

INSIDE SALESPERSON'S HANDBOOK

The path to becoming a superstar

Jon Spoelstra & Steve DeLay
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Welcome

You've joined a team that is following the fundamentals of *The Ultimate Toolkit to Sell the Last Seat in the House*. *The Ultimate Toolkit's* primary fundamental is maximizing ticket sales through the salespeople. To get you better quicker, we believe in training, which starts with the **Inside Sales Boot Camp**. To help you more effectively learn that training, we've created the *Inside Salesperson's Handbook*.

As an Inside Salesperson, you'll be trained to handle three different types of sales calls.

Part 1: Follow-up calls to renewing season ticketholders. We give you the tools to improve the renewal rate of the accounts you're working on. We'll walk through key steps to handling objections and provide effective answers to objections you'll face.

Part 2: Calls to prospective new buyers. We'll train you on how to make follow-up calls to people who already have an interest in your team and have already come to your team's games. We'll show you how to ask the right questions, handle objections, and close sales.

Part 3: Handling in-bound calls from prospective buyers. Your team will send out letters, and emails, and run ads promoting your ticket packages. Fans will call in to ask questions. We'll give you the keys to answering those questions, asking additional questions, and closing sales.

Have fun. You'll enjoy the learning process. And, you'll really enjoy the benefits of the updraft in your sales.



Jon Spoelstra



Steve DeLay

HOW THIS BOOKLET WORKS

There are two sides to each page. The left side (what you're reading now) is me talking to you. The right side is you (see the word **You**) and what you're saying.

You don't see any words by 'you' because, right now, I'm doing all the talking. In fact, I'm already giving you some stage directions. My stage directions are on the right side of the page, in **bold** type and *italicized*. That means I want you to read them.

When you're talking, it will be the words that you would use with a prospect or renewal candidate. As you're talking, I'll be right here commenting on my side of the page. When I give you some 'stage directions,' it will be in parenthesis on your side of the page.

As you go through your **Inside Sales Boot Camp**, your Ticket Sales Manager will be going through this handbook with you. He will be using PowerPoint slides that we've provided to help teach this material to you.

The slides with each PowerPoint presentation are the same as what's in this booklet so you don't need to copy the slides. However, you may want to add notes to this booklet on what your Sales Manager discusses to make it easier for you to remember and learn. Think of this booklet as your school textbook and your Sales Manager as the smart professor.

You:

(Stage directions: This is what my stage directions will look like. So, nod your head that you're paying attention.)

THE TWO-DAY BOOT CAMP

Get ready. The two days of **Inside Sales Boot Camp** may be the most intensive, focused education you've ever had.

There is a lot of ground to cover. The Boot Camp will start off fully explaining all of your team's ticket products and the marketing strategy the team will use to sell the packages. You will then jump to how to make follow-up calls to renewal accounts, follow-up calls to new prospects and, finally, how to handle inbound calls. Each section will have a step-by-step on what to say and why you say it.

Your team is using Full Menu Marketing to give you a wide variety of ticket products to offer. The **Inside Sales Boot Camp** will walk you through step-by-step how to ask the right questions to find the right ticket package for each prospect you're talking with. The Boot Camp will explain objections you might face and give you the exact words to respond to those objections. It will be intense. You'll have to learn the materials *word for word*. Yeah, I know, you'd rather be *you* and use your own words. Well, for the Boot Camp, you use *our words*.

If you're conscientious, you'll look back on these two days and say, "Wow, he was right. That was intense. But, it was worth it."

You:

(Stage directions: Yep, you're still silent. You're reading intensely. Don't worry, we'll get you talking soon.)

EXPECTATIONS

Your manager will expect a lot out of you. You will be expected to make a minimum of 75 outbound calls a day. You'll be expected to keep track of those calls with notes on what was said and progress toward making sales. You'll have weekly one-on-one meetings with your manager to gauge your progress.

Because your team has purchased *The Ultimate Toolkit to Sell the Last Seat in the House*, you know your team and your manager are highly focused on selling tickets. And, they are highly focused on training you to be successful selling tickets. That means if you commit the time and energy, you'll receive a hefty amount of on-going training and attention. The Marketing Department for your team will expend tremendous time and resources to help make your sales calls more successful. And, if you deliver, you'll see growth opportunities, either within your team or other teams who want your knowledge and expertise.

What it takes from you is an intensive focus on learning the materials in this handbook and the willingness to continue the training and learning after this two-day Boot Camp is over. Ready? Turn the page.

(Blank page on the right side means you're silent.)

LEARNING YOUR TEAM'S TICKET PRODUCTS

The first step is product knowledge.

You have to know your team's ticket product offerings inside and out. For each ticket product, you need to know:

- Prices
- Available seats
- Payment options
- Internal rules for holding seats
- Taking deposits

***(Blank page on the right side
means you're silent.)***

Your team should supply you with collateral for you to use to email out to prospects. That collateral will have your name and contact information on it and help you close sales.

At the end of these two days, you should know your team's ticket products down cold. You'll know what to say about those products, how to say it, and when to say it. Recommending the right ticket product to the right person leads to greater success for you.

PART I: Boosting Renewals

The most important mailing of the year for your team is the renewal mailing to existing season ticketholders and package buyers.

Just a few percentage points increase in the renewal rate could mean tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to a team. You're the one who can add those luscious extra percentage points.

To get those extra percentage points, your Sales Manager may ask your help in making follow-up calls to fans who have received the renewal mailing. (If your team happens to have a Customer Service/Retention staff, they may handle the renewal calls. If that's the case and renewals are not part of your responsibility, skip forward to Part 2: Calling on New Prospects.)

If you are going to be part of the renewal process, remember, these are already existing customers. Your phone call shouldn't be a hard-charging, hammer-and-tong sales call. You are primarily following up on the renewal letter, getting feedback, and making sure to get them to renew something.

(Spoiler: You're just about ready to make a renewal phone call.)

GROUND RULES TO HANDLING OBJECTIONS

Even if your team won the title last year, you will face objections. It's how you handle those objections that will be vital to getting the renewal.

There are a few keys I've learned over the years that are absolutely critical in handling objections. For some unknown reason, the first objection often is *not* the most serious objection. However, you have to work your way through each objection as if it were the most important one.

When you receive an objection, you want to make sure the prospect feels you are properly acknowledging it. You also want to make sure you have a solution to help overcome the objection. Here are some simple steps to take for any objection.

1. **Pause for a moment.** There were a couple objections I really *loved* to get thrown at me. It seemed my answer always worked. When I got thrown my favorite objections, I had to show patience. I *paused* for a moment. If I jumped right on the objection, I could quickly scare off the prospect. So, whatever objection is thrown at you—your favorite objection or not—pause for a moment and pretend like you're thinking.
2. **Gather more information.** Even when I know *exactly* how to answer an objection, I ask for some additional information on the objection. For example, you can simply say, "Interesting, how do you mean?" The prospect will naturally expand on their worry or concern. This provides you more information to be able to respond to the objection.

3. **Acknowledge the objection.** Use the *Feel- Felt- Found* method. “I can understand why you might feel that way. I had a couple other clients who felt the same way at first. Here’s what they found...”
4. **Never argue or debate.** If you start arguing or debating with the fan, they will tune you out. For example, if someone says, “Your team is lousy,” you can’t just respond with, “You’re nuts. In some games, we showed great promise this year.” The fan will feel like you’re ignoring them. Instead, work on a concise, practiced answer to their objections that is conversational. (We’ll cover those answers in a few minutes.)
5. **Narrow down the objections to just one.** Sometimes, a fan will throw out 3-4 objections at you all at once. That’s okay. Again, let them talk and ask them to explain each objection further. You’ll most likely find there is only one key objection that might stop them from renewing. The others are more than likely smoke screens for the real objections. If you can narrow down the fan to one issue, you can address that head-on, solve it and ask for the order.
6. **Establish specific next steps.** If you can solve their problem, do it. It could be something simple like changing seat location or setting up a payment plan. If there are still steps to take to get the STH to renew, establish *specific* next steps. Re-affirm what those steps are and then set a specific date and time when you will call them back. Don’t rely on them calling you back.

(TIP: When you turn this page, you’re ON!)

Are you ready? You’re now picking up the phone and dialing:

You're on! ⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒⇒ ⇒ **BRINGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG....**

FOOTNOTES

- 1. Most people would give their name first then their company name. We reverse that. Your team’s name is far more recognizable than your name (unless your name is Michael Jordan or the same name as a famous celebrity). So, use your *title* first. Notice in this example, we made your title sound very personable. *Your* Personal Account Manager. Sounds almost as impressive as CEO. The title ‘personal account manager’ makes the STH feel like they are part of the elite, almost like they have a personal attendant. After your title, use your *team name* then your name. We put the Big City Kangaroos in for this example but you should, of course, use your own team’s name. Lastly, say your name very clearly. They’ll remember your name much better if you use this sequence: title, team, your name.

Remember, these are accounts who are already part of the team and ideally should like talking to you. The tone should be conversational.

- 2. We start right away with a question. There is no, “Hey, how are you? How about this weather?” small talk. We start right off with a question to get them talking about their tickets. (Now, of course, if you talk to this season ticketholder daily or weekly and have a personal relationship, it’s okay to ask about the kids, weather, or something else that comes up regularly when you talk to them.) By asking the STH to rate their

SEASON TICKETHOLDER (STH): “Hello?”

YOU: “Hi, I’m your personal account manager with the Big City Kangaroos. My name is _____.¹ I wanted to follow up on your renewal and spend a few minutes to hear more about your experiences at our games this past season. If you were going to rank it on a scale of 1-100, where would you rank your experience?”²

STH: (Positive or negative answer.)

YOU: (if a high number): “That’s terrific. That’s what we like to hear. Are there any changes you’d like to make to your ticket package?”³

OR

YOU: (if a low number): “That’s not as good as we’d like. What would it take to make it a 100?”⁴

experience, we find out pretty fast how they feel about renewing.

3. Even if the STH rated their experience 110 on a scale of 100, still ask if they would like to change anything. This lets them know you value their opinion. Something may have changed in their circumstances, even since the season ended. Our goal is to get them to renew. Ideally, we want them to renew the same package they had last year, but that's not always possible so it's good to ask if they want changes.
4. This is one of my all-time favorite questions. If your STH had a negative experience, they most likely just want to vent. It could have been because the team didn't win enough, parking didn't go smoothly, or they had a bad hotdog. Regardless, asking this question will get them talking about their concerns or objections. Note those objections for later so you can solve those problems when you make your recommendation.

FOOTNOTES

5. This question puts the STH in the driver's seat. If you can accommodate their location request, do it, and ask for the order. If you can't, let them know why you can't, but also give them an alternative as close as possible.

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6. Cost should never eliminate someone from buying. If your team is using *Full Menu Marketing* like we recommend in ***Strategy & Tactics***, you should have a variety of ticket packages to offer the STH. You also probably have less expensive seats. By asking a question where they have to pick one choice or the other, you're letting the STH tell you what's most important to them. Then, you can make a recommendation on a ticket package and price level that solves their problem. Remember, the goal is to get the STH to renew at some level. Don't let them walk away and not renew. If they walk away, they will be next to impossible to get back. Even if they had the smallest plan and lowest-priced ticket, sell them a Friends and Family deal or single game tickets. Get them to buy *something*.

POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

STH: "I don't like my seat location."

YOU: "How do you mean?" **(Stage directions: The STH's answer would give you a much better picture of the objections. It might be just a drunk fan who sits behind the STH or it could mean a far different seat location.)**

YOU: "If you could pick the ideal seats, where would they be?"⁵

STH: "It was too expensive."

YOU: "How do you mean?" **(Stage directions: The STH might mean the total cost for the season and not the individual game cost. Let's assume it's total cost.)**

YOU: "We could reduce your costs with a smaller ticket package or keep your season tickets but move over just (number) sections."⁶

FOOTNOTES

7. This is one of the biggest stumbling blocks to renewal. No matter what other perks, benefits, and discounts you throw at someone, if they didn't use their tickets, they'll be a tough renewal. By asking, how many games they would *like* to attend *each month*, it feels much less overwhelming. You break the season down into bite-sized pieces. A 41-game season ticket package could sound imposing but 2-3 games each month during the season sounds more reasonable. Many people go out to dinner 2-3 times a week so going to that number of games in a month sounds perfectly acceptable. Then, assuming your team is using *Full Menu Marketing*, you can make a recommendation on a ticket package that fits their specific needs. If it's a smaller package of games, it should involve moving to a lesser seat location. The STH can then decide if they want to give up their prime seats for a smaller ticket package. Or, do they want to stick with more games to retain the same seat location?

OTHER RENEWAL OBJECTIONS

STH: "We didn't make it to enough games."

YOU: "How do you mean?" **(Stage directions: To some folks, missing one game is a monumental waste of money. Ask this question and you'll get a better idea of their problem.)**

STH: (A number of games)

YOU: "How many games per month would you like to attend?"⁷

FOOTNOTES

8. If your team had a tough year, make sure you have a good idea what the plan is for improvement. After all, your STH accounts think you're on the inside and should know. Ask your Ticket Sales Manager to have the GM, team president, or owner give you a vision of how they expect the team to improve. Then, when your STH throws out team performance as an objection, you can give a solid response, repeating what the GM said, and make it seem like you are on the inside. Use seat location as a hook to make the STH think twice about dropping their seats, just because of an off-year.

OTHER RENEWAL OBJECTIONS

STH: "The team didn't win enough games." Or "Your team was lousy" (or some other team performance objection).

YOU: (Stage directions: Asking 'how do you mean' here could provoke screaming. There's almost always some optimism for the future, so lean on that optimism.)

"Here's what our GM told us last week, ... (team defined response on the future, i.e., draft, free agents, youth movement). If you believe we can be stronger in the future, you will want to keep your priority and your prime seat location."⁸

FOOTNOTES

9. The secondary market is becoming a bigger challenge when selling to individuals. That's why *Full Menu Marketing* helps you. Most fans will buy from StubHub when they want to only see the biggest games and the best opponents. They are willing to pay a tremendous premium to get that prime seat location for the biggest opponent. With *Full Menu Marketing* ticket packages, fans can not only get those big games, but they are also assured of good seats without having to take chances on the secondary market. It's likely your team has also put some useful benefits into your ticket packages so make sure to list those here as well in your response. Price isn't necessarily a big season ticket benefit here because StubHub could be cheaper. Focus on guaranteed seat locations, playoff priority, and any special behind the scenes access.

10. It's true, families are busy. However, with the right ticket package including the biggest and best games, going to your team's games can become an event for the family.

MORE RENEWAL OBJECTIONS

STH: "I'll just buy tickets from StubHub when I want them."

YOU: "How do you mean?"

STH: (More complete answer).

YOU: "You can certainly do that and may save money on some games. The challenge with StubHub is you don't get the benefits of being a season ticketholder like..." (List benefits that are most valuable and apply. Each situation is a little different so make the benefits specific to this prospect.)⁹

STH: "I can't plan that far in advance. We don't know our schedule."

YOU: "With our biggest and best games, you can make them an event and build your schedule around them. This way, you know it's part of your schedule months in advance."¹⁰

FOOTNOTES

11. This is the objection that trips up inexperienced salespeople most often. The prospect's response isn't 'no,' so most salespeople feel like they've made progress. That's not necessarily the case. This could merely be a smokescreen objection to get you off the phone.

Ideally, you want to be the person talking to any of the decision-makers. Offer to call them. If it's not possible for you to talk to all the parties, (for example, the STH probably doesn't want you talking to their kids), but the STH seems pretty positive about renewing, then at the very least, ask for a deposit to hold their seat location. If they hesitate, your fallback is to at least get a specific date and time to call them back. This will help ensure they do talk to the others. It's an artificial 'deadline' for the STH but one they should want to stick to.

After you hang up, send a follow-up email with the specific details of what you discussed and the date and time you're going to call them back.

TALK TO OTHERS OBJECTION

STH: "I need to talk to my family/spouse/friends/dog/barber and make sure they want to go ahead."

YOU: "How do you mean?" **(Stage directions: If the STH hadn't already told you who the other decision-maker is, he will probably tell you after you ask 'how do you mean.')**

STH: (A specific type of person like wife, business partner, etc.)

YOU: (If the other decision-maker is a friend) "Would you like to make your life easy? I can call them and answer any questions they might have."¹¹

(If family) "When do you think you'll speak to them? The earlier you place your deposit, the better your seats. Would you like to put a deposit down to hold your spot/seat location?"

YOU: "I understand. If you are talking to them _____, I will send you a follow-up email with everything we discussed. How about I give you a call the day after you talk to them at this same time? I look forward to talking to you on that date."

CREATE YOUR OWN OBJECTIONS

You will face other objections specific to your team and your market. Count on that.

Your Sales Manager will most likely add some. If they haven't added every objection you face, help out and let them know others.

You should write down every objection and practice your answers to every one of them so you're ready when they come up.

It's important to keep a **library of objections** that you can refer to from time to time.

(Stage directions: There's a short respite here, but don't relax. Turn the page and you're back on.)

FOOTNOTE

12. Make it simple for them to renew. You've solved their objections or concerns. You can simply charge the card on file. The STH might even come up with *another* objection. Take this one very seriously. It might be the most important objection and could kill the deal. So, if the STH balks and then utters another objection, go through the drill of answering it. Start with, "How do you mean?"

ASKING FOR THE ORDER

You've handled every possible objection the renewing STH has. They seem satisfied. Now it's time to ask for the order.

YOU: "Other than (the objection you just solved), is there anything else causing you to hesitate?"

STH: "No, that was it."

YOU: "Terrific, why don't we put your order in today? I can take care of it over the phone. Would you like to use the credit card we have on file?"¹²

FOR THOSE STH WHO HESITATE

Even after you handle all those objections, some STHs may *still* hesitate. You certainly don't have the time to meet every single account, but here are some criteria when deciding who to meet with face-to-face:

- **High dollar accounts.** A high priced account that is hesitant to renew certainly makes sense to meet with. Losing a big account hurts not only your renewal commission but the team's overall rate. High dollar accounts could also become terrific referral sources.
- **Long-time season ticketholders.** If someone has been an account for decades, don't let them walk away without a fight. They have loyalty to the team and you should take every opportunity to get them to come back.
- **Big-time referral sources.** There are some accounts where you can tell by talking to them they are well connected. They may be a big-time executive at a large local company, a political figure, or in a business where they meet a lot of other local business executives. Those are terrific accounts to meet with and develop a personal relationship with. Even if they've already renewed, it never hurts to meet with someone well connected or affluent. They could lead to a lot of other sales. Listen for clues about their business, what they do in their free time, or about their family.

ASKING FOR A MEETING

YOU: "You know, I'd love the chance to talk with you personally about (the team/seat location/referrals). Would you be available to meet for a cup of coffee next Tuesday at 10am?"

PART II: Following up with a known fan

I'm not a big fan of cold-call telemarketing. Some teams are. There are plenty of teams who will hand the phone book to a young salesperson and say something like, "start with the letter 'D.'" I don't believe in that. I don't like it for a reason. I have never seen it work very well.

What I do believe in is *collecting the names of every single person who attends your games* and then marketing the heck out of ticket packages to those people.

In the ***Strategy & Tactics*** section of *The Ultimate Toolkit*, we recommend collecting names and go through step-by-step how to market to those people. For you, what matters is that your team's marketing department has names of known fans of your team. These people have shown some interest somehow in your team. This isn't calling the phone book.

Your job will be to make follow-up calls to those known fans who have received letters and emails from the team.

The key is making that follow-up call in a timely manner, ideally within 48 hours of the fan receiving the letter or email. This way, your follow-up call will be a warm call instead of a cold call. You'll be asking questions to help the prospect identify which ticket package works best for them. Then, you'll be handling objections and asking for the order.

Let's get started.

(Stage directions: Relax for a moment; you're about ready to go on.)

You're on: ⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨ **BRRINGGGGGGGGGGGGG**

FOOTNOTES

13. Like with the renewal calls, you start by mentioning your title, then your team name (insert your team here instead of the Kangaroos) and then your name. Mention in your opening that you are following up on some materials that the team already sent. This way, you don't seem as intrusive like a straight cold-call would be.

Q1. This question should get the prospect talking. You're asking for their feedback on how they enjoyed the game. Some sales trainers will tell you to ask, "Do you have a few moments?" Well, I don't know about you, but I never have time to talk to strangers on the phone. Many people will say 'no.' Instead, we ask a question that should naturally create conversation.

PROSPECT: "Hello?"

YOU: "Hi, (prospect first name), I'm your personal account manager with the Kangaroos. My name is (your name). I wanted to follow up on the letter/email we sent you and spend just a few minutes with you to learn about your experiences at the Kangaroos games this past season."¹³

Q1. "How did you enjoy your experience?"

PROSPECT: (Positive or negative response)

YOU: (if positive) "That's terrific. What's your favorite part of going to our games?"

YOU: (if negative) "That's too bad. How do you mean?" **(Stage directions: It could be the team, or seat location, or parking. Find out.)**

FOOTNOTES

14. Like with the renewal call, this gives you an immediate sense of how the prospect feels about your team and attending games. A high number is a big positive to getting the fan to buy a ticket package. A low number isn't insurmountable but will create some additional challenges.
15. This question is where you get tremendous information you'll file away and use later. You will hear feedback on subjects like parking, concessions prices, their seat location, and the team's performance. Even if someone ranks their experience a 100, ask what would make it even better. You need to gather some feedback on what the fan really likes so you can use the information for your recommendation later.
16. You've reminded them again that they had just received some information and you aren't just cold-calling them.

GETTING THE PROSPECT TALKING

Q2. "On a scale of 1-100, how would you rate the overall experience?"¹⁴

PROSPECT: (Gives a number)

YOU: "What would it take to make the experience a 100?"¹⁵

PROSPECT: (Gives you feedback on what they like. This could include opponents, seat location, opposing teams, etc.)

YOU: "I think we can make your experience even more enjoyable next year. We recently sent you some information on our new ticket packages for next season. I wanted to follow up and ask you a few questions."¹⁶

FOOTNOTES

17. You'll get a sense of how much they paid per seat and whether they liked that seat location and price. If they say something like, "We'd like to sit closer to the action," you can use that information later when recommending a particular section.
18. Did they go with family? Friends? How often did the others go to the games? This will help you determine if there are others involved in the decision-making process.
19. Based on those opponents and the day of the week the games were played on, you'll be able to make a smarter recommendation. For example, let's say you work in the NBA and the prospect went to see LeBron James, Kevin Durant, and Tim Duncan. You know they really like the biggest stars in the league so you'd ultimately focus on a big game package.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

(Stage directions: Now that you have a dialogue going with the prospect, it's time to ask some *specific* questions to help narrow down what ticket package would make the most sense for them. By asking these questions, you'll get them talking about their likes and dislikes about coming to your games.)

Q3. "Where did you sit when you came to the games? Is there anything you'd like to change about your location?"¹⁷

Q4. "Who attended the game with you? Are they big fans like you are?"¹⁸

Q5. "What opponents did you see? Why did you pick those games?"¹⁹

FOOTNOTES

20. This question is critical to your recommendation. If the fan says they'd love to go to all the games or most of them, you have the potential for a full-season ticket sale. Or, the prospect might tell you they want to go to 4-5 games a month but cash is tight. You could suggest a package with a payment plan. Focus on the number of games per month. That is much less imposing versus talking about 'full season tickets.'

The answer to this question will lead you to the package recommendation that gives you the best chance of closing the sale. Don't oversell by trying to sell a ticket package with way more games than the prospect wants or can afford. They will tune you out and you'll end up with nothing.

21. You want a sense of how busy they are. Is the family going to Little League baseball games three times a week and dance recitals two other days? This will also help you identify a package with the right number of games. Remember, we don't want to oversell them. If you consciously oversell them, there is a good chance that they won't renew *any* package next season. We want the prospect to use the tickets.

22. If the prospect talks excitedly about StubHub, you'll know you have to focus more on the benefits of buying a ticket package in advance. If they casually mention walking up to buy tickets the day of the game, you'll be able to preach the benefits of guaranteed, prime seat locations that come with buying a ticket package.

MORE QUESTIONS TO ASK

Q6. "Ideally, how many games per month would you like to attend? Is there anything keeping you from doing that?"²⁰

Q7. "What else do you and your family/friends enjoy doing together for entertainment?"²¹

Q8. "How do you typically buy your tickets?"²²

FOOTNOTES

23. By asking them to grab the information or a pen or go to the team website, you are eliminating a later objection of, “Can you send me something in writing?” They will have all they need right in front of them, or know how to find it via the team website if they forget something.
24. I’ll say it again. Don’t oversell here. Keep it simple and remind the prospect of all the key elements they wanted. Your recommendation should match their desired games per month, price point, and opponents. If you’ve listened well and made notes, your recommendation should be dead on what they wanted.

YOUR RECOMMENDATION

(Stage directions: Now is the time to take the information you’ve gleaned from your questions and make the right recommendation. You are using the information the prospect told you about, what their objectives and goals are, when you make that recommendation.)

YOU: “Based on what you’ve told me, I think we have a package that could work perfectly for you. Do you have the information we sent you close by? If not, grab a pen and paper and I can give you all the details. (or) If you’re near a computer, go to (team website with ticket information).”²³

YOU: “I recommend our...”²⁴

Include the following:

1. The specific package that meets their needs including the right number of games per month, the right opponents, and the right days of the week.
2. A seat location and price per ticket that fits their budget and where they’d like to sit.
3. Any important benefits that may have come up on the call such as payment plans, ways to meet the players, or VIP parking.

FOOTNOTE

25. Silence is the most powerful closing tool you can use. Once you've asked for the order, don't say another word. Let the prospect speak next. There may be 3-4 seconds of silence on the phone. That may feel uncomfortable. Don't give in. Your prospect will either say 'yes' or 'no'. If they say 'yes,' terrific, you've made the sale. If they say 'no,' they will most assuredly tell you why. This will be the final objection you have to overcome. If you can overcome that last objection, your chances of a sale skyrocket. Be quiet and let them speak first.

ASKING FOR THE ORDER

(Stage directions: You've done everything right so far. You've developed a dialogue with the prospect by getting their feedback on the game they attended. You've asked the right questions to learn more about what they want.

Now it's time to ask for the order. This is where young salespeople tend to wither like a weed in the hot desert sun. Stand strong and ask for the credit card. Don't let the prospect off the hook without asking for the order.)

YOU: "This ticket package gets you just what you wanted, including the right number of games per month, prime seats locked in, and (list 1-2 key benefits or items they were looking for). Can I go ahead and reserve your seats today?"

SILENCE! LET THE PROSPECT SAY THE NEXT WORDS ²⁵

A QUICK REVIEW OF HANDLING OBJECTIONS

We talked about handling objections for renewal calls. While the actual objections might be a little different on a new prospect call, the fundamentals for handling objections remain the same. Let's take a minute to review those fundamentals again.

When a prospect throws out an objection, here are the keys:

1. **Pause for a moment.** Stop for just a moment. Take a breath. That 1-2 second pause may seem like an eternity, but it will make your prospect feel you are truly listening to them and are attentive. Pretend like you're thinking.
2. **Gather more information.** "How do you mean?" is one of my all-time favorite questions to ask when the prospect throws out an objection. They will naturally give you more information which you can use to overcome that concern.
3. **Acknowledge the objection.** Use the *Feel- Felt- Found* method. "I can understand why you might feel that way. I had a couple other clients who felt the same way at first. Here's what they found..."
4. **Never argue.** It will be tough to hold your tongue, especially if someone is really whacking your team. But, stay calm. Don't interrupt. Let them finish and calmly respond how you've been taught.
5. **Narrow down the objections to just one.** Your prospect may throw out 2-3 objections. Narrow them down until you get to the one true hurdle stopping them from buying. Then, tackle that one head on, solve it, and ask for the order.
6. **Establish specific next steps.** Don't let the prospect off the hook without some clear, specific next steps. You may need to get some answers for them, or they may need to talk to someone. Regardless, nail down what happens next and when you are going to talk again.

The following are samples of objections that you will certainly run into.

FOOTNOTE

26. The prime reason someone would buy a ticket package up front is to secure the best seats for the games they want to attend. Remind your prospect of that. Location and guaranteed seats are the biggest benefits of having a ticket package. The other benefits can have some added heft so don't hesitate to list the ones your prospect had spoken positively about before.

When you're responding to any objection, finish by asking a question that will move the prospect closer to buying. In this case, we ask about a payment plan. The prospect hasn't stated paying up front is an issue, but it may be in the back of their minds. You've provided them an alternative to think about. They will feel an obligation to answer the question which will continue the conversation.

As we've discussed, once you answer the objection, be silent and let the prospect respond.

'WE'LL JUST BUY GAME BY GAME' OBJECTION

PROSPECT: "We'll just buy tickets game by game when we want to go."

YOU: "You can do that, but may risk being shut out of prime seats for our biggest and best opponents. With a ticket package, you get the perks of being a season ticketholder like (list some here). Would it help you to have the tickets on our easy monthly payment plan?"²⁶

SILENCE

FOOTNOTES

27. Your response here is a little bit of a trick on word use. Notice that we tell you to ask, ‘What would they be *inclined* to say?’ By using the word *inclined*, the prospect has to make a determination. If you just asked, ‘What do you think they will say?’ your prospect could just respond with ‘I don’t know. That’s why I have to ask them.’ But *inclined* is almost a *hunch*.

28. Most likely, your prospect will tell you the other decision-maker will probably like it. That gives you the opening to ask for the order again. Go for it. Remind them of the reasons to place their order today.

If they still hesitate and want to talk to others, remember to nail down a specific date and time to call them back. Don’t wait for the prospect to call you. If you let them decide when they are going to call you back, you’ll be waiting a long time.

‘ANOTHER DECISION-MAKER’ OBJECTION

PROSPECT: “Let me talk to my spouse/friend/brother/dog and give you a call back.”

YOU: “What do you think they would be *inclined* to say?”²⁷

PROSPECT: “I think they’d be inclined to like it.”

YOU: “Why don’t we just go ahead and do it then? You’ll get prime seats and a specific schedule of entertainment.”²⁸

(If they persist on wanting to talk to others)

YOU: “I understand. When will you talk to them?” **(Stage Directions: Make sure to nail down a specific date and time to call them back.)**

FOOTNOTES

29. You're not giving up yet. Most salespeople would immediately default to something cheaper. Instead, offer the prospect alternative ways to afford the package you suggested. A payment plan is a great option.
30. Here you aren't just asking, 'What would you like to pay?' You are giving them options to lower the price. If they really like the seating area you proposed, they may take fewer games to stay in the same priced area. If they want to go to all the games, a lower priced seat is a good option to offer.

'IT COSTS TOO MUCH' OBJECTION

PROSPECT: "That's a lot of money. I don't think we can afford it."

YOU: "Would it help to set you up on our monthly payment plan option? We can spread the amount out over xx months."²⁹

SILENCE

(If they persist on cost)

YOU: "I can understand that. We can still get you the benefits and perks of being a season ticketholder. Would you prefer fewer games per month or a lower priced ticket?"³⁰

FOOTNOTES

31. This is the objection that has tripped up many young salespeople. It sounds positive. The prospect hasn't said 'no.' Certainly thinking about it is a good sign. Not really.

Many times, 'let me think about it' is merely a smokescreen to get you off the phone. Instead of just agreeing and hope you get the prospect back on the phone, remind them of all the reasons your recommendation is right for them. Finish by asking them why they want to wait, but in a polite manner. You can't just say, 'what's the hold up pal?' By using the word 'hesitate,' you sound a lot less confrontational. Then, once you ask the question, be silent. You'll most likely find out the true objection that you haven't overcome yet.

If, by chance, the prospect just won't commit and really does have to think about it, make sure to nail down a specific date and time to follow up with a phone call. Then, send out a reminder email to the prospect so they have that date and time on their calendar.

'LET ME THINK ABOUT IT' OBJECTION

PROSPECT: "Sounds great. Let me think about it and call you back."

YOU: "I understand you wanting to think about it. When you look at it, it seems like this package has the right number of games, right opponents, and is in the right price level. And, placing a deposit now gets you locked in for great seats. Is there anything about this package that's causing you to hesitate?"³¹

SILENCE

(Stage Directions: If the prospect persists, get a specific date and time to call them back. Don't let them off the hook.)

FOOTNOTES

32. If your prospect is very particular about seat locations, have them come to the arena. Make sure you schedule a specific date and time for them. Don't leave it up to chance that they will show up. Also, by you scheduling the date and time, it creates the appearance that you have plenty of meetings and there are many people buying. You don't want to create the perception that you're available any time.

ASKING FOR MEETINGS

Like with your renewal calls, there are some people that just won't commit over the phone. You'll usually be able to tell who those people are. They may be asking very specific questions about seat locations.

There are also some people who could become very valuable referral resources for you. It could be someone who is a top executive in a large local company. It could be someone who has an influential role in the community. It's perfectly okay to schedule a meeting with those types of people. However, don't just schedule meetings for the sake of meetings. You want to use your time wisely and meet with only key people. We've all had those prospects that take two hours of your time talking about the team or their favorite player. For any meeting you schedule, make sure you let your boss know. They might want to tag along to help you out.

YOU: "Why don't we get together to show you the seats here at the arena? I have time on Tuesday at 4pm. Would that work for you?"³²

THE KEYS TO ASKING FOR REFERRALS

There are two keys to asking and then actually getting referrals from your clients. The first key is really quite simple. You have to ask. Most salespeople are so excited to get the sale, they completely forget to ask if the prospect knows anyone else interested in buying.

The second key is a little tougher but it's a must-do. Ask for specific referrals. You can't just ask, 'Do you know anyone else interested in Kangaroos tickets?' and hope to get a notebook of names and phone numbers. Your client will probably say something like, 'Let me think about it.' Or, 'Nah, not really.'

When you're asking for referrals, don't be general. Ask very specifically for contact names and numbers. For example, you could ask about:

1. Friends or family who they've come to the games with or that they know are big fans of your team.
2. Someone at work that they always re-hash last night's game with.
3. The person at the office who handles the company picnic or employee events who might handle a group outing at your team's games.
4. Who at their children's school handles fundraising or kids activities?

THE RIGHT WAY AND THE WRONG WAY TO ASK FOR REFERRALS

The Wrong Way: (General)

YOU: "Do you know anyone else who might be interested?"

The Right Way: (Specific)

YOU: "Who should I talk to at your company office who is in charge of the company picnic?"

OR

YOU: "You mentioned you had kids that enjoy coming to the games. Could you tell me who the PTA President at their school is? I might be able to arrange a group outing to help them raise money for the school."

PART III: Handling in-bound calls

Your marketing department is going to be spending a lot of time and energy running ads, mailing letters, and sending out emails. All that effort is going to generate some in-bound calls from people who are interested in buying your tickets. You'll also get an occasional call in from someone who just happened to be thinking about buying tickets from you without any prompting from your team's marketing efforts. These calls are terrific when they happen. Veteran salespeople call them 'layups' because they usually end up turning into an easy sale.

However, just because someone calls in, doesn't automatically mean they are a buyer. You still have to ask them some questions to make sure that prospect actually buys and isn't just looking for some information. You also want to make sure they buy the right ticket package that fits their needs so you can easily renew them the next year.

Let's walk through some of those key questions and how to handle in-bound calls.

HANDLING THE IN-BOUND CALL

FOOTNOTES

33. Notice, like when you made out-bound calls, you mention the team's name before your name.
34. You may or may not have the caller in your computer records but it's good to check. It makes your team look more professional. If you don't have a linked CRM system, that's okay. Still ask. This way, you still have the caller's name and phone number to keep track of and add to your database for a future call back.
35. Instead of just saying, 'How can I help you?' and letting the caller control the call, you are politely taking control by using good customer service, making sure you offer your prospect the ticket package that's right for them.

BBBBRRINNGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG

(This time, it's your desk phone ringing)

YOU: "Thank you for calling the Big City Kangaroos, my name is (first name), how may I help you?"³³

PROSPECT: "Hi, I received your letter/email/saw an ad. Can you tell me more about this ticket package?"

YOU: "Certainly, so I can look you up in our records, can you give me your name and telephone number?"³⁴

PROSPECT: (Gives name and contact information)

YOU: "Terrific. Now, let me ask you a couple questions to make sure we have the right ticket package for you."³⁵

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK THE CALLER

You need a little background information on the caller's level of interest and price point so your recommendation is right for them. Here are some questions to ask. You'll notice they are a lot like the questions you asked on your renewal calls and follow-up calls to known fans. You need much of the same information in order to make sure you recommend the right ticket package.

Feel free to ask them in any order that makes sense, but make sure to ask them all.

36. This gives you a sense if they are a big-time fan or casual fan. They also might mention that they are buying tickets for their company or for some other reason than for themselves to enjoy.
37. This will help you narrow down the right priced ticket for your recommendation.
38. This answer will tell you if there are other decision-makers. If they come with their family, the caller can probably say 'yes' and buy today. If they come with friends, they may just be gathering information. There will likely be others involved in the decision-making process you or they will need to talk to.
39. This will help you decide what size ticket package makes sense. Asking about the number of games per month is easier than asking about an entire season.

WHAT PRODUCT IS RIGHT FOR THE PROSPECT?

YOU:

Q1. "How many games did you attend last season?"³⁶

Q2. "Where do you prefer to sit when you come to games?"³⁷

Q3. "Who do you come to games with?"³⁸

Q4. "How many games per month would you like to go to?"³⁹

PROSPECT: (Provides answers)

FOOTNOTES

40. The purpose of asking if they have a pen and paper is to eliminate the need to send them something later to look at. They might have received a letter or email from you, but ask anyway so no detail is missed. Ask up front and then they can write down everything you tell them about the ticket package.
41. Remind them of the benefits/features they wanted, ask for the order, and then be silent. Let the prospect speak next.

MAKING THE RECOMMENDATION

YOU: “Based on what you’ve told me, I think the (insert package) would work perfectly for you. Grab a pen and paper and I can give you all the details. (or) If you’re near a computer, go to (team website with ticket information).”⁴⁰

YOU: “I recommend our...”

1. Specific package including # of games, opponents, and days of the week (if that was important).
2. Seat location and price per ticket.
3. Important benefits like payment plans, special events, etc. that may have come up during the call.

YOU: “This package gets you just what you wanted including (list 2-3 key benefits or items they were looking for). Does that work for you?”⁴¹

SILENCE – LET THE PROSPECT SAY THE NEXT WORDS

The prospect will either say ‘yes’ and purchase or hesitate and have some objections. If they have objections, handle them as before with the new business follow-up calls.

Will you do it?

This initial Boot Camp is just the beginning of your training to become a superstar in selling tickets. In fact, it's probably just about half of the training you'll need to succeed. The rest of the training comes over the next few months. However, all the training in the world won't make you a superstar in selling tickets. What more is necessary? You. You have to *practice everything in this handbook* until it's second nature.

In Malcolm Gladwell's book *The Outlier*, he repeatedly mentions the "10,000-Hour Rule," claiming that the key to success in any field is, to a large extent, a matter of practicing a specific task for a total of around 10,000 hours. He cites, among others, Bill Gates, Mozart, and the Beatles as those who practiced 10,000 hours at their specific craft.

Relax! I'm not asking you to practice 10,000 hours on ticket sales, but Gates, Mozart, and the Beatles started those hours someplace. Your start is to head aggressively in that direction (10,000 hours).

Your Inside Sales Manager will help you. Some of your phone presentations will be videotaped so you can study where you can improve. However, practicing with your Inside Sales Manager is not enough. You have to do more on your own.

What if you took 20 minutes a day to practice on your own? A scant 20 minutes. Would you be willing to pay that price? 20 minutes!

So, it boils down to a couple of questions?

How much do you want to get a lot better?

Do you want to spend the 20 minutes a day practicing on your own? I'm talking 6 days a week for just a month.

If you do, you'll take a huge leap in your results.

Will you do it?

The Sales Pitch to Known Fans

BRINGGGGGGGGGGG...

PROSPECT: “Hello?”

YOU: “Hi, (prospect first name), I’m your personal account manager with the Kangaroos. My name is (your name). I wanted to follow up on the letter/email we sent you and spend just a few minutes with you to learn about your experiences at the Kangaroos games this past season.”

Q1. “How did you enjoy your experience?”

PROSPECT: (Positive or negative response)

YOU: (if positive) “That’s terrific. What’s your favorite part of going to our games?”

YOU: (if negative) “That’s too bad. How do you mean?” **(Stage directions: It could be the team, or seat location, or parking. Find out.)**

Q2. “On a scale of 1-100, how would you rate the overall experience?”

PROSPECT: (Gives a number)

YOU: “What would it take to make the experience a 100?”

PROSPECT: (Gives you feedback on what they like. This could include opponents, seat location, opposing teams, etc.)

YOU: “I think we can make your experience even more enjoyable next year. We recently sent

you some information on our new ticket packages for next season. I wanted to follow up and ask you a few questions.”

(Stage directions: Now that you have a dialogue going with the prospect, it’s time to ask some *specific* questions to help narrow down what ticket package would make the most sense for them. By asking these questions, you’ll get them talking about their likes and dislikes about coming to your games.)

Q3. “Where did you sit when you came to the games? Is there anything you’d like to change about your location?”

Q4. “Who attended the game with you? Are they big fans like you are?”

Q5. “What opponents did you see? Why did you pick those games?”

Q6. “Ideally, how many games per month would you like to attend? Is there anything keeping you from doing that?”

Q7. “What else do you and your family/friends enjoy doing together for entertainment?”

Q8. “How do you typically buy your tickets?”

(Stage directions: Now is the time to take the information you’ve gleaned from your questions and make the right recommendation. You are using the information the prospect told you about, what their objectives and goals are, when you make that recommendation.)

YOU: “Based on what you’ve told me, I think we have a package that could work perfectly for you. Do you have the information we sent you close by? If not, grab a pen and paper and I can give you all the details. (or) If you’re near a computer, go to (team website with ticket information).”

YOU: “I recommend our...”

Include the following:

1. The specific package that meets their needs including the right number of games per month, the right opponents, and the right days of the week.
2. A seat location and price per ticket that fits their budget and where they’d like to sit.
3. Any important benefits that may have come up on the call such as payment plans, ways to meet the players, or VIP parking.

(Stage directions: You’ve done everything right so far. You’ve developed a dialogue with the prospect by getting their feedback on the game they attended. You’ve asked the right questions to learn more about what they want.)

Now it’s time to ask for the order. This is where young salespeople tend to wither like a weed in the hot desert sun. Stand strong and ask for the credit card. Don’t let the prospect off the hook without asking for the order.)

YOU: “This ticket package gets you just what you wanted including the right number of games per month, prime seats locked in, and (list 1-2 key benefits or items they were looking for). Can I go ahead and reserve your seats today?”

SILENCE! LET THE PROSPECT SAY THE NEXT WORDS

‘WE’LL JUST BUY GAME BY GAME’ OBJECTION

PROSPECT: “We’ll just buy tickets game by game when we want to go.”

YOU: “You can do that, but may risk being shut out of prime seats for our biggest and best opponents. With a ticket package, you get the perks of being a season ticketholder like (list some here). Would it help you to have the tickets on our easy monthly payment plan?”

SILENCE

‘ANOTHER DECISION-MAKER’ OBJECTION

PROSPECT: “Let me talk to my spouse/friend/brother/dog and give you a call back.”

YOU: “What do you think they would be *inclined* to say?”

PROSPECT: “I think they’d be inclined to like it.”

YOU: “Why don’t we just go ahead and do it then? You’ll get prime seats and a specific schedule of entertainment.”

(If they persist on wanting to talk to others)

YOU: “I understand. When will you talk to them?” **(Stage Directions: Make sure to nail down a specific date and time to call them back.)**

‘IT COSTS TOO MUCH’ OBJECTION

PROSPECT: “That’s a lot of money. I don’t think we can afford it.”

YOU: “Would it help to set you up on our monthly payment plan option? We can spread the amount out over xx months.”

SILENCE

(If they persist on cost)

YOU: “I can understand that. We can still get you the benefits and perks of being a season ticketholder. Would you prefer fewer games per month or a lower priced ticket?”

'LET ME THINK ABOUT IT' OBJECTION

PROSPECT: “Sounds great. Let me think about it and call you back.”

YOU: “I understand you wanting to think about it. When you look at it, it seems like this package has the right number of games, right opponents, and is in the right price level. And, placing a deposit now gets you locked in for great seats. Is there anything about this package that’s causing you to hesitate?”

SILENCE

(If the prospect persists, get a specific date and time to call them back. Don’t let them off the hook.)