ONLINE TRAINER ACADEMY

HOW TO SELL ONLINE TRAINING OVER THE PHONE IN 11 STEPS

A SPECIAL ADAPTATION FROM THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ONLINE TRAINING TEXTBOOK

Learn how to sell your online training services

In this guide, I'll give you a full-fledged selling system, complete with a step-by-step breakdown of what to do, what to say, and how to handle any objection that may arise.

But first, a few notes about the process of selling online training.

You must become proficient at selling training over the phone – not a savant, but proficient.

The first step that occurs before the actual selling begins is attraction of the right kind of clients to you. In the Online Trainer Academy I include 6 different methods to get your ideal clients. If you do your marketing right, sales gets a lot easier.

Sales is simply the process of figuring out what somebody wants, identifying whether you're properly suited to help, and, if so, positioning you and your services in a way that appeals to the potential client.

There's no trickery with sales and there are no secrets. In the famous words of Robert Louis Stevenson, "everybody lives by selling something." Even those who work for large companies sell themselves and their work every day. You must become confident presenting your services. It can take time and practice, but it is imperative for your success.

In this guide, I'll walk you through a system for sales calls. Your job will be to practice the scripts, get comfortable with the flow, and make this process your own. Again, it takes practice. Over time you will become more comfortable and confident with the whole thing.

Rules for Successful Sales Calls

1. Always be the one asking questions.

The more information you can attain throughout the sales process, the better your chance of making the sale.

Always ask questions. If the client attempts to ask you a question, you can either quickly answer and respond with a question or reply immediately with a question in return.

For example, let's say that a client asks you about your training background early on in a sales meeting. Instead of responding haphazardly about your entire experience, certifications, etc. you say, *"To be honest, I've done a lot in this industry and not all applies to how I can best serve you. Is it okay if I ask you a few more questions to learn more about you, and then I'll be happy to tell you about my background more specifically as it pertains to you – if it does. That way we can both stay on track. Is that alright?"*

2. Silence is golden.

Unconfident people are scared of silence. But really, silence is your best friend.

Wait at least two seconds after a client finishes before you speak. It's in this space that they often begin speaking again and tell you the information you really want to hear.

At the end of the meeting, when you ask for the sale, stay silent – it's their turn to speak, no matter how long it takes.

3. Show that you understand their specific issues.

The biggest benefit of being an online coach rather than an in-person coach is the ability to train with somebody of your choosing, regardless of their schedule or location. This means that you can deliberately choose to work with people you are uniquely skilled to help.

Do your research before a call and know your client as well as you can. Figure out what they did before and what special needs they may have. Come armed with as much information as possible specific to them on the call.

4. Never prejudge a client.

Go into every sales meeting with the same two-part goal: to figure out whether you're the right person for the job, and to identify how to best serve the client. If you can help the client, always present the option(s) that you feel are best suited for them, irrelevant of what you think they can or cannot afford.

5. Choose your clients carefully.

Most online trainers need 15-20 clients in order to achieve the freedom that they desire. Choose your clients carefully and don't be afraid to tell a client that you aren't the right person to work with them.

What if I've never sold anything before?

Selling takes practice. If you haven't sold training before, I strongly suggest you ask a friend, family member, or colleague to practice being your client. Do this over, and over, and over again. Have them challenge you as you role-play the scripts.

Make sure that they ask you the hard questions you hope a client will never ask, but know they will.

Know the benefits of online training to a client.

You should know the list that follows inside and out so that you can properly tell a client why online training may be better for them.

They no longer have to go into a gym. For some people gyms are uncomfortable environments. And they aren't always located conveniently.

Scheduling is a non-issue. For those clients who work regular hours, booking in with a trainer from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. can be a headache. Additionally, a strict appointment time puts undue pressure on a client. It's frustrating to show up at 6:35 p.m., 5 minutes late for an appointment because of traffic, and miss out on part of your workout that you paid for.

Stronger accountability and support. Because you have more time, you can offer clients better support. Additionally, it's easier to incorporate clients into a community online when they are all moving towards the same goal.

More cost effective. In addition to paying a trainer for their time, a client also has to pay for club overhead. You can get a better trainer at a fraction of the price by working with somebody online.

Can now work with the best. Because the trainer can be anywhere, a client can now seek out and find "the best" trainer to work with them leading to more trust in the process, better adherence, and better results.

Free client app to track progress (if using software that provides one): A nice value-add for clients is the ability for them to see stats, track progress, and communicate with their trainer in real time.

Loved ones can be taken care of. Unfortunately there's a lot of variance in our industry and not all trainers are good. People can now refer friends and family who may have had a previous bad experience to a great trainer because location is no longer a factor.

Always be confident

The most important skill that you can possess in a sales meeting is confidence. If you can help a client, you need to assure them that you're the right person for the job. If you cannot help a client, it's your responsibility to say that.

No matter what happens, keep your cool and roll with the punches. You can be excited but you must also be patient and learn to value silent pauses, because silence is a salesperson's best tool.

You're the product being sold. You're awesome. If you've established that you can help a client with whatever transformation they desire, then it's your responsibility to position your services in a way that appeals to them. Screw it up and you'll lose the sale. Lose the sale and they will go somewhere else – to somebody who may do a worse job than you and who cares less than you do.

Remember, a prospective client has come to you for help. You are in the expert seat until you relinquish your spot.

If you don't feel confident with yourself, **commit to getting there**. Do whatever it takes. Stand in front of a mirror and tell yourself that you're awesome before getting on the phone. Beat your chest, jump up and down, I don't care. Your training is great, you know how to take care of clients, and what you charge is fair.

Remember that famous line from the play/movie Glengarry Glen Ross? "A-B-C. A-Always, B-Be, C-Closing. Always be closing."

Let's switch that up. Always Be Confident.

Performing the 11-Step Sales Call

Below is a full explanation of the 11-step sales call process. On the page where you downloaded this PDF you will find a quick reference guide of these 11 steps to keep with you while actually on a call.

The 11 steps of a great sales call include:

1. Small talk
2. Taking control of the call
3. Health history
4. Exercise history
5. Goals
6. Objections
7. Introducing the sales proposition
8. Describing your program
9. One final "yes" before price
10. Sales proposition
11. Dealing with a price objection

Let's dig into each of these steps. For each step, I'll provide you with a small script or phrase to use during an actual call, plus an explanation of why the step is there and what it will help you accomplish.

Step 1. Small talk

"Hey {Name}. Thanks for jumping on this call with me. What was your favorite character from Lord of the Rings?"

Use the first minute or two of your call to build a bit of rapport. Always begin an engagement with an appreciation (thank you) and attempt to connect on an uncommon commonality unrelated to fitness.

On your web application form I suggest that you add in a question or two attempting to glean a piece of information, which you can refer to here. If you're connected on Facebook you can sift through the person's feed before the call, making note of their interests and liked pages in an attempt to find a topic to chat about for a minute.

In the absence of any commonality, try to tell a quick story to share a laugh (even if it's at your own expense). I remember a sales call I performed years back where I spilled coffee all over my carpet just before. I told the story to the person on the other end of the call and we both had a laugh. Twenty minutes or so later I had sold $4,000 worth of my services to that person, more than enough to get my carpet cleaned.

Once there's a brief break in conversation, it's time for you to take control and move the call forward.

Step 2. Taking control of the call

"Okay, so here's how this call is going to work. I'd like to start by spending a few minutes learning about your health history, exercise history, and goals moving forward. From there, if I think that one of my online training packages is a good fit, I'm happy to chat about it. If not, that's cool too. Sound good?"

You're doing a few things here. First and foremost, you're taking control. In laying out the structure of the call with a short phrase like this, you're communicating to the client that you're going to be leading them the entire way.

There are two other things to note with this phrase. The first is that you're telling them right away that you need to learn more about them before deciding if your training is right for them. This will (hopefully) eliminate the "what does it cost" question by helping them to understand your process. The second thing to note in this phrase is that you've begun the process of accumulating "yes" statements.

Getting the client to say "yes" throughout the sales call grants you permission to move along. Generating "yes" statements also puts the client into a "yes" mindset, improving the chances of a positive response to your sales proposition. Three "yes" statements is something of a magic number in sales circles. You'll notice that there are three main "yesses" before you bring up price in this sales flow.

(What if they ask the price right up-front? You'll see my answer to this in Dealing with Objections, later this in this guide.)

Step 3. Health history

"Any health issues I need to know about before we get any further?"

This is a question that you likely asked in your application form as well. I like to ask this as an open-ended question to start. If they mention something on their application form that they don't bring up, you ask them about it.

Once they are finished, it's not a bad idea to ask, "anything else?" and wait a few seconds before moving on. Giving this final pause may trigger a client to remember an old injury, for example.

Step 4. Exercise history

"Have you ever followed a workout program before?"
"Have you ever hired a trainer or coach either in-person or online before?"

Which specific question you ask here will change depending on your clientele. If you're focused towards more advanced clientele, you likely won't ask whether they've followed a program, but you may ask them specifically about the previous 1 to 2 programs that they followed.

I suggest always asking if they have worked with a coach before. If they say yes, inquire further as to whether they enjoyed working with that person.

Follow up with 2 quick questions in succession about their experience:

1. What's one thing you loved about working with that person?
2. What's one thing you didn't love about working with that person?

The answers to these questions will help you communicate the different aspects of your program later on. Also, if you identify that your client had a bad experience and know specifically what they didn't enjoy, you can assure them you won't operate that way (assuming, of course, you won't).

Step 5. Goals

"If we were to meet 3 months from now, what would you like to see happen?"

I kept the above phrase general but you'll likely want to adapt it to make it more specific to you. For example: *"3 months from now, how would you like to be able to describe your level of swole?"*

A quirk of human psychology is that we have a hard time building a plan forwards. We seem to be able to visualize what we want to happen and work backwards much easier.

Instead of asking a client what their goals are now, you ask them what they will be like in 3 months. It's effectively the same question, but using this technique, called the r-factor quotient, allows them to visualize the experience more and make it more emotional.

You will often need to probe deeper. When they respond, ask them why 2 to 3 times if needed. Your goal is not for them to tell you that they want to lose 5lbs, but to learn both the real reason why they want to lose 5lbs and what they feel it will enable them to accomplish.

Step 6. Objections

"Okay, well that sounds like a great goal. What do you see as the biggest obstacles to getting there?"

You want to know what, in their mind, is holding them back. This is where you draw out all of the excuses that your client has been telling themselves. Take note of what's said because you will need to show how your coaching can overcome these objections when describing your program.

After they give you an objection, don't give them a solution. Just listen.

Ask them if they have anything else that they see as an obstacle. Continue this process as many times as possible, writing down the obstacles. After you ask if there's anything else, wait for a full count of 5.

If after 5 seconds of silence the client doesn't mention anything else, say,

"Hmm. Okay, so if I can show you how we're going to overcome all of your obstacles that you just told me about in order for you to reach your {insert client goal}, are you able to get started today?"

Here you're going for 1 of 2 things. The first, and most obvious, is another "yes" statement. If the client says that they are, then you move on to step 7.

The other goal of the statement is to give the client one final chance to bring up an objection (or obstacle).

Here's the thing about sales: **Objections are good**. You want as many objections as possible because, as Chet Holmes said, "objections are an opportunity to close." The only time when an objection will kill a sale is if you haven't given your client a chance to raise it.

If the client brings up anything else, write it down and repeat a variation of the same phrase as above, "If I can show you how to overcome…"

Get a "yes" statement and move on to step 7.

Step 7. Introducing the sales proposition

"Great. Well, I think that you'd be a great fit for the {name of your training package}. Would you like to hear more about it?"

Now is when you begin to introduce your program. Get the client to say "yes" again before moving on, giving you permission to describe your program.

If the client says "no" or "maybe," don't get taken aback. Simply ask, "No problem. If you don't mind me asking, why aren't you interested in learning more at this time?"

Honestly, if you get stopped here without a "yes," then you've screwed up in a previous step. **More than likely you haven't raised all objections yet.** Attempt to draw out whatever the issue is.

If you can't, you may have lost the call in a previous step and will have to end it. Don't move on until the client gives you a "yes," so if you need to draw out another objection here then do so. When you feel as if you've cleared the air, ask if they would like to hear more about the program again.

Step 8. Describing your program

"Great. So, the program has ___ parts. I'll go over each one briefly. The first is direction. You mentioned that you were overwhelmed with the variation of advice. Each month I'll be sending you a workout specifically designed for you to get you closer to _______ (whatever goals they laid out)."

Obviously, this script is a very general example because it will change in every meeting. Until now, you have been collecting information with the goal of making this statement as specific as possible to your client. **The better you do with that, the better chance you have at converting them**.

Your statement in step 8 may be lengthy. It depends on how many objections you have to deal with and how complicated a process your client requires to reach his or her goal.

Here's an overview of things that you must include in this statement:

1. **An outline with the number of parts to begin**. Always start by saying how many parts are involved. So if you're going to hit on 4 aspects of your program, say that there are 4 parts. This way the client knows to let you finish all four before asking you any questions.
2. **Description of your services as they apply to your client**. You don't need to discuss everything that you offer, only the stuff that you will help the client achieve. Be sure to mention how your package will specifically help the client reach their goals and how it will help them overcome their obstacles. If applicable, also mention how you'll avoid doing whatever they didn't like with a previous coach.
3. **A solution to every objection**. As you get more experience with your sales calls you will begin weaving this in seamlessly. On your worksheet, throughout the call, you should have written down each client objection. Throughout your description of your program, attempt to mention how it solves each objection. Tick off the objection on your sheet when you've covered it. Before finishing, make sure that all objections are ticked off.

Step 9. One final "yes."

"Does this sound like something that you'd be interested in?"

Wait for them to say yes. Ideally they'll say something like, "sounds like the program is perfect for me!"

Your only goal here is to identify any last minute objections before bringing up the price. If they say, "sounds good but what about ..." immediately show them how your program can help overcome that obstacle. Before moving on, ask them if they are ready to hear about the price and how to get started.

You know by now that they are likely wondering about cost. It's important that you deal with any other questions first. But here's the thing: you don't want them to say "no." The phrasing of this question matters. If you were to ask a simple, "*do you have any more questions?*" the answer you desire is "no" but you don't want them to say that word. So, instead of asking if they have any more questions, ask if they are ready to hear about the cost and how to get started.

This way they say "yes" once more and you get to move into your sales proposition.

Step 10. The sales proposition

"Sounds like we would be a great fit to work together. For the {package name} that includes {list the 1 to 3 main components to overcome their specific objection and help them to their specific goal} the cost is {$cost bi-weekly / month}. I ask for a minimum 3-month commitment. So, if you're ready to start today, I can have your first workout to you by {date}. Are you ready to get going?"

Now is the time to shut your mouth. You have said all that needs to be said and it's the client's turn to talk. Unconfident trainers get nervous after asking for the sale and dilute the ask by adding in a bunch of other nice-sounding words.

Keep quiet for as long as you need to in order to get a definitive answer.

Often a client will 'hmm' and 'haa' for a few seconds. They may even talk to themselves a bit, saying something like, "well I'm not sure about the cost but …"

Wait for them to direct a statement explicitly to you before answering. More often than not a client will talk themselves into a sale at this point.

If they say yes, have your payment link or button ready and send it to them directly (over email, Skype, FB messenger, or whatever). Give them an end date to pay.

For example, you can say something like,

"Sounds great and I can't wait to work with you! I've just sent you a secure payment link to get started. I have some time later on tonight {give a time no later than 24 hours away} to get started on your program. So as long as I see the payment come in right away we can hit the ground running."

If they say no at this point, then 1 of 2 things is happening:

1. Price really is an issue (I'll show you how to deal with that in a minute)

OR

2. You haven't solved a previous objection.

If price is a problem, move on to step 11.

Step 11. If an objection to price occurs

"Would it make things easier for you if we split up the payments? I have no problem being flexible. What plan would work for you over the 3 months?"

You can decide whether you want to work with them on a payment plan or something similar.

You don't know what a client situation is like, but if they are willing to work with you on figuring out a payment plan, my experience is that they will be more than fair.

Usually they will ask if they can split the payments or space them out a bit, depending on how you've structured your program. More often than not, a client just wants the payments to come out at different times of the month to align with other bills or when they get their paycheck.

If what they propose works for you, great! Create a unique payment plan button for them in PayPal (or whatever payment gateway system you're using) and send it over.

If they still say that they can't afford it, you can move on to your secondary (cheaper) option if there is one.

If you don't have a cheaper option that you think will work for them or they still can't afford it, wish them well and end the call.

Dealing with Objections During a Sales Call

Here's how to deal with some of the common objections that may arise during, or towards the end, of a sales call.

1. "I need to know the price before anything else."

This isn't necessarily an objection, but it can be a problem, so you have to navigate carefully.

Just because they are asking for the price doesn't mean they are looking for the cheapest. It means that they require a bit more information to relax and actually hear your message.

Generally, the best response is to **give them a range**. Here's what you can say:

"I offer a few different packages depending on what a client needs. Some people are looking for a bit of guidance and others either desire or need much more direction, support, and accountability from me.

The packages that I offer range from $200 to $750 per month. Would it be okay if I asked you some questions so that we can work together to determine which option may be best suited for you?"

There are a few reasons that this works:

1. You're communicating your service offerings off the bat.
2. You give a range so they have an idea of cost and that nagging feeling is removed.
3. You're asking permission so **they can continue to have a sense of ownership**. You're giving them an opportunity to say "yes" and, when it comes to sales, the name of the game is getting the client to say "yes."
4. You're demonstrating that you're both on the same team and making it clear that you care about what's best for them.

2. “I was injured before.”

When a client mentions that they’ve had an injury that they’re afraid to re-aggravate, you should take it seriously.

First, ask as many questions as you need to ensure that you understand the injury.

If you’re familiar with the injury, feel free to speak candidly about it. If you’re not familiar with the injury, use the line, “I can help you with that.” Let them know it’s not something you know much about, but you will do some research to find out. Your number one priority is always to be responsible and honest.

3. “I had a bad experience with a trainer.”

In our industry there are two types of trainers: professionals and tourists. It’s unfortunate but likely that you’ll meet a client who has had a bad experience with another trainer.

Never badmouth anybody. Give the former trainer the benefit of the doubt, but **tell the client how you’ll deal with the situation differently**.

For example, if the client didn’t feel ‘listened to,’ by their previous trainer, tell them that you are happy to answer all questions. Explain how your office hours or other contact systems work and explain how you will be available to them.

Whatever the bad experience was, show that you’re going to deal with it differently. Be specific and don’t move on until you have demonstrated that you won’t repeat the same mistake the previous trainer made.

4. “I have to ask my spouse.”

This is one of the toughest objections.

There’s no way to deal with this objection if it comes up during a sales meeting. If a client leaves the meeting saying they’ll ‘discuss things’ with their spouse, your chances of making that sale drop significantly.

That’s why I suggest you be proactive. When setting up a sales meeting, ask the client if they have anybody else who “might be involved in the decision-making process.” The hope is that they will bring their partner to the sales meeting and the objection won’t happen.

On the application form, I recommended you include a question asking if anybody else is involved in their decision-making process. If they checked yes, be sure to request that the other person is also on the call.

5. "It's too expensive."

If you've demonstrated your value to a potential client, cost becomes less of an issue. Objections tend to occur when you haven't properly communicated your value.

The cheapest trainer in the world is too expensive to someone who doesn't understand or appreciate the value of your service.

(This can also mean you're speaking to the wrong type of client.)

Yes, some people can't afford a trainer, but the fact that you're a little cheaper or more expensive than another trainer shouldn't matter.

If cost becomes an obstacle, first revisit all of the other objections and ensure that they're all properly dealt with. **Cost often acts as the fallback if something else is a sticking point.** If the client still objects based on price, stay quiet for a few seconds. Often they will talk themselves into the sale. If that doesn't happen, you can present a more cost-effective option, offer a financing plan, or simply wish them well and stay in touch.

6. "I don't have enough time."

Your client has taken the time to get on the phone with you for a sales meeting. They wouldn't be there if they weren't interested in training, and they know there must be some time commitment involved.

That said, some people are truly more pressed for time than others. You can decide if you want to manipulate the prescribed programming to meet their needs. For example, if this client wants to lose fat, you could explain the benefits of "quickie" 25-minute metabolic sessions. You could also suggest a combination of in-gym and at-home workouts. With a little out-of-the-box thinking, you could probably come up with a number of timesaving options.

That said, only present these alternatives if you truly believe you can help this client reach their goals with the adapted program. Otherwise, be honest. Let them know that for what they want to achieve, this is the time required. Explain that if they aren't able to put forth that time commitment, they may need to rethink their goals.

7. "I have to think about it."

This isn't an objection – but it's usually a sign of an unsaid objection.

What does the client need to think about? Ask them and be quiet. There's always a tangible reason behind this statement. Be patient and wait for them to give you an answer.

What to Do Now

I'm not the kind of guy who is going to tell you that one way of operating your business is best. There's no 'my way or the high-way' in my materials. Instead my team and I purposefully developed everything here and in the Online Trainer Academy to give you what you need to figure out the best model for you, your business, and your life.

On the page where you downloaded this PDF there is a worksheet. If you haven't already, download it. Keep it beside you as you perform sales calls for your online training so that you can reference it, ensuring that you don't miss any steps.

Jonathan Goodman