How to Make a Powerful First Impression

By Kelley Robertson
Contact Information

Published by:
The Robertson Training Group
677 Inverary Road
Burlington, ON L7L 2L8
905-633-7750
Email: sales@robertsontraininggroup.com
Web site: www.robertsontraininggroup.com

Copyright © 2004-2008 The Robertson Training Group. All rights reserved.

Legal Notices

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical or electronic, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, or transmitted by email without written permission from the publisher.

Neither the author nor the Publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein.

This publication is not intended for use as a source of any advice such as legal, medical, or accounting. The Publisher wants to stress that the information contained herein may be subject to varying international, federal, provincial, state and/or local laws or regulations. The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes responsibility for the use of these materials and information. Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations, including federal, provincial, state and local, governing professional licensing, business practices, advertising and all other aspects of doing business in the US, Canada or any other jurisdiction is the sole responsibility of the purchaser or reader. Neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader this publication.

Any perceived slight of specific people or organization is unintentional.

Disclaimer: Please note. The information contained in this publication is for educational purposes only and should not be construed as advice.
About Kelley Robertson

Kelley Robertson began his retail career in a men’s clothing store in the mid-seventies. With no experience or training, he struggled to make ends meet and eventually changed directions by moving into the hospitality industry.

For over a decade he worked in a managerial capacity for several large chains and in 1990 began training employees, managers and owner/operators. During the next five years, he hired and trained close to 1000 service staff for sixteen new restaurants.

In 1995 he returned to retail to provide sales training for the retail division of Sony of Canada and helped the Sony Stores become one of Canada top retailers of consumer electronics. The training programs and resources he developed are now recognized around the world within the Sony organization and have been used by Sony Latin America as well as Sony Mexico.

As President of The Robertson Training Group, Kelley has helped thousands of professionals improve their business results with his engaging approach to training and speaking. He specializes in helping businesses increase their sales, develop better negotiating skills, deliver outstanding service and coach and motivate their employees.

He is the author of two books: Stop, Ask & Listen—Proven Sales Techniques to Turn Browsers into Buyers and The Secrets of Power Selling and he publishes a weekly electronic newsletter called 59 Seconds to Sales Success that is distributed to thousands of people around the world. Kelley is a frequent contributor to magazines and his articles have appeared in dozens of publications and hundreds of websites around the world. Some of the magazines his articles have appeared include; Sales Promotion, Boating Industry Canada, Canadian Vending, Canadian Business Franchise, Graphic Arts, Luggage Leather & Accessories, Professional Door Dealer, Sleep Products, Staff Digest, and Tire News.

Kelley can be reached at 905-633-7750 or at Kelley@RobertsonTrainingGroup.com.
How to Make a Powerful First Impression

A customer’s first impression of you will influence his or her behavior in the sales process. This report provides a wide variety of tips and strategies that will help you make a powerful first impression with your customers which will lead to a higher closing ratio and more sales.

1. **First impressions are critical.** Ninety percent of people will form up to eleven opinions of you within the first forty-five seconds of meeting you. If you don’t make a great impression immediately, you will have to work harder to develop credibility with your customer or prospect. Determine how you want people to perceive you and develop an image that is consistent with your goal.

2. **Develop a 1000-watt smile.** A genuine smile exudes warmth and confidence and makes people around you feel great. Practise your smile. Ask your friends to evaluate it for you. Then make the changes they suggest. Remember, an excellent smile reaches the eyes as well as the mouth.

3. **Show respect.** Start conversations with your customer’s last name and the appropriate Mr./Ms./Mrs. or Dr. It is always better to err on the side of formality. People will tell you if they are comfortable with you using a more casual greeting. For example, I am comfortable with some business people using my first name, but in some cases, I prefer it when others use Mr. Robertson. Allow your customers to guide you in this area and follow their lead.

4. **Use eye contact.** Good eye contact shows people that you are genuinely interested in them. Most men only hold eye contact for a moment or two. Develop trust and rapport with women by increasing the length of time you maintain their gaze.

5. **Rest** so you are physically and psychologically alert. This will help you maintain your focus. Schedule quiet time for yourself on a regular basis to help recharge your batteries. This will increase your overall energy level.

6. **Be yourself.** Use your own style rather than imitating someone else. Learn from other people but don’t mimic them. Adapt what they do well into your style and make it your own.
7. Avoid saying, “Hi, how are you?” Instead, greet them with something that stimulates and encourages a conversation.

8. Introduce yourself to your customer via a social context. This type of greeting focuses on something other than the sale and helps to start the sales process in a relaxed and comfortable tone.

9. Visualize yourself as a successful sales person. Athletes use visualization to help them train; you can as well. Close your eyes and create a mental image of how the perfect sale looks, feels and progresses. Hear yourself asking the right questions and controlling the sale. See your customer responding in a favorable manner and shaking your hand after they agree to buy your product or service. This will help you create a more powerful first impression.

10. Pay careful attention to your appearance. Like it or not, people judge you by the way you look. You are your product, which means your packaging is important. Pay attention to your personal grooming. You don’t have to wear a two thousand dollar suit (unless you sell them, of course!) but you must look professional. People will seldom criticize you for over-dressing, and in those rare situations, you can always remove a jacket or tie. However, it is next to impossible to upgrade your appearance when you are under-dressed.

11. Be aware of odors. Recognize that most non-smokers find the lingering smell of cigarette smoke offensive. Take breath mints after you drink coffee. Use fragrances with caution; many people are sensitive to them.

12. Relax and enjoy yourself! Have fun with the people you interact with. The more relaxed you are, the more comfortable your prospect will be. People tend to buy from individuals they feel comfortable with.

13. Be aware of your tone of voice and body language. It is not uncommon for your tone or body language to contradict your words. Ensure they are consistent with the message you want your customers to receive.

14. Believe in yourself. People want to do business with confident and self-assured sales people. Create a list of your strengths and review them regularly to develop your confidence.
15. **Develop a great handshake.** A good handshake should be firm but not crushing and should last approximately as long as it takes for you to take notice of the colour of the other person’s eyes. Always make immediate eye contact and connect with a smile when you shake hands.

16. **Use a conversational tone.** Many people raise their voice a few octaves when they sell and this sounds unnatural. Speak as though you are talking with a friend. Your sales voice should be the same as the tone you use with your friends and coworkers.

17. **Develop a great telephone greeting.** Your phone manners are an extension of your image. Your greeting will influence a person’s decision to buy from you. Practise your greeting and your voice mail messages until they portray the message you want people to receive.

18. **Exercise regularly.** This will increase your energy level and will dramatically influence how your customers respond to you.

19. **Inject enthusiasm into your voice.** The greeting most people offer is usually lack-luster and unmemorable. You have exactly one opportunity to make a great first impression so separate yourself from your competitors by displaying a high level of energy and enthusiasm.

20. **Don’t prejudge people.** Avoid making assumptions about people based on their age, gender, nationality or the way they are dressed. I have seen many situations when a disheveled person was ignored by the sales staff only to spend thousands of dollars later.

21. **Believe in your product or service.** Your confidence increases when you believe in what you sell and your customer will be influenced by this confidence.

22. **Be prepared.** Develop a variety of greetings, openers and approaches. Know how and when to use each. Adapt your approach to meet the specific needs of each person who enters your business.

23. **Develop the art of small talk.** Successful sales people know how to make small talk and can carry on a conversation with almost anyone at anytime. Read the newspapers and watch the news so you can comment on current affairs.

---

*The higher your belief in your product/service, the higher your sales will be.*

*Follow the motto of the Boy Scouts: “Be prepared.”*
24. **Try new approaches.** To truly excel, you must constantly try new strategies and techniques. Experiment. Take risks. Expand beyond your comfort zone. Some approaches will work, others will not. But do not allow that to prevent you from using new ideas and approaches.

25. **Learn how to present yourself effectively.** Take a Dale Carnegie course in public speaking or join a local chapter of Toastmasters International. This will help develop your internal confidence and will positively affect your initial approach with your customers.

26. **Avoid making assumptions.** Assumptions will drain you of energy and cause doubt. I once assumed that a customer who wasn’t returning my calls was no longer interested in working with me. I later discovered that he had to deal with more important issues during the time I was trying to contact him.

27. **Stop complaining.** Rather than whine about things that are beyond your control, concentrate your effort on the things you do have control over. You have a limited amount of energy each day and if you waste it thinking or focusing on something that can’t be changed, you will have less energy for your customers.

28. **Be aware of your customer’s fears and hesitations.** Help customers alleviate their fears by showing genuine empathy and viewing the sales process from their perspective.

29. **Treat each customer differently.** Every person is an individual and must be approached in a different manner. Ask them questions to learn what is important to them and focus on adapting your presentation to meet those specific needs.

30. **Stand up straight.** Avoid leaning on anything – walls, desks, doors, etc. This will appear too casual and you will lose as much as ninety percent of your presence.

31. **Respect their time.** Most business people are pressed for time. Pay attention to their body language. Most people will give non-verbal clues such as glancing frequently at their watch or fidgeting. These clues indicate that they are in a hurry. Avoid wasting time with information that is irrelevant to their needs, wants or desires. Focus on helping them quickly and efficiently.
32. **Recognize that people are often uncomfortable** in the sales process and treat them accordingly. Seek ways to help them relax and make them more comfortable.

33. **Earn their trust.** Never mislead someone. If you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t fake it. Be completely honest in all your dealings, all the time.

This list was adapted from Kelley’s best-selling book, “Stop, Ask & Listen—Proven Sales Techniques to Turn Browsers into Buyers”. This unique sales guide shows you how to improve your sales by applying a few customer-focused selling strategies. Robertson provides many real-life examples of how the concepts work and unlike most business or self-help books he shows you, step-by-step, how to incorporate the principles into your sales routine with his *Blueprint for Success*. Visit [www.stopasklisten.com](http://www.stopasklisten.com) today to order this valuable book.

It’s competitive out there and there’s a lot expected of you in terms of results. But, where do you begin? Start with The Secrets of Power Selling. Its 101 tips and strategies are packed with great examples, stories, and practical advice that you can put into action right away. Whether you are new to selling, an experienced veteran, a business owner or entrepreneur, or a sales manager who’s training and coaching a team, you will learn valuable tips that will help you increase your sales and earn more money. Read six sample chapters at [www.secretsofpowerselling.com](http://www.secretsofpowerselling.com).

**Looking for practical sales and motivation advice?**

Sign up for Kelley’s free newsletter, 59 Seconds to Sales Success. Issued every Monday morning it offers practical sales advice you can use to increase your sales right away. Register for this free resource at [www.robertsontraininggroup.com](http://www.robertsontraininggroup.com).

Kelley is available for keynote presentations and training workshops. For information on his programs contact him at 905-633-7750 or at: [Kelley@RobertsonTrainingGroup.com](mailto:Kelley@RobertsonTrainingGroup.com).