

A collection of tips, tricks and traps  
for people interested in non-pushy  
sales

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# **SELLING SECRETS FOR NON- SELLERS**

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4 Non-pushy Skills  
Great Sellers Use to  
HEAT Up Sales

**BY PATRICK HELMERS**

"No one can deny the power of a great quote"  
- Pat Helmers





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## My Selling Secret

The last thing I thought I would ever become was a sales guy.

I had always been in software development, first as a coder, next architect and then lastly as a technical manager. I'm a builder and enjoy being a creator. I worked on some pretty cool things and even earned a couple patents. Yet time after time my projects kept getting cancelled. What gives? They seemed great to me. Why aren't these products flying off the shelves? I was stumped.

In 2001 the dot.com bubble burst. All the first movers in e-commerce imploded. Remember eToys? Out of business. Amazon? Their stock tanked. Yet surprisingly Amazon barely held on. But that wasn't the case for my company, Bell Labs/Lucent.

Lucent was a telecom company born from ATT and the old Bell System. I started in Bell Labs and it was subsumed into the fold. In the 1990s Lucent took advantage of the emerging Internet. They made a fortune selling second land lines to houses: one to make calls and one for dial-up. But the market saturated and soon the smart men and women of Bell Labs didn't look so smart. The stock went from \$84/share to \$4. It was a trainwreck. Projects were being cut left and right. It was time to purge staff.

I had to make some heart wrenching decisions and request some wonderful loyal engineers to retire early. One engineer refused. But that wasn't the end. 6 months later I had to lay him off. He was devastated. Along with another crop of freshly laid off engineers.

We called them the walking dead.

Then the day came. My boss called me to his office after lunch. She said I was safe from being laid off. But I was going to be demoted back to engineer. It was demoralizing. It had been 7 years since I coded a project.

It took work but I was starting to get back into the zone. Then to no surprise, 9 months later they laid me off after 23 years of service. It was over.

Too young to retire, too old to retool. Or so I thought.

## A New Start

Towards the end of my technical manager career, I managed a group of systems and sales engineers. I was working with the sales teams and giving technical presentations on the product to our customers. I enjoyed it! I was able to leverage my technical skills and presentation skills I had honed as a software development instructor. I had seen such possibility in this job.

My last day at Lucent was a Wednesday. I had been packing and pitching 23 years of Bell Labs crap all week. Two week prior I was looking at jobs online. I wondered if I should look for a new job in sales.

That next week I applied for unemployment, twenty cents on the dollar. I had a ton of family responsibility with 4 boys and a mortgage. What was I going to do?

In those days my wife was president of the school board. Each year we attended a large education conference in downtown Chicago. As a guest I was allowed to wander the tradeshow and came across one tattered booth that had a sole engineer/entrepreneur struggling to sell a web-based education service.

Despite the poor presentation, the education product was a true innovation for those days. I immediately could see the benefits. The owner and I hit it off and soon I was selling software with the fancy title Director of Business Development.

## Mistakes Sellers Make

I made a lot of mistakes.

I thought that I was supposed to be aggressive and assertive. I'd seen movies where the sales guys are hard charging competitors. I tried to be like that too. But it went against my personality.

As an engineer I was all about my craft. I was proud of creating software products that were loved and admired. I polished them like a goldsmith might polish a ring. Assumptive arrogance was not my natural inclination.

It was on my second or third deal I was trying to close this one lady. She didn't have budget to buy until summer time. I was calling in February. Even if she wanted to, she didn't have the budget to pay. What was I thinking?

She quit answering the phone. It only made me more aggressive!

Come summer she called up the phone line and said I'd like to by your software. But she was very explicit.....

*“ .... I don't want anything to do with that Pat Helmers guy!”*

I was too pushy. Way too pushy.

I soon came to the realization that being pushy was exactly the WRONG thing to do when hoping to win business.

What truly matters is something completely opposite.

## It's All About Helping

What matters to buyers is that they profoundly understand that **you have their best interest in mind**. The way you understand what's best for them is to discover what they want, then seeing if you can help them.

Unfortunately too many sellers devolve into telling selling.

This is where you tell the prospect all about your stuff, and then lay it on even thicker. The thinking here is that the louder and more aggressive you tell the buyer how awesome, great, innovative, inexpensive, etc. etc etc the more likely they will buy.

Wrong.

Buyers don't want to be told. Buyers don't want to be sold. Buyers want to be helped.

## How Bakers Sell

Let's say you're a baker. The door opens, the bell rings and a patron comes into your bakery. The smells of fresh bread abound in the air and you ask them a qualification question. It's a simple question but a natural question:

*"How can I help you today?"*

If they say they are looking for some fresh tomatoes you can't help them. You don't sell vegetables, you're a baker!

But let's say they answer differently and say they came to your store to buy a cake. Excellent!

You may ask:

*"What kind of cake are you looking for?"*

The customer answers *"Birthday"*. This is a good start!

*"Whose birthday?"* you counter.

Could it be a parents birthday, or a friend, or a child or maybe even an organization? These details matter.

As the customer continues to answer, the good baker furthers the journey. They ask probing questions about the interests of the birthday person, the intent of the buyer and the vibe of the birthday event. They need this information to ensure the buyer gets the PERFECT cake.

See how the baker becomes more coach than baker in this situation?

## Helping Make a Decision That's Good For Them

What they're doing is **helping** the customer make a decision that meets and exceeds their needs. By taking a **consultative approach** the baker gets the buyer to open up and get excited by the possibilities.

Relief pours out of the buyer now that their quest to buy a cake is coming to the end. This is masterful sales.

## Anyone Can Excel in Sales

I believe that anyone can grow their confidence in sales. It's as simple as merging the passion you have for your business with your wish to help. There is a lot of babble out there about sales. Most of it is false.

How often have you heard that to be successful in sales you must be a hard-driving, loud-mouthed and become a uber competitive extrovert. Hogwash.

In reality, these kinds of sellers are losers. They might bully a customer into buying, ONCE.

But they will never build up a catalog of loyal clients who come back to buy and buy again.

## Master Sellers Have HEAT

Over time I became a terrific sales professional and soon Vice President of Sales. As a hiring manager I felt compelled to create a criteria for evaluating candidates. I met sales people from all walks of life and amazed how different they all viewed the sales profession.

For me I just wanted people who were helpful. People who went out of their way to take care of me. I wanted people who made sure I had everything I needed so I could properly evaluate them as a candidate. I loved the people with hustle and energy, especially those who anticipated my needs. I want to be served like a diner in a fine restaurant.

But it was clear that my best sales people were more than just helpful. They were on fire. I've come to the realization that master sellers have heat. And by heat I mean the acronym, **HEAT!**

HEAT stands for **Helpful, Emotionally intelligent, Astute, and Tenacious.**

With these four attributes, you'll have a fresh mindset on how to approach sales. And you'll do so in a non-pushy way.

## Helpful

Let's say somebody you deeply love calls you up out of the blue. You're not expecting the call. It's the wrong time of day. When you answer the phone they are clearly stressed. You can hear it in their voice.

You immediately ask *"What's going on?"*

And in response they say *"I was just in an accident"*

What would be your natural response? Most people would quickly ask

*"Are you alright?"*

*"Are you hurt?"*

*"Was anyone hurt?"*

*"Is there anything you want me to do?"*

Isn't this what you would naturally do in this situation/ You wouldn't start lecturing them on how to take photos of the accident, take notes, get names and phone numbers and other commands. It makes more sense to ask a few questions, figure out the situation and then offer to see if there is something you can do like call a friend or go pick them up.

So it begs the question where are you helpful in your life?

Consider the situation where a friend or family member calls you up. Would you come to their aid? In this situation you would ask a number of questions, wouldn't you?

What's going on? What's the problem? Is there something I can do? How can I help?

Now take this mindset and use it when you're working with prospective clients. Not a mindset of being pushy, but being helpful.

Let's assume you believe in the value of your product or service. Let's also assume that you're sure you can improve the lives of your customers. By taking the mindset of being helpful, it's easier to promote what you have. But only if you're certain you can help.

In the case of baker, they can only help with baking needs. Meat, Vegetables and Dairy good can only be found at another store. A good baker would point out the nearest store, building good will in anticipation of the day when the customer may need a wedding cake.

You're not trying to sell them, you're trying to help.

## Emotionally Intelligent

Master sellers are able to pick up social cues. They can read body language in ways words don't convey. Being able to read people, depends on your ability to listen, look, and understand.

Pay close attention. When you're mindful you can read between the lines. It's easier to understand what your prospective client is telling you. Often times people get confused. This is especially the case when they're shopping for the unfamiliar. But this doesn't make them dumb. Just ill informed.

Master sellers expect their customers to know less than they know. They never look down on them. They feel their prospects aspirations and look for ways to find solutions.

Once they offer a solution, too often sellers assume a sale is going well, when in reality it's not. They don't notice the shuffling of the feet or the fidgeting of the hands. They don't notice what the client is NOT doing. Master sellers pick these things up. They listen with their eyes.

For example did you notice the buyers *are NOT* asking a lot of questions? This is a sign of trouble.

Weak sellers assume silence is a positive thing. But in reality that's not the case. If you look at the body language, the prospects are uncomfortable with your presentation.

Or maybe they're presenting "buying signs" but you're oblivious to this behavior and failing to start closing.

The best way to know what your customer thinks, is to ask. After you ask, listen. Really listen. Listen hard and then listen again. If it's unclear what they're saying. Ask some more. Probe. Wonder. Discover. Then listen again.

None of us are mind readers.

Never assume you know what a prospect is thinking. Ask them for honest feedback, and listen how they answer. When the answer is complete and full, only then propose a solution.

## Astute

Master sellers are astute. Unlike others who are constantly baffled by reality, master sellers are able to connect the dots. They take random facts and find patterns. They understand how to take a bad situation and turn it to the buyers advantage. The astute seller is smart and creative.

Buyers are often confused by the event in their lives. They know they are experiencing pain, but unsure where it stems. It's important you that understand your ideal client better than they know themselves. Once you understand the troubles they have in their lives, you can provide relief.



An astute seller never leads with a solution. But they do walk their clients through a conversation. If done masterfully, it's a conversation that concludes with a solution the seller offers.

Astute sellers are patient. They are more than happy to let buyers come to a realization on their own schedule.

## Tenacious

Master sellers do not give up. They work deals until done. Tenacity is the ability to not quit and stick with the deal, win or lose.

This requires sellers to become organized and detail oriented. This is a hard thing for people who don't have a predisposition towards order. But this can be fixed by building new daily habits centered around CRM software. With a little discipline, you too can become the organized seller.

Now make no mistake, not all deals are winnable. It's a competitive world. This is especially true if the product or service you have isn't much different from the rest. In this case it's critical that you have a clear **value proposition** that describes what types of customer you serve, what kind of problems they experience, what you offer and how the buyer benefits when they use your product or service. You should know this like you know your phone number.

Not all deals are won. But you should work deals until it's clear the prospect is no longer a match.

Sales is like matchmaking. It needs to be a good deal for the buyer and it needs to be a good deal for the seller too. The buyer must believe that for every dollar they spend on your product, they will get a clear return on investment. The inverse is true too. The seller must make margin on the deal too. Giving away products and services below cost might make sense in the short term. This is how you grab market share. But to be constantly selling on price, it's a race to the bottom.

Luckily your competition probably stinks. Their products and services pale in reality to the hype. More likely, doing nothing is your great competitor. Change is hard for most customers. Patience is in order.

The key here is to periodically check up on them. We call this follow up. Most sellers don't follow-up more than twice. This is where you can beat them.

Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up. At least eight times.

## In Conclusion

Master sellers have HEAT. And if you reflect on your life, you intrinsically have these attributes too.

Where are you helpful?

Where are you good at reading people's body language?

Where are you astute and able to see the forest for the trees?

Where are you tenacious and never ever let go?

Take what you do in your personal life, and apply it to your professional life. By integrating the two, you can become a master seller. A seller that is non-pushy, confident, makes sales, and loved by their customers.

Complete the HEAT Selling Skills Assessment at the end of the eBook and see if you have what it takes to be successful in sales. I bet you do.



# HEAT Selling Skills Assessment

Do you have what it takes to be in sales? Let's see!

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, where would you rank your selling skills?

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

Master Sellers have HEAT. Write the word each letter represents.

H		
E		
A		
T		
<b>Sum</b> _____ /4 =		

## Assessment

Review you score. Most sellers are in the middle, between 2.5 and 7.5. See the possibility of becoming successful in sales with your existing skill set. You already have what it takes.

## The Author

Pat Helmers is an international business consultant and technology startup coach. He is the author of the Selling With Confidence sales system and host of the [award winning](#) Sales Babble podcast.

Pat has been in the tech world his entire professional career. Pat started his career as a software engineer for Bell Laboratories. It was there he became an inventor in GSM wireless technologies, earning two patents. He leveraged his expertise and became a trainer for emerging software Object Oriented methodologies, training 1000s of engineers in the USA and Europe. He was promoted and managed various training groups and a technology adoption organization promoting technology transfer.

He then entered the software startup arena, pursuing a career in business development for software startups, enrolling and selling early adopters on new technologies. Eventually Pat was promoted to the Vice President of Sales for an enterprise SaaS startup, building from scratch an inside and outside sales team that generated 8 figure revenues.

Still having the start-up bug, Pat created the *Sales Babble* brand with the [Sales Babble Podcast](#). Sales Babble was created to stop the babble and myth that only pushy salespeople are successful in sales. He believes **anyone** can become skilled in sales. All it take is an attitude of “helping” clients and adding “value” to their lives and businesses. From the podcast sprung his consulting and coaching practice as well as authoring the [Selling With Confidence](#) sales system.

When he’s not podcasting, Pat is a startup business consultant. He helps businesses find prospects that ache for their products, convert those prospects into clients, then scale up that process for phenomenal growth.

Pat enjoys golf, bicycling, history, and world travel. He is an avid father, husband and loyal friend.