

Sales Machine

Use First Impressions as Sales Tools

By [Geoffrey James](#)

September 3rd, 2009 @ 11:24 am

| [Permalink](#)

Categories: [Pitches](#), [Presentations](#), [Sales Skills](#), [Sales Tips](#)

Tags: [Statistic](#), [Presentation](#), [Impressions Inc.](#), [Sales Strategy](#), [Sales Force Management...](#), [Sales](#), [Geoffrey James](#)



This week we're discussing opening remarks. ([CLICK here to vote on your favorite!](#)) Amazingly, many people still believe that it's best to start a sales presentation exactly like every other business presentation — with a personal introduction, a summary of the presentation, or a funny story. I think that's nuts.

Regular business presentations take place among people who generally know each other and either have worked together for years or will be working together for years. The purpose of such presentations is generally to provide information, come to agreement on operational issues, etc. As such, it makes perfect sense to use the standard “here’s why we’re here” or “hi, I’m Joe from accounting” openings.

Sales presentations are DIFFERENT. A sales presentation is intended to lead to a sale and, in most cases, it will be the first time that the decision-makers will meet you. The sales presentation is when you're making your FIRST IMPRESSION on the people who are going to make the decision to buy. Why in God's name would you want to waste that FIRST IMPRESSION on something that doesn't drive the sale forward?

Let's suppose you begin by introducing yourself. Fine. Even if you've got the best personality in the world, you've used your first impression up by asking the customer to absorb some (possibly irrelevant) information. They must now figure out a long series of connections about who you are and how that ties to what you're selling and how that is associated with what they think they might want to buy, which may not be what you're selling, etc. etc.

By contrast, going for a gut reaction in the first 10 seconds will cause them to forever associate you, your face and your presentation with a compelling need to buy. Tying your first

impression to a memorable, relevant statistic — one that leads towards buying your product — keeps that association focused on the eventual goal of the relationship.

From then on, when they see your face, or hear your name, they'll be reminded of the compelling reason that they need to buy. That's *exactly* what you want.

In other words, **use first impressions as sales tools.**

Go for the hearts and minds in one swift strike with an emotion-laden, relevant statistic.

Introduce yourself **AFTER** you've made a first impression that they'll remember all the way to signing the bottom line.

Get it?

RELATED POSTS:

- [QUIZ: What's the Best Opening Remark?](#)
- [Presentation? You've got 10 Seconds!](#)

CHECK THIS OUT: The Ultimate Prospect Qualification Tool