

ISVMA "Brand Speaker's Notes

Greetings,

My name is Todd Fach. I am the Leader of Learning & Development for Covetrus North America. I have been with Covetrus for about 18 months working with our partner facing Leaders, Account Managers and Specialists. I have 20+ years of experience working with customer facing service team members across the globe. I am a certified instructor on several interpersonal skills and communication workshops, and I am passionate about creating "aha" moments for people that want to find new ways to communicate with peers, managers, and customers more effectively.

Today, we will talk about the importance of recognizing your own value. Perceiving that strength in each of us and how that drives perceptions and influence with the people we spend time with.

Here is what we will cover today:

- Personal Brand – What does a Brand mean? What can that mean for me? How could I use this to identify the perceptions I create. More importantly how can I practice, get feedback and elevate?
- Influence. We all know the definition. How do I recognize if I have it today and how does my Brand help me drive Influence.
- Relationships – Do I know if I have good relationships with peers, managers, staff or customers? How do I know and then how can I effect or build it?
- Listening skills – The number one area of focus for any team I have consulted or worked with across the globe.
- Finally, we will talk about how to leverage all of this to effectively navigate those difficult conversations or resistance we get every day. And, to do so in a way that protects relationships.

So, what's in a Brand?

I want you to put your consumer hat on. Why do we gravitate toward a Brand? Many answers I hear are: "I know what I will get."; "I trust that it will be good." "They treat me well." "I have never been disappointed." Think for a second how powerful that immediate impression is. When you think of this Brand you know you will buy it, and be satisfied with the purchase. Here is a list of Brands that show up in the "top 20" consistently:

Let's flip that experience around. Think of a buying experience you would never repeat. Think about how that made you feel. What comes to mind quickly? Here is a list of a few that I have heard in my travels that have elicited those responses:

That immediate feel you have is the perception the Brand drives whether they want that or not. Now let's take this down to a personal level. What could that look like for us?

So as we build this visual out I want you to think about yourself, how you see value in yourself and how others may see you. Let's build this out:

First – Think about how you see yourself. For others to see value in us, we need to see that in ourselves. Go through the exercise of coming up with adjectives you think of when coming up with your view of what you bring to others. I start with strengths. Here are examples I have heard during my travels. Team members like yourself in workshops like this:

- Trustworthy
- Partner
- Knowledgeable
- Problem Solver

These are your strength anchors to always build from.

The next level of the exercise is to ask someone you trust to give their view of your Brand. This takes a strong relationship as I want you to focus on growth. How do always think of driving "more" value in the Brand. Examples I've heard in the past are:

- Language
- Posture

Your Brand is the working combination of how you value yourself and how other value you. Its your own asset. One to always protect and grow. Why is that important?

I am a big believer in this principle:

People buy you first, your company second and your ideas or solution last. If they don't "buy" you then they won't agree to anything else. Personal Brand drive both influence and relationships. Here's how: Perceptions or how someone feels in the moment (remember your thoughts on buying) drives someone's attitude. Attitude drives behavior and we all know how hard it is to change behaviors right?

So, included here is a worksheet for you to practice as you leave the conference. This is a worksheet I've given thousands of sales and service reps. Here is how it works:

Practice:

- Individual Practice for Growth
- - Identify (Min) 2 Strengths to anchor on
 - Identify a Partner for 2 Growth Ideas
 - Complete your Worksheet
- Review with your Peer, Manager, Staff

Influence has its own definition. I like to believe that influence means: getting people to agree with your idea or approach and getting things done all without authority. Think about the informal power you build with a strong Brand that drives perception.

Let's first look at this model through the lens of the customer, partner, peer or manager you are spending time with. We need to know if we have any influence. Start with perceptions and build up. If I want to influence behavior change. Where is there perception of us or the intended change? If its poor from a past experience, we need to recognize that and determine how we persistently change that. It doesn't happen immediately. That may take time. The reason it's important is that it drives attitudes. I saw a sign in a business I was consulting with that read: "A bad attitude is like a flat tire. You can't go anywhere until you change that." Finally, where is the behavior? Perception and Attitude directly impact how someone behaves.

That is the Peer side. What may be more important is to think you're your perspective. I want you to picture an encounter from your past. A scheduled appointment in the afternoon you knew you didn't look forward to. It sat in your stomach, made you apprehensive. I bet your perception was not good. That drive a shaky attitude and your behavior in turn may have been less that you wanted. Less than the "Brand" we talked about. That behavior is the first thing that drives perception in that encounter and before you know it that poor experience was the self-fulfilling prophecy you may have known it would be.

The lesson here is that we teach people how to treat us. Think about that for a second and reflect on relationships where you lack influence.

Brand is your tool to help drive this. The Behavior on the "Me" side is what you work on the be that best version of yourself for every occasion. Carry that through how you perceive yourself and the attitudes that shape how you drive influence in others.

I have worked with many sales and service reps who tell me they have "great relationships." In coaching session, I would say: "That is awesome. Let's look for some evidence." Typically, I would get a strange look in response. The question behind that look is: "What does that mean?"

As I walk around this model, I want you to think of your own important relationships. Answer the same questions:

Rapport – Do I have a connection with this person? Really it's the opening and do I have permission to ask questions? Will they respond. What do we have in common that connects us?

Trust – The bedrock of any relationship. Do they believe that I consistently perform or do what was asked? I know many people that I may have Rapport with. A quick connection at the Starbucks or running friends that I certainly would not trust. Ask yourself the same. Quick side note here. If you feel that you need to build trust, there are 4 areas to focus:

- Authentic – Be yourself and true
- Logic - Make sure you pass the common sense test
- Empathy – Be in it with the person (authentically)
- Listening – We will talk about that in a moment. The key to trust.
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Respect - How does the person respond when you ask them to do something mutually? If no, then there may be room to work on the strength of your relationship

Value – This is always a very large principle. If it involves behavior change and buying into your ideas then what is most important is understanding the things that are critical to your peer, customer, manager, staff. That includes the big compelling personal aspirations. Things that move the person and your ability to help someone achieve something they may not be able to on their own.

Answering yes to all of these is wonderful. It should also be protected as you know it takes time to be able to build relationships. They can be lost quick if trust falls away or maybe we don't provide the same value as we once did. Do not take them for granted.

Listening is the key to building trust which I said before is the bedrock of any relationship. Listening is the number 1 soft skill need of any team that I have worked with in the last 30 years. Some of the "opportunity areas" are based on old habits or behaviors. That said, it is a soft skill and it can be worked on. Here is a worksheet I have used to help build skills.

Listening: Constant battle between sales rep's need to understand that the customer need to be heard.

- 1.
1. Maintain Eye Contact
2. Receptive Posture
3. Take Appropriate Notes
4. Display Patience

Levels of Listening

1. What?
2. Feeling?
3. Attitude?

Listening skills, mainly patience are critical to help you have those more difficult conversations that typically have some form of objections or resistance. Human nature gets us stuck in defending. It becomes a sword fight of who is right and who is wrong. Put another way it's a path to win the battle (argument), yet lose the war (the relationship.)

For Resistance/Objections here is a set of tools to help you:

First **Acknowledge** the resistance. Be authentic and empathetic. Stay away from **Buts**. Be patient and stay in the moment. Ask 2-3 questions to make sure you understand the real source of resistance. The heart of the issue. Confirm that first and then through empathy and discovery questions, earn the right to guide or expand someone's thinking.

The last tool around conversations is something referred to REAL feedback. Here is how this works:

R)esults

What was the result of the exercise? If this is a one to one with a staff member. What did you occur? What was the result of the engagement you may have seen or heard?

(E)Xamples

Evidence based conversation – What is the evidence of what you give feedback? To keep it from being a defenise conversation, have the relevant detail or facts.

(A)ffect

What affect did this have on the outcome? What happened? If this was a customer, what affect did it have on them, your staff member, etc.?

(L)Earning- Finally, what can we walk away with? What strength and opportunity will we grow from?

I have found using this model allows me to guide many challenging conversations with evidence vased feedback that assumes a guiding principle of positive intent.

Thank you for your time and engagement. I hope that you found this time productive and that you can take 1-2 key things away to practice in your own environment.