

## **In a Sales Presentation, Pitch the Hole Not the Drill**

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Here's a sales pitch fable.

There once was an associate in a hardware store named Johnny.

The store began carrying what Johnny considered the best power drill on the planet. It was the SuperDrill 5000. This drill was a super-duper hand-held model that came with dozens of drill bits. The SuperDrill 5000 was so light anyone could use it. It was powerful, portable, and held a charge for twice as long as the other drills. And it was beautiful.

Johnny had been selling drills for years and yet he still got a thrill when he looked at the SuperDrill 5000.

One day, Janet walked into the store and walked straight to the drills.

“Interested in a drill?” said Johnny.

“Yes,” she said, “I need to drill a few holes for a doghouse I’m building for my dog Balou.”

“Have you thought about the SuperDrill 5000?” As Johnny said the words, he felt a thrill of excitement. He thought, “How could anyone not fall in love with the SuperDrill 5000.”

When Johnny described all the features of the drill, Janet could hear Johnny's passion; she could see it in his eyes.

Then she pointed to another drill, the K-250—a lesser drill in every respect. “But this drill costs a third as much,” she said.

Johnny scoffed at the K-250, reminding her of all the features of the SuperDrill 5000. “This drill comes complete with twenty-four drill bits. And it's so light.”

“But I only need to drill four holes to make my dog house,” she responded. In the end, Janet bought the lesser drill.

What the moral of this fable?

People buy holes, not drills.

Put another way, people buy solutions, not products or services. Always.

With that in mind, you should never pitch anything other than solutions.

So let's say that you've been invited to pitch for a chance to defend a Fortune 500 company in a class action lawsuit alleging a pattern of employment discrimination against women.

In that circumstance, what is the company in the market for? They're not in the market for a law firm, i.e. a "drill." That means you shouldn't talk at all about your firm's history, reputation, famous partners etc.

The company is in the market for a "hole", that is a solution to their problem of the lawsuit. As a lawyer pitching for the opportunity, it's your job to show the prospect that you have a solution and that you and your team are the ones to implement that solution.

That means that your presentation should focus solely on how you're going to win the lawsuit. To the extent that you can detail a specific litigation strategy, do it. If you've got experience implementing similar strategies for other clients, tell those stories.

Part of the solution the company is buying is also a lawyer that they like personally. After all, they're going to have to spend a lot of time with their new attorney. With that in mind, you should present the solution with a style that connects with the prospect on a personal level. That means speaking with the same kind of intensity that you use when speaking with close friends, not the dull "lawyer voice" that makes you sound like every other attorney.

When pitching for a new piece of business, remember what the prospect is buying.

Pitch the hole, not the drill.

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