

10 Steps to Solution Selling

Everyone is selling something to someone!
How to sell solutions and get win-win outcomes

Step 5

Uncovering those Hidden Needs

Discover what your target audience REALLY WANTS – what keeps them up at 2 am?

As mentioned in STEP 4, we have a set of UNSTATED needs that we need to uncover and understand before selling an idea or a product or solution to our client, manager or team. Something that has been invaluable to me in identifying these UNSTATED needs is the The SCARF model.

The SCARF model was developed by neuroscientist Dr David Rock who identified that we all have 5 sets of needs that influence whether or not we see something as an opportunity or a threat. We may have them in varying levels of importance, depending on our circumstances and personality – but we do all experience them. These intrinsic needs (below the waterline) if met, help our target audience to process the event or the information we are selling them, as HELPFUL. If we do not meet these needs - our target audience will process the information as HARMFUL. This will in turn trigger a THREAT response and we will SEE the reaction, above the waterline in their behaviour. Their behaviour will either fall into the category of Silence (disengaged or compliant) OR Violence (open confrontation and objecting). (I borrowed this terminology from a great book 'Crucial Conversations')

Let us examine the SCARF needs.

According to Dr David Rock, we all have a need for **STATUS** – the need to be seen as competent, relevant and significant – to be valued and respected. So my solution that I offer, needs to demonstrate how that solution will validate them, make them feel respected and help them to be seen as competent .

We also all have a need for **CERTAINTY** – a need for predictable outcomes, or for the process to be logical. We need a certain reassurance or guarantee of the outcome – so I need to be using the language of reassurance, guarantees, predictable outcomes etc, when offering my ideas or solutions.

We all also have a need for **AUTONOMY** - so I need to make sure that my solutions or idea meets their need to have options, choice, independence and a degree of control.

We also all have a need for **RELATEDNESS** so I need to make sure that my solution or idea meets their need to feel connected, to belong, to be accepted and liked, to be in harmony with others.

And finally – we all have a need for **FAIRNESS** – so I need to make sure to demonstrate how my solution or idea will be meet their need for transparency, equity and justice.

(Each individual's needs vary, so you can alter the level of focus placed in each area, but it's good to ensure all areas are covered to some degree).

If I don't meet these intrinsic needs, I trigger a threat response in the emotional brain – through which all information is processed. At this point the rational brain disengages and the person is only capable of responding from an emotional place of fight or flight OR what Patterson from Crucial Conversations refers to as **Silence or Violence**.

What does Violence look like ?

Violence is a loud vocal expression of disagreement, complaint or list of concerns.

What does Silence look like ?

Disengagement, apathy and a lack of commitment or interest.

Neither is ideal BUT if you had to pick one – which one would you pick? Yes Violence – because then at least you are aware of what is below the water line

From now on – don't be scared of the violence – **embrace the violence** and if you see Silence – encourage your target audience to engage so that you can address those unstated needs BELOW the waterline.

So how do we uncover all these needs? by asking the RIGHT questions and truly listening to the answers AS well as listening to the non verbals which we cover in

Step Six: Questioning and Listening

Until next time.
Be Bold. Be Curious.

Jacqui
Perkins.

