

Be Prepared!

It's been said that salespeople don't plan to fail, they simply fail to plan! How much time do you currently spend preparing for your client appointments? If you're honest with yourself, the answer is probably not enough. In my opinion, the single most common characteristic shared among all successful salespeople is the value they place on pre-appointment preparation, research, and planning.



By [John Boe](#) 28 Nov 2011

I believe that when W. D. Boyce founded the Boy Scouts of America in 1910 he selected "Be Prepared" as the organisation's motto, because he understood that preparation was the key to unlock the door of opportunity.

Being prepared for an appointment gives the salesperson a major competitive edge and boosts his or her self-confidence, credibility, and professional image. Prospects are truly impressed when they meet with a salesperson who has taken the time to customise his or her presentation. Two thousand years ago the Roman philosopher Seneca remarked that "luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." Here are some time-proven suggestions to help you prepare a customised presentation the next time you get the opportunity to meet with a prospect:

1. The Internet makes it easy to conduct research. Review your prospect's website to familiarize yourself with his or her products and services.
2. Read the company's mission/vision statements to gain an understanding of the organisation's core values.
3. Check out the most recent press releases to enhance your understanding of current events and initiatives within the company.
4. Research the latest trends and products within your prospect's industry so that you are able to address any specific concerns in detail.
5. Be prepared to counter claims about your competitors' products and prices. Be ready to respond to common sales objections such as; "I can get it cheaper elsewhere." "It costs too much." or "I want to think about it and get back to you."
6. Have copies of your client testimonials ready to hand to your prospect. The most powerful testimonials are from clients within your prospect's industry.
7. Make it easy to do business with you. If appropriate, have applications available to close the sale.
8. Be prepared to ask for referrals.

I've never met a salesperson who admitted to losing a sale because he or she spent too much time preparing for the appointment. The twenty minutes or so that you invest in researching your prospect's company, products, and services is a smart business decision that will yield huge dividends during your appointment. If you want to improve your professional image, build rapport with your prospect, and dramatically increase your sales effectiveness, I suggest that you take a tip from the Boy Scouts and always "Be Prepared!"

ABOUT JOHN BOE

American John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynotes and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a recognised sales trainer, business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. For more information, go to www.johnboe.com. Free newsletter available on website.

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