



## Know Thy Customer

**KNOW THYSELF? BETTER YET: KNOW THY CUSTOMER.** The sales landscape is littered with stories of salespeople who pitched products and services to potential customers they didn't bother to research. Taking a naïve (at best) or arrogant (at worst) approach, these kind of salespeople think all they need to do is dazzle with facts, figures and sales acumen to seal the deal. Or they think the product pretty much sells itself, so why do any research about potential buyers?

We recently interviewed 24 top executives in the process of developing our SalesSpeaking® course. Listen to Sharon Black, President of Strategic Accounts at Robert Half International, as she tells the story of the novice salesperson who didn't put much stock in knowing his audience.

Click here to watch the video:

<https://powerspeaking.fordela.com/v/48898/1237893>

You simply cannot gain the ear, let alone the heart and mind, of a client unless you have an understanding of their business and their goals. You accomplish that by doing extensive research, and then, by seeing every subsequent interaction with them as a two-way conversation, not a sales pitch from you. During the presentation, your potential customer should do most of the talking, and you should do most of the listening. Nail those things, and you create:

**Credibility**, by showing that you understand the company, its history, its competition, the market forces affecting them and the problem they're trying to solve or goal they're trying to reach.

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**Trust**, not only by gaining credibility through knowledge, but by spending even more time asking questions of them to clarify what they need.

**Interest**, by showing that you know them and their needs well enough, you just might have the solution.

When you understand your customer's business, you can engage in meaningful conversations about their goals and position yourself as an ally in accomplishing them.

Here are some suggestions for gathering the data you need:

**Research the Company:**

- Review their website.
- Read their annual report.
- Search online for recent articles or press releases.
- Read about their clients and customers.
- Learn the company's growth trajectory: Is it growing, scaling back, and leveling?

**Research the Competition:**

- Stay abreast of your competitors *and your customer's competitors* by reviewing their websites.
- Read industry reports to learn about trends and issues facing their industry.
- Search online for recent articles or press releases.



### **Research the People:**

While getting to know the customer on a macro level is highly valuable, researching the specific people you plan to speak with is equally important.

- Review LinkedIn profiles.
- Follow on Twitter.
- Ask colleagues.

Maybe more than any other type of presenting, sales speaking is about building profitable relationships—for both parties—over time. Take a cue from the most successful salespeople by doing your homework on your audience.

To get more information about our SalesSpeaking® course goals and agenda, click here: <https://www.powerspeaking.com/salesspeaking>.

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