling. What is their hot button? What is really important to them? What are they willing to take action on? The answer is *value* and the value proposition. But remember - the value to them is **their** value proposition, not yours.



Value Proposition from the Seller's Point of View

- We have offices in 22 locations around the world
- It took us 4 years to develop this product **(BLAH)**
- We hire only the smartest people **(BLAH)**
- We integrate with 85 different systems **(BLAH)**
- We have had 22 quarters of positive earnings
- Our product is 20% better than its closest competitor **(BLAH! BLAH! BLAH!)**
- Our corporation is now leading the charge for this industry

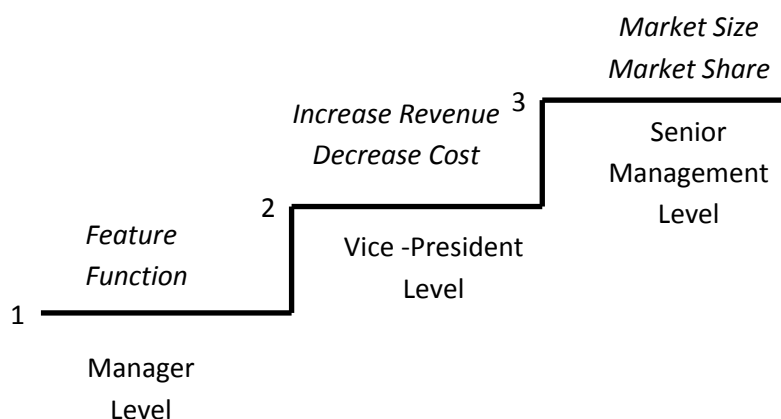
Great, really great, but what is in it for me (also known as WIIFM)? Too many sales people want to deliver the value proposition of their company and then assume the customer can translate what it means to them. In every conversion you have, be it in business or in your personal life, every time you let someone interpret the meaning of what you have said you have a possibility of miscommunication. Happens in business, happens with your kids, and happens with your spouse. A ProActive sales person understands the Vice President wants to know WIIFM. The vice president wants to know what the value is for them in your solution.

The Third Level

The Third Level companies speak is reserved for senior management; Presidents, Senior Vice Presidents, Executive Vice Presidents CFOs, CEOs, CIOs, and so on. These senior level managers speak a language all their own. The only thing they care about and the language they speak is market share and market size. That's about it. How big is the market, how big can it



get, and how much share of this market can I get? (How much can I have, maintain, preserve, take, cover, and develop as well). That's it. Market share and market size. It is their lifeblood, their focus, and their ultimate measure. How much pie is there and how much of that pie can I get?



These are the 3 languages that companies speak, and all three are important for the ProActive sales person to master.

Anchor the levels with language!

Speak the right language

There is a huge push in most sales organizations nowadays to call high. Call higher in the organization. Call at the senior management level. Call at the top. Sell to VITO (very important top officer).

Calling high is not the trick. Anybody can do that. The trick is when you call high in an organization, what do you say? What do you say to a senior level executive that will let them see you as a value-add, and not just as a sales person who is trying to peddle something? Worse, when you meet with senior executives and they think you add little value to them, they will pass you down in their organization to a lower level and you will have to do unnatural acts to get back up to the senior level. What can you say to be a value-add in these senior management sales calls? **The Answer: Speak the right language.**

