

Momentum

Playbook 12

Soulful Selling

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Playbook 12:

Soulful Selling

The Dreaded S-Word

If you're like most entrepreneurs, you love being creative, dynamic, bold, innovative. But there is one thing that you probably hate with the white-hot passion of a thousand suns:

SELLING

Which is unfortunate, seeing as how that generates revenue. Women business owners especially struggle with what they perceive to be “annoying”, “slimy” or “sleazy.” We see those kinds of pitches every day.

And so we think, “I hate sales. **I hate talking about myself.**”

Well, good. Because it's not about you. It's about *them*.

In this week's Playbook, we're going to dive in to how to have delightful *conversations* instead of boring cheesy, sales pitches so you can sell your work with soul.

Invite, Don't Sell

Many of us think we hate “sales” simply because it's been done so badly by many marketers.

I'm here to tell you: There's a better way!

Everyone loves a good party, right? Think about the last dinner party invitation you received.

Why did you go?

Most likely:

- You already know, like and trust the hosts.
- You salivated over the amazing menu being prepared.
- You knew you'd have a great time with the others attending.
- You may have been tempted by a few fun surprises: gift exchange, wine tasting, game night, signature cocktail, bouncy house (*Oh, wait. That last one is the hook for my toddler's birthday party*).
- Logistically, you knew exactly when, where and what time to show up...and what you needed to bring.

Was the host a complete stranger who shoved an invitation in your face and demanded an answer by the end of the day?

Did she chase you down with multiple emails and phone calls?

Did she tell you it would be the “worst mistake of your life” if you missed the event or use fear or intimidation to force you into going?

Did she overpromise that your meal was going to be a fully-catered four-course affair that would be the BEST meal ever served on the planet *and* that it would turn you into a jet-setting, billionaire model, and that it would solve world peace, cure cancer and save puppies?

No. She simply had to show you the value and invite invite you in.

Successful sales, like marketing, is not about manipulation, coercion or lies. It's about elevating the truth of your story and packaging it beautifully so the right people will see the value.

If your sales page is full of bright yellow, screaming BUY NOW! buttons, crazy overblown promises, or stilted language you would never use in real life, it's time for a makeover.

It's time to turn your “sales” page into an invitation to the party of the year!

Relax: It's Just a Nice Conversation

Many people get uncomfortable talking about their business. They feel like egotists. They don't like being seen as “pitching” or bragging. The thought of someone thinking they are an infomercial spokesperson makes them shudder.

So what do they do? They don't sell themselves *at all*.

No bueno. You have to let people know about what you do and why they should care if you hope to make a living.

Here's the cold, hard truth: You have to clearly and confidently talk about the value you provide at some point. Why?

If you are not your own biggest fan...if you don't believe in the value of your offerings, why should you expect prospective buyers to get excited either?

Take the pressure off yourself. Just like the best sales pages are like irresistible party invitations, the best sales pitches are *conversations*.

It's not just you with a megaphone blaring your message to someone. It's an interaction. Treat it as such. Listen and engage so you can show them how your offerings solve their problems or help them achieve their goals.

I've been in business for almost a decade. I've never once had to "pitch" a client. I've lost out on proposals, sure, but I've never had to do a "sales" presentation.

Always, they are conversations.

Pushy salespeople are the ones who are all about their own agenda: *Take my business card! Buy my product! Here's why I'm so great!*

This is not going to be you.

Four Tips to Sell Without "Selling"

- **Be consultative:** Stop pitching and just discuss their goals. Be generous with guidance, resources or connections. Don't work for free, but offer simple "teaser" advice. Believe me, if they see value, they will pay you for it.
- **Ask questions:** Like a good date, don't just brag about yourself the whole time. Find out about *them*. What are they struggling with? What do they value? You can then organically sprinkle your value and experience into the conversation.
- **Show empathy:** Put yourself in the customer's shoes, addressing their pains and offering solutions. A past Harvard research study found that "empathy" was the #1 trait for a successful salesperson.
- **Network:** I can see you rolling your eyes from here! Get out there and network with people, either in-person or online. Let others see you and get to know your value without ever making a sales pitch. Make connections. You never know who knows who. Warm introductions are always the best (and easiest) sales opportunities. We'll cover more on networking in later Playbooks!

Here's The Perfect Sales Page!

Kidding! There is no perfect sales page. It doesn't exist.

There is no one "right" way to sell what you've got. As always, we are dealing with humans here and there is absolutely, positively no magic bullet, despite what some marketing experts may have you believe. There are no secrets, systems or 100% foolproof methods.

Sales copy for one business may result in tens of millions of dollars. But the exact same format and style for another business might be a total fail.

Some super short, intriguing sales pages are enough if the brand or offering is well-known. Others are short because there's already been a lot of launch information build-up via free videos, training, or email.

Every brand and business is different. Every offering is different. Every audience is different, full of diverse people buying for very different reasons. Marketing is about make smart choices, taking a chance, measuring, adjusting, doing it again....rinse and repeat. I'd be a billionaire by now if I could tell you, "This messaging *always works*" or "This sales page template *always works*."

Testing and tweaking is the nature of marketing. Get used to it!

However...

... there are some best practices you can try and test to persuade the right people to come to your party. While you are not manipulating, lying or coercing, at the end of the day, you still want to persuade people to take action.

But you can do it in a classy, fun, inviting, "*Oh my goodness, you have to try this new restaurant! The service was impeccable and the food? Mmmmmm. I really think you will love every minute of it*" kind of way, rather than a...

"ACT NOW! I'll throw in some steak knives and double your order. But hurry. Limited time offer! You will be so very, very sorry, sad and a complete failure if you don't buy this RIGHT. NOW. Look how amazing I am! This offering will change the world!" kind of way.

A Classy Sales Page Framework

Years ago, I took a wonderful writing workshop with [Alexandra Franzen](#), my favorite writing teacher and communications expert. She articulated an **eight-element sales page framework** that I'm paraphrasing and adding color to below:

1. **The hook:** Can you grab them with a delightful or shocking statement, fact, or statistic? Can you declare something bold and attention-grabbing? This is your headline: What is the most gripping thing you can say?
2. **The story:** What inspired you to create this? What problem does it solve? Why are you uniquely qualified to deliver it? Like a superhero, what is your offering's "origin story?"
3. **The promise:** What can you undeniably promise people will get out of this offering? This is where your benefits come in: What does the buyer get from this offering? And not just literally, but what do they emotionally receive? This could be a conditional promise ("If you do this, then you'll get that"), expected or proven results ("Clients have gotten more website visits and email signups") or collaborative promises ("When we work together, I commit 100% to helping you achieve the goals we set together and I'm available to you by email at any time.")
4. **The logistics:** What do they get? When do they get it? How do they need to prepare? You don't have to list everything here but ease them into it. Give them more details once they're on the inside, or provide a separate FAQ.

5. **The concerns, fears, suspicions:** This is also called “objection handling.” Put yourself in the buyer’s shoes. What are they worried about? Will this be too expensive or take too much time? What if they think they are not ready? Try to get ahead of just a few fears that may give them pause. Are there others they will need to convince before buying? Maybe arm them with the right info to alleviate those concerns as well.
6. **End on an inspirational high note:** This is what’s possible! Give them a grand finale and inspired action. Just like you would at the end of an invitation. What is the final word from you that could get them to “yes?”
7. **Call to action:** What do they need to do to move forward? Be visual, succinct, and clear. Now is the time for the call to action! Sign up, Buy now, Contact me, Join us, Get on board. If you have a long sales page, it’s a good idea to put a call to action in key places throughout the copy.
8. **Offer praise from others:** List your testimonials. You can add these at the end or sprinkle them in key spots through the sales page. Put your most influential endorsements near the top. Try to include ones that speak to results or even address why someone almost *didn’t* hire you.

Different Sales Page Models

Here are some of my favorite sales pages or approaches. Again, some are short, some are long. But these work for these brands and for their audiences. Find inspiration here, or use these as models to test for yourself.

Online Programs/Mastermind Courses:

- [Clicksanity](#) by Melissa Cassera
- [The Joy Equation](#) by Molly Mahar of Stratejoy
- [Marie Forleo’s B-School](#). This is what you can do with oodles of money and top-notch production quality videos!

eCommerce Sites:

- Kent Youngstrom’s [shop](#). He warmly welcomes folks to this page and it’s styled beautifully, unlike the usual cold and sterile eCommerce sites.
- [Little Lotus Baby](#) offers adorable temperature-controlled sleep wraps for babies. And for every one they sell, they donate their innovative invention, the Embrace Infant incubator, to a baby in the developing world. The company was actually created to fund the non-profit work! Their entire site is a “sales page” and they share their story and product benefits so beautifully.

3. **BENEFITS:** What will people get from this offering? Not just literally but what results or benefits will they get? How will they feel?

4. **FEATURES:** What are the logistics and how does it work, at a high-level? Timing, length, start dates, process, etc.

5. What may be holding them back? Address their objections or concerns. For in-depth questions, create a separate FAQ.

6. What's your final inspirational message to wrap things up and get them to yes? This can be a short sentence or even a personal quote or statement from you.

7. What is the call to action? What do you want them to do next to get on board? Remember, on a long sales page, you'll want to sprinkle this at intervals throughout the copy:

8. Gather at least three praises or testimonials to use as social proof. Put them at the end or sprinkle them throughout the page:

But wait, you're not quite done....

Now: Please share your sales page tweaks or even full drafts on the Facebook page by Friday.

Remember, we are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward you all year long, so don't lose your **MOMENTUM**: Post it now and keep that train moving!

One Last Thing...

Sales does not have to be icky. Truly it does not.

But again, if you don't believe in your own value enough to want to shout it from the rooftops, why should anyone else care?

Forget all the bad, cheesy, slimy marketing out there. You don't have to sell that way. You can sell authentically and beautifully. Marketing is about communication and connection. Not coercion and lies.

Just remember: **It's an invitation. It's a conversation.**

You've got amazing gifts, talents and skills to share. No one else can do what you do in exactly the way that you do it.

If you talk and write from the heart, from a place of excitement, generosity and substance, the right people will never think you are a pushy salesperson.

Instead, they will be delighted to accept your invitation to this fabulous party.

Cheers,

Maria

Goodies and Inspirations

A [Harvard research study](#) suggests balancing empathy with ego to be successful at sales. In fact, it clearly states, “a healthy balance!”

Not feeling the party invitation or conversation analogies? Here’s another approach to writing sales emails, from the fabulous Alexandra Franzen: [Write a love letter.](#)

About the whole sales “ick” factor: Don’t go there. [You are called to create something that matters.](#)

Two great past Red Slice blog posts about writing sales pages and sales emails:

[Sales page and email copy that works, minus the sleaze.](#)

[What great stand-up acts have to do with long-form sales letters.](#)