

# Ten Steps to Selling the HR Opportunity

It's the big day. You've built up to this over the years and you're ready to take both the company and your career to the next level. Here are 10 steps to consider to prepare for the big day.



## 1. Go in with a BIG agenda.

As Jim Collins says, Big Hairy Audacious Goals. Really get clear and imagine what the future of your company could be like and how you can contribute to that future. Think ahead. Understand your present condition, but set an agenda. Give a vision that leadership can attach to, that employees can attach to. While you can only execute it on one step at a time, you can lay out the big picture.

The more negotiation points or ideas you have, the more things you want to accomplish, the more you're likely to get done, even if they say no to some. If you just go in with one big item and they say no, you've got no win. You go in with 10 items, they say no to half, you got 5 wins. Go in with a big list. Go in with a big agenda. Go BIG!

## 2. Create a killer presentation.

I've got a trial law background. For every hour in the courtroom I practiced a minimum of 3 to 5 hours. You've got to know your script. I would write out the script for opening and closing statements, a tweak them until they were perfect and memorized.

Don't wing this. I've seen people do great PowerPoint presentations, use great handouts, or a combination of the two. I've seen people use flip charts or just a straight conversation from the heart. The method is secondary to the message and preparation. To get pumped up watch a few videos at Ted.com. Outline it, practice it, and then nail it!

## 3. Speak their language.

That includes using their math. Be an observer of the phraseology they use when they talk to people about their business. What buzzwords have they created as a language for themselves? You want to use words that create positive images in their mind. Use words that resonates with them. It's called mirroring in psychology. You want to mirror not just people physically when you sit across from them, but you want to mirror their languaging and their pacing. Make sure you speak their language, at their pace.

One thing I've learned about talking with CEOs over the years is they're much more attached to revenue than cost. Let's hope so, right? So where's HR focused? On cost. We are going to prevent turnover costs. We're going to reduce hiring costs.

It's not as sexy to business owners as sales, so they don't attach to it emotionally. They'll listen to the sales and marketing person every time over the HR person. Why? Because they're talking their language. They're talking revenue.

You take the numbers of HR and you put them to revenue equivalency. For example, if you're going to prevent \$200,000 worth of turnover, that's the equivalent of \$800,000 to \$1 million in top-of-the-line revenue. Now you are solving a bigger problem!

Then go the next step and take those revenue equivalencies and turn them into activities. To obtain \$800,000 in new revenue the company must build 200 more houses or get 500 new clients. We you do this they see also you have some business acumen..."Whoa...you get the business. You understand the math and you're talking in my terms. You have my full attention."

## 4. Be persistent.

This is a sales job, okay? You can't cower after the first no and say they will not listen and give up on it. You've got to have a thick skin. You've got to stay present. Maybe you send them an article you read in Fast Company or in Inc magazine or an industry periodical about what another company's doing around their HR practices you'd like to emulate.

Give them an idea. Here are 10 ideas that can help our business. Get those creative juices so they go wow, this person's really thinking!

## 5. Talk the competition.

Leaders are competitive animals. You want to talk competitive languaging with them. Something that's been used in sales and marketing forever is a battle card or a kill sheet. You take the competition, identify who they are and what their strengths and weaknesses are and then think how to undermine their strengths and exploit their weaknesses. Do that around the HR practices of your competition. Find out what they're doing. Do the research, make the phone calls, check out their website, go on Glassdoor and similar websites. Then figure out how to one-up them!

## 6. Budget for HR technology.

I don't care if you have 25 employees or 25,000 employees, you should be using all available technology. One problem is people get technology and then they don't use it. It just sits on the shelf, so to speak. When you budget for technology, budget for the time and expense of training on its use.

A lot of technologies have a one year ROI on them, so you've got to think forward and plan those numbers forward. Most business owners are willing to invest in something with an ROI that kicks in within a year. Most technology programs market their ROI so have them help you with the conversation.

## 7. Brand it.

Whatever "it" is. You've got to think like a marketer. I've learned so much on how to better manage people in the workplace by reading marketing and sales books. Marketing and sales is about communicating with and motivating people. Guess what? HR is about communicating with and motivating people. You can always learn a lot from sales and marketing publications.

Cross out the word customer or client in sales and marketing publication and put in the word employee. You'll learn so much, it's amazing. Look at a book on branding. How will you brand this initiative of yours? Make a mock-up of what your hiring page will look like. Make a mock-up of the videos that will be on the About page to help position the company, to not only prospective employees but to customers as well.

You go to Zappos' website. Study it. You can do exactly what they're doing on your website and not at great expense. Technology is so cheap today; it's just about getting it done. What kind of posters would you put around the workplace? What other messaging will visually support the change going on in your workplace?

## 8. Know who is on your team.

We're going into negotiations; going into battle. Who's got your back? Who have you taken to lunch to help you practice your pitch? Let them poke holes into it. Who's willing to coach or mentor you through this upcoming presentation? And, who's trying to undermine your efforts and why?

How do you make all those stakeholders heroes in the process? The easiest way to do that make things their idea, even if they are the enemy. Make other people the hero when you present your opportunity. That'll make you a hero too.

## 9. Be physically and mentally prepared.

Don't cram the night before. Get a good night's sleep, make sure you have a healthy morning, eat well, and don't get into fights at home. Come with a good self-image, dress right, make sure you're

well-groomed and all your clothes are the way they should be. Simple things like nails are done and shoes are polished.

Be a professional and be mentally prepared. Visualize the meeting. You want to have the best energy in the room. What's it going to take for that to happen?

## 10. Enjoy the process.

Most HR people are not big into selling. It's a foreign experience for them. It was foreign for me too when I started as a trial lawyer until I realized I had a sales job to do in the courtroom. Enjoy selling the HR opportunity!

If you follow these recommendations, you'll do well by them. Here's to selling your Great HR opportunity!

To learn about the Great HR Program go to [www.greathr.com](http://www.greathr.com)

## About Don Phin, Esq.

Don Phin, Esq. is a lawyer and a highly rated presenter on the emotional intelligence required to be great at leadership and sales. To learn more go to [www.donphin.com](http://www.donphin.com)

[don@donphin.com](mailto:don@donphin.com) | (619) 852-4580 | [www.linkedin.com/in/donphin](http://www.linkedin.com/in/donphin)

