

LAB BACKGROUNDER

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*The **Lab Backgrounder** is a guide to help sales representatives hone their selling strategies, as well as improve their knowledge of clinical testing and related diseases in an easy-to-understand, one page format.*

ESTABLISHING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

A prospect will be reluctant to use your lab for several reasons: (1) no desire to make a change (political reasons, not competitive in certain aspects, etc), (2) no urgency to change labs, and (3) no trust or credibility with you (or possibly the lab you represent). Any one of these can contribute to the downfall of a potential sale, but the last one kills (or delays) more sales than you might realize. You can overcome this situation by understanding and working on the following precepts.

There are four basic elements to establishing your credibility: (1) **your experience**, (2) **your knowledge**, (3) **your presentation** and (4) **your associations**. One of the first things people want to know about you is your experience and how you have helped other clients. Knowledge refers to areas such as a complete understanding of your lab operations, clinical utility of tests, your competition, etc. Your presentation suggests a number of important parameters: the manner in which you present yourself and marketing materials, your professional attire, vocabulary, attentiveness, punctuality and organization. Your association with mutual business contacts may help with your credibility (albeit short-lived), especially if the customer thinks highly of your mutual friend.

Trust is one of the most powerful forms of motivation and inspiration, and it is a function of two things: (1) **character** and (2) **competence**. Your character includes your integrity, your motive and your intent with people. It is a *constant*. Many people think of trust only in terms of character; but what really makes a difference is the element of *competence*. Competence includes your capabilities, skills and track record. Competence is *situational* as opposed to the uniformity of character.

Confidence advances between you and your prospect in small increments over time, not in one dramatic meeting. These small steps are **moments of trust**. Without this constancy of creating moments of trust, *building* trust is impossible.

Prospective customers may easily make excuses why they won't use your lab. It could very well be no desire or no urgency. However, the third point—establishing personal trust and credibility—may be a causal factor you haven't given much thought to but should. It could change the "no urgency" reason around 180 degrees!

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410-299-6562