



Selling Advantage: Promote Yourself and Your Company

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At some point in a sales presentation, it is appropriate to take the time to credential yourself and your company (i.e., provide your audience reasons to listen further, and for you to build some additional credibility).

Initially, you must determine the audience's level of knowledge pertaining to your company, your products/services, and your areas of endeavor. This can be accomplished through the use of what is known as "point of reference" questions. They may be well informed about who you are and your company, in which case you don't want to bore them with facts they already know. On the other hand, they may never have heard of your company nor you, so you'll need to cover "credentialing matters" in greater detail. You can determine present level of knowledge simply by asking "Are you familiar with our company?" or "What do you know about our business?"

From the response provided to these questions you will learn much about what information you will need to provide. You must plan to describe you and your company in a way that will be meaningful, informative, and flexible. In order to do this, it is recommended that you have at least three basic histories planned that you will use as/when appropriate:

- One historical synopsis should be factual, to the point and stick to the essentials. This is for the no-nonsense, bottom-line type of person.
- One historical synopsis is for the casual, warmer, friendly individual. It should be full of descriptions of the key people who are behind the company.
- One historical synopsis should be fairly succinct and almost point form, concentrating on the highlights. This format should be used with people who are definitely not within the descriptions given above.

Naturally, every presentation will vary, but for planning purposes, these variations are sufficient. In all cases, it is suggested that your historical synopsis should include the following points in this order,

WHO	Describe the people who started the company and those who have developed it to its present point.
WHAT	Review what the company does, its major markets, and some of the key products/services it provides.
WHERE	Outline where offices, branches, service departments and other departments of importance are located.
WHEN	Explain when the company was started, how long you have been with the company, and how long the various services have been available.
HOW	Describe how the company operates and how it is different from others in the same industry.
WHY	Highlight why the company was started (review the initial and subsequent mission statements), and especially why you decided to work for the company. Provide details of your relevant experience, knowledge and skills.

As you promote yourself and your company, you will be relying heavily on effective communication skills. You will be addressing the audiences need to determine if they can benefit from doing business with you and whether or not your proposal and / or ideas make sense. Good luck!