

8 quick fixes to improve your virtual selling success

5-min read



The 2020s have seen a huge shift in the way we work. And at the centre of this shift has been the widespread adoption of video conferencing.

The initial surge was prompted by the necessity of moving work online during the Covid pandemic: Zoom saw its number of daily participants in virtual meetings soar from 10 million to 200 million in the first quarter of 2020. Since then, video conferencing has remained popular in hybrid workspaces and as global organisations lower their dependency on travel in a bid to reduce costs and their carbon footprints. Microsoft Teams went from 270 million daily active users in 2022 to 300 million in 2023.

However, not everyone has adapted easily to the virtual workplace.

In fact, during a recent webinar, almost two-thirds of attendees (62%) revealed they found selling more challenging in a digital environment.

This is unsurprising, given that the reason [many of us are in sales](#) is because we thrive on human connection and interaction (and obviously the commission goes down rather well).

In this blog post, we explain why it can be more difficult to build rapport screen-to-screen than face-to-face, and how you can increase your sales effectiveness in a virtual setting.

Body language

Many of you will be aware of the impact body language has on human interaction.

In his 1971 book *Silent Messages*, [Albert Mehrabian](#) identified three components that impact how we interpret what's being said to us:

- Words used
- Tone and rhythm of voice
- Body language

Groundbreaking in Mehrabian's research, though, was the finding that we put significantly more emphasis on body language (55%) and tone of voice (38%) than on what is actually said (7%).

Even when speaking on the phone, just 25% of our reaction is based on the words used.

So, when pitching to a client virtually, how can we overcome these obstacles and create an emotional connection?

1. Manage your tech and environment

Just because your team are Teams disciples doesn't necessarily mean your clients are. You should also become confident with Zoom, WebEx and Google Hangouts in case that's their preferred platform.

Ensure you remove any background clutter that could distract your prospects – if you're in a particularly busy environment, use a professional virtual background.

2. Humanise

Building “know, like and trust” is critical to any sales conversation. So look at ways to build a connection from the start. While you don't want any distracting objects in the background, there is a slight caveat to this.

Strategically placed objects, such as a classic film poster or running medals, can serve as a great ice-breaker. And don't forget the standard sales techniques to build a connection, such as mirroring your prospect.

3. Follow a proven sales process

Just because you're meeting on screen doesn't mean you should adopt a completely different approach. Stick to a proven sales process. At SBR, for example, we teach the QUIS Selling™ consultative sales technique, which stands for Question, Understand, Influence, Solidify.

It is vital to keep these 4 stages in the back of your mind during virtual sales conversations. Unfortunately, many salespeople forget about the first two stages and go straight to “Influencing”, even if this isn't an approach they'd take in an in-person meeting.

4. Pre-approach and preparation

Again, we have seen many clients forget critical aspects of their sales cycle in the virtual environment. Make sure you are fully prepared, including knowledge about who you're meeting with, their position in the decision-making unit, and the questions you intend to ask them.

Knowing your prospects' personality types is also important. Previous email conversations can help you work out whether you're dealing with detail-orientated personalities or someone who likes more of a high-level overview.

LinkedIn is a great tool for gaining insight into who you'll be speaking to and how to tailor your approach.

5. Stories vs. facts

It's often said that “facts tell and stories sell”. Using [previous success stories](#) is a highly effective way of building trust and making yourself memorable. Prospects are more likely to remember a compelling narrative that adds colour than dry facts.

This is even more notable in a virtual environment where several video calls can soon blend into one.

6. Interactive

One of the main benefits of virtual selling is the ability to share content with your prospects. Using whiteboards and screen sharing are great ways to avoid screen fatigue and keep your audience engaged.

7. You are the conductor

Keeping your prospects engaged is, in fact, your main goal here. Make sure you watch their facial expressions while you are presenting. If you feel that certain stakeholders' attention is wandering, or their interest waning, ask checking or naming questions to draw them back in.

8. Adapt and evolve

Don't become complacent and instead stay ready to adapt and evolve. Make sure that you learn from what hasn't worked in previous sales meetings to include in future training and preparation.

There is a lot to learn about selling in the virtual environment. As with any skill, the more you do it, learning from your mistakes, the better you will get.

To discover more how you can improve the quality of your virtual selling technique, [let's talk growth](#).