

# Four Rs of Marketing and Sales

by Maritza Valverde

**Y**ears ago someone told me that I was a natural at sales. I did not believe it. First, I was not working in sales; and second, I had never sold anything in my life.

Some time later, I learned that some people are born with personality traits conducive to sales. They can even “sell a refrigerator to an Eskimo.” At once my way of thinking changed. If others saw me as a salesperson, maybe I was one!

I do not have a marketing or sales degree to qualify me as an expert, but I know that an innate talent for sales is not enough. After almost 20 years in the school of “hard knocks,” much reading and personal study in this area, and many courses and seminars, I have learned that there are some basic elements to complement natural ability. These are summarized in four basic categories I call the four R’s of marketing: review, relationship, recognition, results.

### **Review**

A lack of success in sales can always be blamed on a lack of natural sales ability, or insufficient knowledge about the art of sales. This is unfortunate. In my experience, to be successful in sales, I must continually review what I know about my product, my clients, and myself.

*Product knowledge.* Success in sales begins by knowing your product very well. It is not a superficial overview but rather a thorough examination of each product in one’s inventory. In my case, I sell books. For me, this is a pleasure, because I love to read. I read all kinds of books, but especially the books I sell. I treat them as friends.

*Client knowledge.* I know my product, but I also know my clients. I frequently review my client list to stay in touch with them, and that is easier these days with electronic mail. I am not saying that all of them are close friends, but many are.

*Knowledge of my own work style.* In sales, there will always be new books, seminars, and experts to tell us how to improve. I buy every book I can and attend every seminar available to improve my skills. In our era of technological breakthroughs, there is much to learn. But in the end, there are basic principles and concepts that don’t change. Instead of chasing after new ideas, which can be good and useful, I have found that a review and return to the basics is one of the most helpful things for me.

### **Relationships**

Nothing is as important in sales as good relationships. This is the critical point for any enterprise. Sales staff must look for opportunities to get to know their clients, not only on a professional level, but also on a personal level whenever possible. Telephone calls, cards, thank-you notes, and electronic greetings can all make a big difference in maintaining close relationships with them. This is what allows a company to survive and maintain long-term relationships with its customers.

Do you contribute to your organization’s vision, mission, and values by communicating the value and importance of good relationships? If we really care about our customers, we will want to know them. In turn, they will be interested in us and in our product.

### **Recognition**

How do you feel when you are acknowledged for some success, or achievement, or when you are recognized in a meeting, or greeted on the street? We all enjoy recognition. This is so basic one could think it is not even worth mentioning. However, something that makes clients feel valued is recognition of their work during the year. Congratulate them with a brief note or, when you are at an event together, give them verbal recognition before others.

### **Results**

We measure short-, medium-, and long-term success through results. We cannot compel anyone to buy our books, but we can put the first three Rs into practice. If we constantly review our products, nurture relationships with our clients, and recognize their achievements, we shall see the fourth R, positive results in our work.

Not every salesperson is born with natural talent to sell. Perhaps sales is in your blood, or maybe you just could not find other work. But if you are convinced of the worth of your books, and genuinely like people, you can become a true sales professional, and enjoy your work, as I do, keeping the four Rs in view. ▽

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