

Speaker 1: 00:03 Welcome to the same side selling podcast dedicated to modern sales and marketing innovation and leadership. Here's your host, Ian Altman.

Ian Altman: 00:15 Hey, it's Ian Altman. Welcome to the same side selling podcast this week. It's a solo episode and it's answering a question that I got in the same side selling Academy, which is this, someone shared with me, it was Chris and Chris said, Hey, look, Ian. So I've got a client who, man, we can help better than just about anybody out there, but they want us to follow this crazy process that they have in terms of their procurement process and we know that their process isn't going to give them the best outcome, but this is the process they want us to follow and instead we want them to follow our process. How do we make that happen? Well, Chris, here's the challenge and I'm going to give you specific ideas on how we can actually help our clients see that we have an approach that would work really well for them, but it's a little bit, it's a little bit different than you might be thinking otherwise.

Ian Altman: 01:18 See if the client says, here's the process I want to go through to buy your stuff. And you say, no, no, no, no. Instead we want you to follow our process to buy our stuff. Meaning I want you to follow the process that we prefer when we're selling you stuff. We're probably not going to get their buy in because they're thinking to themselves, none of this manipulation be like if you went to go buy a car and you said, well, so what I want to look at is I want to look at the invoice and I want to look at the past history of the vehicle. And the salesperson said, no, no. Instead you tell us what you would be willing to pay for the car and then we'll select the car for you. You'd be like, no, I don't trust you to do that.

Ian Altman: 02:03 That's not gonna work. So instead we need to take a slightly different approach because if all we want them to do is follow our process for making a sale, then no one's going to buy into that. So very often organizations get stuck with, they say, well, it's crazy cause their procurement process they want us to follow is not in their best interest. So what can we do? Well, the first thing we have to do is actually open their eyes to the possibility that we have a way that will help them reach a better outcome. See, when I ask salespeople to map out the buyer seller relationship or the buyer seller interaction, everyone agrees that it starts with initial contact. We usually then listen to their needs, determine if we have a good fit, lay out a proposal, then boom, we get a contract and everybody's high fiving.

Ian Altman: 02:57 Yay, we got the contract. And very often when I ask people, what's the finish line in the buyer seller interaction, people say, what's the contract or the sale? Or someone at accounting might say getting paid. But what if you asked your

client to tell you what the finish line is? Well, your client would say, well, the finish line is actually getting the results because let's face it, if the client, no matter what they pay, if they don't get the results they need, it's not a good deal, is it? So you can almost ask yourself, how much less would someone have to pay for it to be a good deal? But they do not get the results that they need. So if we know that, if we know that results are the things that really matter, then in order for us to map out a process for the client that they will be willing to follow, we can't map out the sales process we want them to follow.

Ian Altman:           03:54           Instead, we have to map out what it takes to get us from where we are right now, which is this initial meeting to the end. And the end is where they get the best results. So if the client said, well, so here's our process. We want you to go through this. We want you to give, this demo, wants you to check off these boxes. Um, we want you to go through this assessment. We want to have a demo and all these things that may not meet their needs. The first thing we have to say is, and this is, this is the initial piece of this as a concept from my buddy Phil Jones book, exactly what to say. And Phil says that one of the great questions you can ask is how open-minded would you be? And then fill in the blank because the alternative to being open minded is what?

Ian Altman:           04:41           Well, you could say it's being closed minded or you can say it's being a jerk or something with profanity. But the bottom line is open minded is something that people generally, um, want to be considered as being openminded. So what we could say is, well, there's a number of different ways that we've seen clients implement these concepts before and some are wildly successful and some don't generate the same sorts of results. How open would you be to hearing about a process that we've found goes between now all the way through, confirm the results of the end that we found generates the best results for our clients? Well, most people aren't going to be opposed to that process. And what I want to do is I want to lay out for you the different elements that you should include as part of that. And keep in mind if all you do is focus on the sales part of it, then you're not really looking out for your client's best interest.

Ian Altman:           05:42           So what you may even do is start towards the end of the process where you say, look, one of the things we want to make sure of right out of the shoot is that we know what success looks like. So let's imagine that we've already implemented this solution for you. What are the two or three things that we can measure together so we know whether or not we've been successful? And the client says, well, okay, gee, let's go through that. They may struggle with it, in which case you might want to say to them, here's some of the things that other people have measured to make sure that they're getting the results they need with those be applicable for

you. The idea is that I want to start with how are we going to measure success together? Happens to be the lower left quadrant in the same side quadrants that's on page 76 of the same side selling book.

Ian Altman: 06:30 But the idea is that we want to focus on their measurement of success and then say, well, so who would need to be involved on your end to make sure that we actually achieve those results? And the client might identify some other people and say, okay, so in order for us to get to that point where we implement that, what could get what could get in the way of that? What could go wrong along the way? And then people will map map out that. And the idea is that we work from the end backwards to where we currently are. And by defining this, what we can do is say, look, some of the steps that have proven to be most effective for our clients are these specific steps here. Here's the sequence that we followed together. And I'll give you an example. Let's say that you're selling to, um, you're, you're selling into a, a large enterprise pharmaceutical company and they want to run you through their procurement people and all that.

Ian Altman: 07:29 And what we might say to them is, look, eventually procurement always needs to get involved right now it may be premature cause I'm not quite sure we can help you yet. Would you be open to me laying out for you the specific process we found to be really successful in generating the best results for other pharmaceutical companies? They'll probably say, sure, okay, so in this manufacturing area, what we found works best and keep mine, I want to make sure we understand what are we going to measure at the end. So they'll tell you that and say, okay, in order to get to that measurement, what we found is that initially what we do is we lay out all the requirements and understand exactly what we're trying to solve and we document it so we can all nod our heads and say, yet this we're trying to do the next step after that is for us to look at it and say, can we actually achieve that result?

Ian Altman: 08:16 If we can, then we need to get this role in that role involved on the manufacturing side. When you make sure we get their buy in, that this can actually accomplish what they feel needs to be done, so we're not missing anything at that point, then we would get procurement involved because if it looks like we have a solution that can meet your needs, then we need to make sure that we have the process nailed down for how we can achieve that. But at this point we don't yet know where we need to be. And so what we've just done is made it so that the client now sees that, ah, you have a process that makes sense and you're not trying to circumvent our procurement people. You just trying to bring them in at the right. And the idea is that what you need to do is literally on a sheet of paper, write down for a good outcome who's involved at each step along the way, and then think about what tasks need to be done at each step and what the milestones are for each step that move it forward.

Ian Altman: 09:16 You want to think of it almost like a project plan. And then the idea is that with this project plan, we can now share this with the client and say, here's the roadmap that we would follow. How open are you to at least considering this as a way that might help us mutually reach the best outcome? Because the last thing we want is for you to spend money and not get the results. We don't want our team to be frustrated not knowing what it is you're trying to accomplish. And if we can't help you, we want to make sure you know that as quickly as possible so you can reach the right outcome. So in taking this approach, what we're doing is we're putting ourselves on the same side as our client or prospect because we're now putting a top priority on the results that we're trying to achieve.

Ian Altman: 10:03 Then we're working backwards with them that says, here are the steps we take to actually get there. And what you'll notice is we're now co building a plan together that helps us reach the correct outcome for the client that actually include the entire sales process. But we're not identifying it as part of the sales process. We're just saying to get you from where we are today, this initial discussion about what you're trying to solve to the best results, here are the steps we're going to follow together and here's what needs to be involved in each step on our end and your end. And here are the decisions we're going to make along the way. So early on you're going to share with us what you're trying to accomplish and what the impact is of not solving that. And we're going to evaluate whether or not we can actually solve that sort of problem.

Ian Altman: 10:52 And then we're going to define what this solution needs to look like and what the results are that we're going to measure and we need to make sure once again, that we can actually deliver that. And if it looks like we can, then we want to make sure that we get procurement involved and other people involved so that we're not missing anybody important in the process so that we make it a streamlined as possible to get you these results as quickly as possible. Now here's a little, a little tip that you can use if somebody says you, yeah, those are the results we're looking for. We can then ask a two part question. The first question is, so when's the latest you would like to see those results? And when they give us that information, you write that down and say, okay, great. So that's the latest you'd want it. So ideally when would you like that to happen? And in almost every case your client is going to give you an earlier date than the first day they gave you, which means they are pushing the urgency, not you.

Ian Altman: 11:49 So hopefully this gives you some insight. Let me just kinda recap the key information you can use when somebody presents a crazy plan that is not in your best interest and probably isn't in the client's either. We want to make sure that we focus first on results and outcome and we ask them, what do you want

to measure at the end of this process to know that we're successful? Then we want to make sure we're identifying from the end of the process where they're measuring results all the way back to where we were at right now, who needs to be involved and what the milestones are. And we asked them, how open would you be to a process like this that we found generates the best results for our clients? And candidly, some of your clients are going to be resistant to that. And what I would suggest is those people may not be as serious about the results as other people, and you may not want to go through the process with those organizations.

Ian Altman: 12:40 I encourage you to kind of keep tabs of that and you might find that the people who aren't willing to go through that sort of process end up not being good clients in the long run. So make sure to take the time to focus on their results and map out that plan. And my belief is that the clients who are the best fit for you are going to embrace that and you'll be working from the same side. Remember, this show gets direction from you, the listener. There's a topic you think I should cover or a guest I should have on the show. Just drop me a note to [ian@ianaltman.com](mailto:ian@ianaltman.com) have an amazing week. Add value and grow revenue in a way everybody can embrace, especially your customer.