



HOW TO  
**SELL**  
WITH  
**NLP**

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# How to Sell with NLP

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## Example

Carol sells furniture to businesses in and around the north of England. She had been trying to get Ken, the buyer responsible for furnishing a small group of family hotels, to buy a lovely leather range of chairs and sofas for the reception halls. She showed him pictures from her catalogue and he was unmoved. When she asked him what he didn't like about the range, he said that in his experience leather was cold to sit on and he found it unfriendly. Realising Ken's kinaesthetic nature, Carol had a chair from the range sent to his office for a month. Ken loved the feel and warmth of it so much that he bought the range for the entire group.

## Other senses

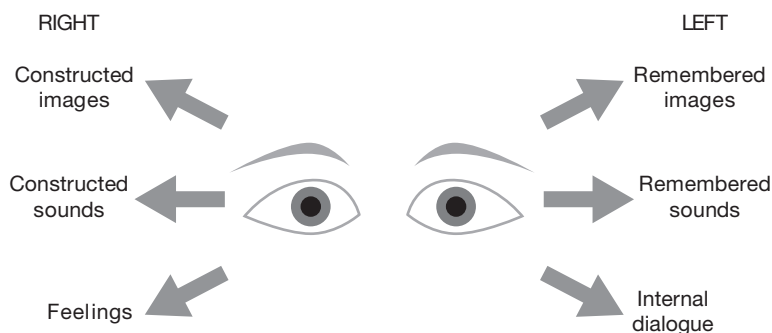
In industries and cultures where the sense of smell and taste are important, you may hear words and phrases such as 'I smell a rat', 'It leaves a bad taste in my mouth', 'This has the essence of something exciting', 'Can you give me a taste of what this might be like?'. Body gestures might include touching the nose or excessive swallowing. Smell and taste can play a large part in selling outside these industries as well.

## Example

A friend of mine had the experience of a salesman from a well-established kitchen company calling at her house to design her new kitchen. He arrived smelling strongly of stale tobacco, a smell to which my friend has a particular aversion. She couldn't get him out of the house quick enough and needless to say he left without a sale. The sad thing is that she only has to hear the name of this company mentioned in an advertisement and the memory of this salesman and the smell comes back immediately.

## Using all the senses

Of course, as I said at the beginning of this chapter, people use all their senses. For example, a person with a preference for visual processing may access their thoughts visually and then quickly move into kinaesthetic mode. We call this V-K processing. Similarly, a person with a preference for auditory processing may listen intently and then move into kinaesthetic mode and tell you how they feel about something. The purpose here is not to find a label for people but to learn to use what we call sensory acuity to monitor a person's processing from moment to moment. If we label a person as visual, the next time we meet them they may be having a kinaesthetic moment, having just heard a sad or touching story or having had a disagreement with a colleague or a loved one. The secret of success is to take what information is being offered in the moment (as shown in Figure 3.1) or, to use an NLP term, to calibrate the situation and respond to it accordingly.



**Figure 3.1** Eye accessing cues: note that this represents observing another person's accessing cues, i.e. remembered images are up to *their* left; it is also for a right-handed person – a left-hander may switch left with right

## Developing sensory acuity

NLP practitioners practise their sensory acuity. This means they look for small signals that indicate a change of state in people. Whether or not your prospects are going to buy from you will depend upon the state – or in other words the state of mind the prospects are in. If what you have been saying has opened up their thinking in some way, this will show. They may take on a state of curiosity or reflection or they may gaze into the distance as they project an idea into the future based on what you have been saying. If you miss these signals, you may miss an opportunity to help them develop their ideas, or maybe you need to be still for a moment while they process their thinking.

Practise noticing small changes in your prospects as they go from one state to another. In Chapter 6 you will learn how to anchor positive states so that you can use them to bring your prospects back into a buying state.

Here are some things to look out for when someone is changing their state:

- change of posture;
- gazing into the distance;
- changes in the rate of breathing;
- voice tone;
- eye movements – up, down and sideways;
- pupil size;
- complexion changes – flushing, paling.

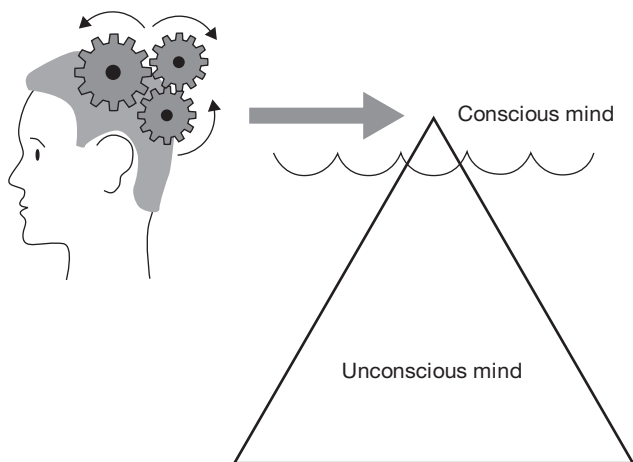
Learn to connect these state changes with what your prospect is saying so that when they are saying nothing you can accurately assess their state.

## Focusing out

It is worth taking a moment here to emphasise the importance of focusing your attention outwards when dealing with clients. By this I mean paying full attention to what is being said, how the client is reacting and behaving, and noticing any body movements they make. All this gives an insight into how they are processing and will ultimately indicate when a prospect is ready to buy.

Your conscious attention is limited (see Figure 3.2), and in order to focus outwards it is important that you have prepared thoroughly so that you don't have to revert to internal dialogue, such as:

- Did I bring the right brochures or order forms?
- What am I going to say next?
- Did I put any money in the parking meter?
- Do I really know the key features of this particular product?
- I left the samples in the car.



**Figure 3.2** The conscious mind (tip of the iceberg) has a tiny capacity compared with that of the unconscious mind (the part of the iceberg underwater)

- What are they thinking?
- I hope they don't ask me any technical questions.
- What if I don't get this sale?

While your mind is occupied talking to yourself in this way, you will find yourself unable to use your sensory acuity to watch for key buying signals, or even hear what your prospect is saying.

## Staying focused out

Try this exercise to help you stay focused outwards and to keep a mental note of what your client is saying so that you can refer back to it later.

- 1 Look up and create a strong colourful image in your mind of a notice board and of your hands placing sticky notes on the board.
- 2 As you concentrate on your prospect's conversation, pick out key words relating to something about which you would like more clarity, or would like to come back to later.
- 3 Mentally jot them down on separate sticky notes and place them on the board.
- 4 You will find yourself recalling these key words at an appropriate moment later in the conversation. Even if it turns out that you don't need them, the exercise will have kept you focused outwards.

## Storing memories

Let's take a moment here to explore further how the mind stores information in the form of memories, because it is upon these memories that decisions are made. The mind is a bit like a filing cabinet – it has a location for certain types of memories.

Pleasant memories are stored in one location and unpleasant ones in another. To show you what I mean, try this.

- 1 Think of an unpleasant experience you have had in relation to your sales career – perhaps a presentation went wrong, or a client was particularly disparaging, or you said something you later regretted. Recall this specific incident and notice the qualities of the image:
  - Is it in colour or black and white?
  - If there is colour, are the colours muted, or is there one strong colour in particular?
  - How far away is it – is it very close or some distance away?
  - How defined is the picture – does it have fuzzy edges?
  - Is it framed?
  - Is there any movement?
  - Can you hear anything?
  - As you look at this image now, how does it make you feel? Do you sense a knot anywhere or a pain in a specific location – maybe a sense of sickness in the stomach or throat?

Change your position to discard the picture but keep in mind the qualities of the picture you have noticed.

- 2 Now think of a time when you were very successful – maybe you were signing a big contract or maybe you booked an appointment with someone you had been trying to engage with for some time. Again, be specific with the scenario you choose, and notice the qualities of the image by asking yourself the same questions as above.

Sometimes our images can become confused and we can store them in inappropriate places in the mind – this can lead to stress and maybe even depression – but on the whole the unconscious mind knows what to do and stores our images in places that work well for us. You probably noticed that your pleasant