

# B.A.C.K. T.O. B.A.S.I.C.S.

## Background

Find out as much as you can about the customer's background. Who is the real decision maker? Where did he\* grow up? Go to school? What hobbies does he have? Is he big on sports? What sort of sports do they enjoy?

How did he get into this line of work? The more you know about the decision maker, the easier it will be to sell to him. Is the decision maker an analytical person? Does he like charts and graphs? How does he go about making decisions for the company?

When is the anniversary of the founding of the business? How many years have they been in business? Do they celebrate their anniversary with a lot of fanfare?

If you were to guess what kind of personality the decision maker is according to a personality assessment (such as Myers-Briggs), what sort of personality would he be?

Does he make decisions independently or is there another person involved in making or helping make the decisions?

With the Bold Personality, we must be direct and get to the point quickly. They don't like small talk. Be concise. They like to talk a great deal of the time during a sales presentation. Allow them time and the opportunity to establish their authority.

With the Friendly Personality, we must spend more time developing rapport. Talk about your desire to help people succeed. Speak about your pride in developing lifetime relationships with customers. If possible, try to ask questions about their family.

With the Sincere Personality, we must somehow earn their trust. Go slow and easy. Answer all the questions thoroughly. Reassure.

With the Competent Personality, we must show a lot of proof. Share testimonials and a list of satisfied customers. Be prepared and structured in your presentation. Answer HOW. Don't be afraid to discuss disadvantages but do so early in the presentation. Ask for agreement.

Look for signs to help you determine personality. If they have little or no decorations on the wall or on their desk, they probably are very analytical. If they have photos of their family around the office, they are most likely, the Friendly Personality.

Here's an important fact: 55% of the population are Visual; 25% are Kinetic; and 20% are Auditory. Adjust your presentation accordingly.

Remember, you don't have a second chance to make a great first impression.

***Note: We know that women are decision makers for a very large number of businesses. We do not want to overlook this fact; however, it is very cumbersome to read "he/she" all the time throughout in this text. We appreciate your understanding.***

## Aspirations

It is vital to get to know the goals and aspirations of the decision maker. If you find this information out, it is easier to design an advertising program to complement these goals and aspirations.

What are the advertiser's or prospect's personal aspirations? What goals has he set for himself? For the company? Where do they want to be in three years? Five years? Ten years? Twenty-five years? How many stores/locations do they want to eventually have? Who will they hand the business over to after he retires? Are they happy with the way things are presently going?

If they plan to expand, in what part of the city (or outside the city) would they open another location? When would they like to remodel their store(s)? When would they like to open another location?

How do they want to be perceived in the community? Do they have a desire to promote a Good Samaritan image? What charities do they support? How do they get this message out in their advertising? Do they sponsor any charitable organizations? How do they think they are viewed in the community? What one thing do they wish the public knew about them? How do they try to demonstrate that they are a unique business? If another business just like theirs opened up down the street, why should a customer still come to them?

If money was no object, what aspirations would they have for their company?

## Concerns

What keeps them awake at night? Who is their competition? What things are not going as well as they would like? What does the competition do that they wish they did? Is the competition taking dollars away from them in areas that they should be more competitive? What is it about their public image that they would like to improve? What inventory items do they wish they carried but do not have? Do they have a well-trained staff that knows how to sell? Is there a threat of new competition coming into the market? If they had a magic wand, what one thing would they change about their company and how would that make a difference for their success? Are things going as you expect?

*What changes have occurred in your industry over the past few years that has make it more challenging to do business? As you analyze the market and the economy, what concerns you the most? How have customers changed over the years? Is it more difficult to sell to them today compared to the past? Why? How well is the business run when you are out of town? Do you foresee any major changes in the way you will be doing business in the future compared to the way you do business now? How well trained are your salespeople to overcome objections and sell?*

## **Kingdom**

### **(1. Their customers 2. Their inventory 3. Area of influence)**

#### **Customers:**

Who are their customers? Percentage that are male? Female? Age of customers: (18 – 24 25-34 35 –44 45-54 55-64 65+) Customer profile as far as outlook on life. For example: Conservative? Liberal? Young at heart? Mature? Cautious? A hard sell? An easier sell? Would respond to coupons? Would not respond to coupons? Takes a long time to make a decision? Makes decisions rather quickly? Would respond to an ad showing drastic discounts? Would be turned off by such an ad?

*Tell me anything else about your customers that would help me understand them better so I can design advertising to reach them more effectively. How have they changed over the years? Do you expect any dramatic changes in the coming year? Are your customers getting older? Younger? How much is your average customer worth to your company?*

#### **Inventory:**

*What do you sell? Tell me about your inventory. Please tell me the percentages of the different things you sell? (For example, if you are doing a needs analysis interview with a furniture store, you would ask: What percentage of your sales are recliners? What percentage are sofas? What percentage are lamps? What percentage are dining room tables? What percentage are wall hangings? What percentage are rugs? Etc.)*

*Do you have co-op funds available to assist you in your advertising? What are your sources for this co-op? Do you have deadlines on your co-op that I should know about? Have you ever considered doing a Vendor Support section?*

#### **Area of Influence:**

*Where do your customers live? How far do people drive to do business with you? What percentage live within a five mile radius? Ten mile radius? Fifteen mile radius? Twenty mile radius? Thirty mile radius?*

As you find out this information, you can include important information about your readers in the advertising proposal. Match your customer's target area with your paper's coverage. Demonstrate that you reach the customers they want to reach.

## **Timing**

You now need to find out when the company does its business—its peaks and valleys. Some months are busier than other months. On a scale of one to ten (10 being best), which is their best month? How much business do they do during this month? Which is their slowest month? Ask the account/prospect how the other months rate on this scale of 1 to 10. Remember, if the person says that his slowest month on a scale of 1 to 10 is a 4, then all other months are higher than a four. He would not have any 1's, 2's or 3's. (Note: However, he may have another 4.)

Do this exercise on a chart and then connect the dots. You now have a better picture of how the business operates over a twelve month period. You can sometimes show him how this compares with the national average or with other businesses like his in the city.

Next, draw a blue line to represent the way his advertising program should flow. This blue line should be a little above his valleys and just below his peaks to demonstrate that you want to bring business up during a slow period and do not want to waste advertising dollars during peak times—however, you still need to advertise during the good months because that is when people are in the market to buy and he needs to be out there telling the public what he has on sale and why people should come to his business.

## **Overview Of Yearly Business Activity**

In order to plan an advertising campaign, you need to know what is happening in the business month by month. Pay particular attention on the three months immediately following the interview. In other words, if you interview a client in April, ask more questions about what is happening in his business during May, June and July. The reason for this is that you will want to design a three-month advertising campaign for the client immediately after the needs analysis interview.

It is important to find out if he does anything special for Valentine's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Mother's Day, July 4th, Labor Day, etc. When does he receive new inventory? When does he have clearance sales? Does he have a big anniversary sale? When is it? When do his co-op dollars have to be spent? Does he ever have a Sidewalk Sale? How big is the Christmas season for the business? What is the biggest promotion for the business? What was the best advertising promotion? When was it? Why did it work so well?

In order to find out as much information as you can, a suggestion would be to say, *Pretend that I am becoming a partner in your business. Inform me about everything you are doing month by month so I will have a better understanding of the business.*

## **Budget For Advertising and Promotion**

In order to design an effective advertising proposal, it is vital that you know what percentage of gross sales he sets aside for advertising. Find out what the national average is for his industry. In other words, if you are interviewing a furniture store owner, know that the national average for advertising for furniture stores is 7.2% of gross sales. Simply ask, "What percentage of gross sales do you set aside for advertising?"

After you have found out this information, ask what media choices they use? Do they use radio? Direct Mail? Broadcast Television? Cable Television? Yellow Pages? Internet? Newspapers? Shoppers? Magazines? School Publications? Outdoor? Etc.

Ask what percentage they use in each of these media. In other words, "Let's look at your advertising as a whole—100%. What percentage of this 100% do you place in Yellow Pages? What percentage is in radio? What percentage is in newspapers? In shoppers? What percentage is in Cable Television?"

If the client (prospect) is running on Radio or Television, it is vital that you find out the number of stations or networks he is on; how many commercials he is running; what dayparts he is buying; etc. He may be on too many stations or networks (especially cable television). You can take dollars away from these media if you have the proper information.

Ask if they include their co-op advertising as part of their advertising budget? Find out if there are any co-op deadlines.

## **Advertising Aspirations**

After you have finished your needs analysis interview, you will want to create an advertising proposal that fits the specific needs of the client. Before you do this, however, you need to know what he expects to receive from his advertising. Does he want immediate response to the ads? If so, you will have to design ads that have a great call to action or ads that advertise big discounts.

If the client wants to "create an new image" for his business, it will take a lot longer to accomplish this and the advertising will have to be designed differently. Simply ask, *What exactly do you want from your advertising campaign?*

If the client is expecting more than you can deliver, it is best to bring them back to reality before you design any ads. Sometimes clients think all they need to do is to run one or two ads and they will receive tremendous response. Remind the client that advertising is like exercise. It takes time to see the results. There is no overnight magic pill, no silver bullet. It takes time and effort.

Remind the client also of the AIDA Principle. All ads need to have Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. Also, inform the client that there are seven factors that influence the results of all ads: Copy, Artwork, Color, Frequency, Timing, Size, and Identity (that is, how easily is the company, product(s), service and/or offer recognized).

## **Set A Time and Day For A Sales Presentation**

After you have completed the Needs Analysis Interview, you need to set a time and date with the client for a more formal sales presentation. Ask for about 45 minutes to an hour for this presentation. Try to give the presentation in a private area where the client will not be distracted. If you are going to make a Power Point presentation, make sure the room is such that the presentation will be able to be professionally done.

It may take you some time to complete all the graphs, charts, research, etc. for your presentation so allow seven to ten days from the date of your interview. It is important, however, not to delay too long. If there is a long gap between the interview and the presentation, the client's (prospect's) excitement level for a customized proposal will diminish. On the other hand, you do not want to come back in just a few days after the interview. This will give the impression that you did not do very much work in preparation and that the presentation is a "canned pitch" that you always give with just a few minor customized changes.

## **Interface Your Paper's Strengths To Match The Client's Needs**

You now return to the paper and work up the best advertising proposal you can make. Use all your demographic information; co-op opportunities; research on your paper's strengths; information on radio and television that prove that they do not have as much reach as you do with your paper; data on the low readership of Direct Mail; circulation figures; zone circulation coverage; testimonials from satisfied customers; list of current advertisers; the pulling power of color in ads; circulation gains; believability of the printed word over other forms of advertising; long readership life of the paper; etc.

You must gather as much material as you can to present a justifiable argument for the client/prospect to be convinced that the advertising proposal is sound and reasonable.

List here your "inventory" that you can offer the account. For example: Special Target Market Sections throughout the year, Co-op Programs, Wraps, Color, Inserts, Coupon Pages, Directory Pages, Vendor Sections, Special Pick-up Rates, Online Programs, Classified, TMC Products, Remnant Ad Programs, etc.

## Create A Three-Month Advertising Campaign

With the use of creative spec layouts, create a three-month advertising campaign. Offer suggestions on how the advertiser can create a unique campaign message that will be heard above all the other advertising that is out there. Don't just put together a series of ads, create a campaign that goes along with what you learned about the client (prospect) in your interview. He mentioned concerns he has. You must be creative in designing a campaign that addresses these needs and concerns.

Practice your presentation before you attempt to give it. Ask your fellow salespeople to offer suggestions on how it can be improved. Do not overload the client (prospect) with too much information. If you do, you will overwhelm him.

Make sure you give sources for your research. Make extra copies of your proposal in case he has other members of the company there for the presentation. Do not allow the client (prospect) the opportunity to read the presentation before you actually present. It is best to tell the client (prospect) that you have a copy of the presentation which you will leave with him but that it will be best if he follows along with you as you give it.

Anticipate objections and role play ways on how you can overcome these objections. Be confident and speak with authority. Practice. Practice. Practice.

## Sell The Advertising Proposal To The Client (Prospect)

Make sure you dress appropriately for the presentation. In some rare situations, this means **NOT** wearing a suit and tie. Start out the presentation with a Purpose-Benefit Statement. That is, explain how this proposal is going to help him increase business. Remind him that it will be an investment and not an expense. Go slowly. Do not rush through the presentation. Inform the client that you will give him time for questions after the presentation, but also be ready to answer them during your presentation if necessary.

Just as you did in practice, be confident and speak with authority. Use the appropriate amount of eye contact; and, most importantly, **ASK FOR THE BUSINESS.**