

CHAMELEON SELLING



Take Flight Learning

INDIVIDUAL REPORT



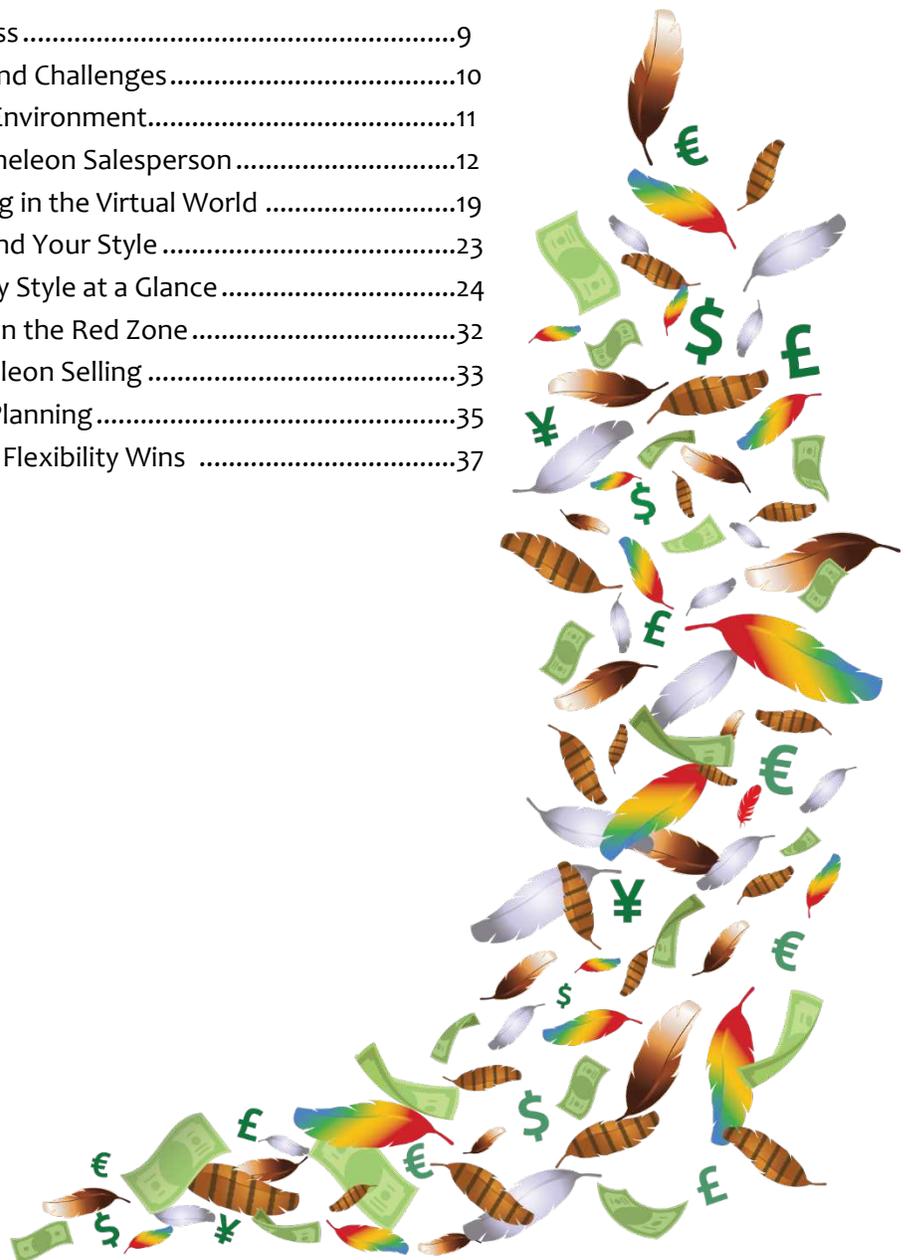
Crystal Owlfeather

August 13, 2024



Table of Contents

The Chameleon Salesperson	3
The Three-Legged Stool	4
The Four Styles	5
Sales Characteristics for Each Style	6
Your Graph	7
Style Intensity.....	8
ADAPT for Success	9
Style Strengths and Challenges.....	10
Your Ideal Sales Environment.....	11
Becoming a Chameleon Salesperson	12
Chameleon Selling in the Virtual World	19
The Sales Cycle and Your Style	23
The Sales Cycle by Style at a Glance	24
The Salesperson in the Red Zone	32
Practicing Chameleon Selling	33
Dynamic Action Planning	35
Conclusion: Style Flexibility Wins	37





The Chameleon Salesperson

The “piano matchmaker” Erica Feidner is famous for having sold more than \$40 million worth of pianos at Steinway & Sons where she was the top salesperson for eight consecutive years. A musical instrument that can cost anywhere from a few thousand dollars to \$150,000 is not an easy product to sell at that volume. **Feidner’s approach is to match the personality of the piano to the personality of the pianist.**

“With characteristics that can range from shy and subtle to fiery and aggressive, every piano is ‘born’ with its own unique personality,” says her website. “Central to Erica’s belief is that the soul of the piano should mirror the soul of its owner.”

How does Feidner make the match?

By flexing her style to different people, situations, and needs.

She can be a direct, confident seller who knows there’s a right piano for each pianist and recognizes a match “instantly.” She can be a charismatic and spirited piano teacher who cultivates relationships by ensuring students (i.e., sales prospects) have a “great time.” She is deeply knowledgeable about pianos and “never pre-judges” one, preferring to play it and evaluate it herself. Empathetic and patient, Feidner interviews every client about their preferences and background before showing any pianos.

Feidner illustrates what it means to be a Chameleon Salesperson who adapts to each customer. She makes a point of understanding and accommodating their style. Rather than impose her preferences on anyone, she empowers customers to discover their perfect piano in their own way. Her method reflects award-winning author and keynote speaker Merrick Rosenberg’s advice: “Don’t impose your style on others.” Applying this wisdom to salespeople ...



Sell to others in *their* style, not yours.





The Three-Legged Stool

To be successful, a salesperson needs three things: Skills, Strategies, and Styles. Think of them as the legs of a stool. Just as a stool with one short leg is wobbly, a salesperson lacking in any of these elements will struggle to stand strong in a competitive market. Let's define each term:



SKILL

Skills: Every salesperson must possess core abilities to navigate the sales process, from effective communication and active listening to product knowledge and negotiation skills. A weakness in any of these skills can lead to misunderstandings, misalignment with customer needs and, ultimately, underperformance.



STRATEGY

Strategies: Salespeople must research potential clients. Without sound strategies, a salesperson is likely to miss opportunities to study their market and develop plans to reach and engage prospective buyers, which may cause them to lose deals to competitors. As markets change, so must the salesperson's strategy. A salesperson lacking strategic acumen may struggle to perform consistently.



STYLE

Styles: The best salespeople understand and adapt to the different personality styles to build meaningful connections with clients. This requires empathy, emotional intelligence, and the ability to relate to individuals with varying preferences and communication styles. If this leg is short, the salesperson may struggle to build rapport with prospective clients, and without rapport, a sale is unlikely.

A salesperson with a well-balanced stool can master the sales process, match their plan of action to market conditions, and connect with any buyer. However, if one leg is shorter than the others, the entire structure becomes compromised. Sales is not just about mastering a single aspect but also about harmonizing these three elements to create a solid foundation for long-lasting client relationships and sustainable success.





The Four Styles

Our core style is like our autopilot. It gets us from one destination to the next without much energy or conscious effort. The autopilot works well enough *until* we fly toward a person running on a completely different autopilot, with different assumptions about how people should behave.

The four styles are a shortcut to recognizing the fears, needs, and motivators of anyone we interact with. In brief, here are the key traits of each style:

Eagles are bold, direct, and competitive.

They are driven by goals and the need to achieve them. Decisive and quick to act, Eagles don't overthink anything.



Parrots are optimistic, enthusiastic, and social.

They are motivated by attention and love being around people. Talkative and carefree, they keep things fun.



Owls are analytical, thoughtful, and methodical.

They are motivated by quality and getting things right. Careful and precise, they ask the questions others overlook.



Doves are sensitive, empathetic, and supportive.

They are motivated by service to others. Good listeners and reserved speakers, Doves intuit what people feel and desire.



While we tend to have one primary style, we *all* have some Eagle, Parrot, Dove, and Owl traits. We can learn to tap into each style authentically. Yes, that can be draining. But if a sales experience is going to be challenging, it better be challenging for you, Crystal, *not* for the buyer!





Sales Characteristics for Each Style

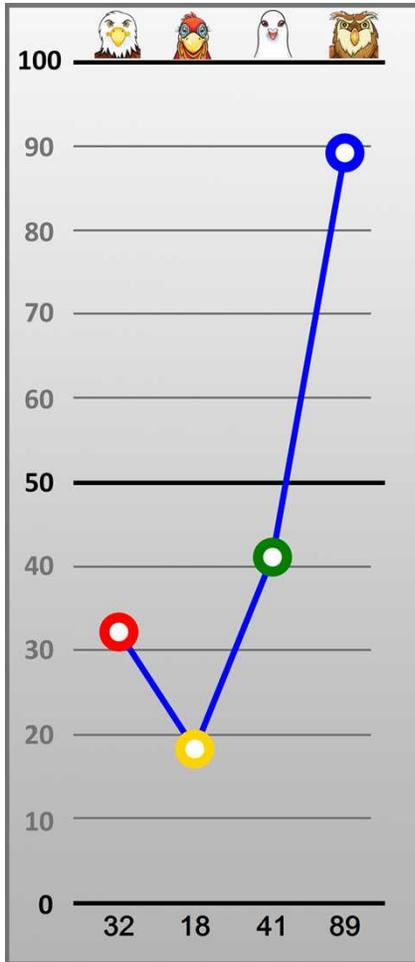
Eagle, Parrot, Dove, and Owl behaviors are driven by different thoughts and feelings. Consider the information below to gain a deeper sense of how the four styles approach the sales process.

	Eagle	Parrot	Dove	Owl
				
Is motivated by...	Winning (likes to beat competitors or previous results)	Making customers happy	Being genuinely helpful	Providing the most logical solution
Enjoys...	Closing the deal quickly	Meeting lots of people and making someone's day	Building long-term relationships for repeat sales	Sharing their expertise
Shines in this phase of the sales process...	Closing the deal	Maintaining the relationship	Building rapport	Describing the product/service
Paints the picture of...	The results that will be achieved	An exciting vision of the future	How comfortable the customer will be	How this is the right solution
Provides solutions that are...	Quickly implemented	Exciting and innovative	Supportive and safe	Quality-driven and reliable
On a sales call, needs to partner with a...	Dove	Owl	Eagle	Parrot
Hesitates to call the prospect because...	They already did (several times)	They don't want to wear out the relationship	They don't want to be a bother	They prefer to communicate in writing
Is irritated by...	Indecision	Lack of enthusiasm	Insensitivity	Irrationality
Fears...	Wasting time	Getting bogged down in the details	Abrasive customers	Not having all of the answers
Needs to learn to...	Tune in to emotions	Listen more than speak	Be direct	Dial up enthusiasm





Your Graph



This graph is the key to understanding your sales style. Remember, you're not just one style—Eagle, Parrot, Dove, or Owl. Instead, you're a unique blend of all four, each contributing differently. The highest point on your graph highlights your primary style.

If any styles surpass the midpoint (50), they indicate where you naturally excel and may influence your approach in sales situations.

Recognizing these nuances can enable you to tailor your sales strategies to increase effectiveness.

Remember, true optimization of your sales prowess entails adaptability—flexing across these styles based on your audience, the company culture, and the situational demands.

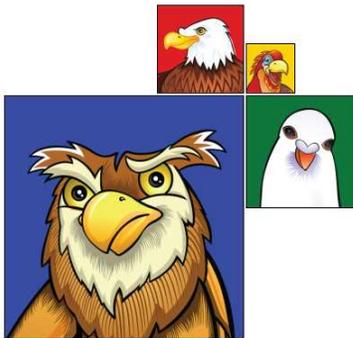




Style Intensity

The following graphic represents the four styles based on the proportion of their weight in the overall pattern of your style.

Since we tend to sell in our style, the style that is the largest in the image below is probably the easiest for you to sell. Whichever style is the smallest is probably the most difficult because you must work out of your style and that takes energy.



For example, if the image of the Parrot is very large and you are selling someone who is a strong Parrot, you can employ your innate tendencies. You are likely unleashing your core strengths to match the person and will probably feel a natural connection to the prospect. You know how to communicate with them and then intuitively understand the type of energy that resonates with them. You know how they think and what they need to get them to say yes. This prospect is a natural fit for you, and it may even feel like you are talking to a friend. You will likely leave energized from the interaction.

Now imagine you have a large Parrot and a very small Owl, and you are selling to someone who is a very strong Owl. You will likely need to dig deep to find the resources to create connection, speak their language, and meet their needs. Working out of your style takes energy, and this prospect will take everything you have. Can you do it? Absolutely. Can you be successful? Definitely. But it will likely drain you. The good news is the more you flex to other styles, the more comfortable and natural it becomes.

Look at the graphic above and ask yourself, who are the easiest people to sell to? Does the easiest person match the box containing your largest percentage of style? Does the most difficult person match the style with the lowest percentage? Consider how much more effective you will be if you tap into the power of style and can sell to anyone regardless of their style.

In the following pages, you will discover your natural tendencies, how they work for you, and how they work against you. Take the time to consider your selling mindset and behaviors and you will soon achieve new levels of success as a Chameleon Salesperson.





ADAPT for Success

The essence of *Chameleon Selling* is to adapt to the person to whom you're selling. This includes three key components. First, you need an awareness of your style. By increasing self-awareness and recognizing your own traits and tendencies, you gain a deeper understanding of how you are likely to sell. Second, by developing the ability to read the style of others and gain social awareness, you get a window into a customer's needs. This allows you to sell them how they like to be sold. Third, be the Chameleon! Adapt your style by meeting the unspoken needs of the person to whom you are selling. Display the right style at the right time based on the person and the situation.

Powered with self-awareness, social awareness, and adaptability you can sell to anyone of any style, regardless of your natural tendencies...or theirs. While the *Chameleon Selling Profile* is designed for salespeople, remember that everyone sells. Whether you sell products or services, strategies, or ideas, this profile will help you do so more effectively.

While it takes energy to flex to someone else's style, the most adaptable salespeople are the most effective salespeople. And everyone has the potential to be a Chameleon Salesperson.

The Golden Rule:
Treat others as *I*
want to be treated

The Home Rule:
Treat others as *they*
need to be treated

The Golden Rule for Sales:
Sell to others
how *I* want to buy

The Home Rule for Sales:
Sell to others
how *they* need to buy





Your Style Strengths and Challenges

In sales, there are no “good” or “bad” styles. Your style in no way determines how successful you will be as a salesperson. However, your style absolutely determines how you will go about *being* a salesperson. Eagles, Parrots, Doves, and Owls can all thrive in sales—they just go about it differently.

Effective salespeople learn how to tap into their style strengths and manage their style challenges. The best salespeople harness the strengths of every style while recognizing that in excess, *any* strength can become a weakness. Crystal, these are high-level strengths and challenges based on your style.

Strengths

- Understands products thoroughly and is always prepared for tough questions.
- Highly dependable in fulfilling customer requests.
- Researches leads thoroughly to understand their market and environment.
- Gathers customer requirements with a thorough, comprehensive approach.
- Diligent about entering data in customer response management (CRM) and complying with the sales process.
- Uses data, analytics, and evidence to make a strong case to buyers.

Challenges

- May overload prospects with information and details.
- Bulldozes objections rather than addressing them with nuance and patience.
- Delivers slow or indecisive recommendations for fear of being wrong.
- May overemphasize features and functionality over the value proposition.
- Struggles to think on the fly in tense or dynamic sales situations.
- May struggle in a competitive sales environment out of fear of conflict.





Your Ideal Sales Environment

The culture at work can have a massive impact on how we feel and perform. Eagles and Parrots tend to be overrepresented in sales, which means the culture and management style often cater to them. People tend to assume that others share their preferences, not realizing that those preferences are often unique to each style. When you are clear about what you like or dislike in a sales environment, you can advocate for processes that empower your style to thrive.

Likes

- You appreciate environments where people really do have each other's backs and don't view each other as competitors or threats.
- You appreciate it when sales organizations use sophisticated analytics to forecast demand and market conditions.
- You believe that sales teams should invest time in practicing sales conversations and giving constructive feedback.
- You believe changes in sales procedures should be carefully discussed, tested, and refined before going live.
- You probably appreciate receiving constructive feedback in private, delivered in a way that boosts your confidence.
- You tend to thrive in an organization that has a humanitarian purpose or supports employee volunteer work and charitable giving.

Dislikes

- You prefer employers that value your work-life balance and don't pressure you into sacrificing precious time with family.
- You probably don't respect sales cultures that exaggerate or spin information to nudge buyers toward a deal.
- You may find that boisterous, social sales environments are too distracting and unfocused for your taste.
- You strongly dislike competitive sales environments and don't want to be treated as anyone's rival.
- You may feel anxious in sales organizations that rapidly implement new technology and ideas to see what sticks.
- You likely feel stressed in sales cultures that use fear of layoffs or "performance improvement plans" to squeeze out more results.

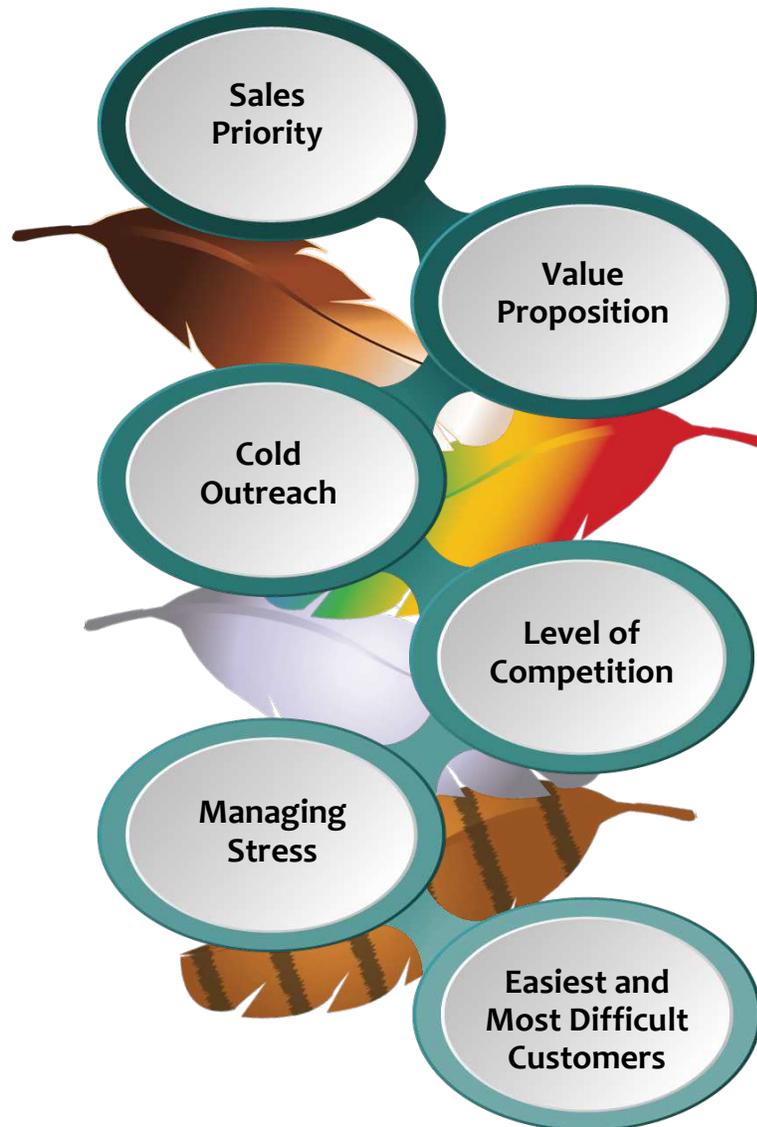




Becoming a Chameleon Salesperson

Being a Chameleon Salesperson means selling to others the way they want to be sold to. To do that effectively, we need more than a general understanding of each style. We need to get familiar with our own habits, patterns, and tendencies in the sales process. With that awareness, we can learn to distinguish our style's needs from the customer's true needs.

In this section, we'll illuminate aspects of your style through themes and experiences that are universal in sales. We'll note how you may differ from the other styles in these circumstances.





Sales Priority

What matters most to you in a sales interaction? You are about to discover that your style shapes your priorities. Moreover, your priorities are often drastically different from those of the other styles. Those differing priorities can come into conflict in ways that can ruin a sale. At the same time, tapping into your customer's priorities can enable sales that were previously beyond reach. Let's examine the strengths and challenges of your priorities.

Strengths

- You like peace and harmony in sales engagements rather than confrontation.
- You believe customers deserve time and space to fully reflect on their options.
- You consider it important to discuss trade-offs, risks, and unintended consequences.
- You want customers to use your product or service in the best way possible.
- Rather than exaggerate or guess, you take time to find the right answers to questions.
- You prioritize helping customers make informed, rational decisions.

Challenges

- You may be too critical of your own product when discussing tradeoffs and risks.
- You may feel alienated in hard-charging sales groups that reduce customers to numbers.
- Your effort to fully educate customers can frustrate those who make quick, gut decisions.
- Your need for peace may lead you to withhold upsetting but important information.
- You might deflate eager individuals who are rushing toward a decision you advise against.
- You are likely to share more information than quick decision-makers can absorb.





Value Proposition

Every salesperson must understand and communicate the value of what they sell. Of course, our style shapes how we interpret and convey benefits, features, and capabilities. With software, for instance, an Eagle might value performance and impact, a Parrot might prioritize new and exciting features, a Dove might care most about customer support, and an Owl might focus on security and warranty. Let's explore the likely strong points in your value propositions along with the blind spots.

Strengths

- You back up your value claims with persuasive, verifiable evidence.
- You instill trust by transparently discussing flaws or limitations with your product.
- You meet indecision patiently and work to understand its source.
- You encourage hands-on testing and experimentation to communicate value.
- You often provide documentation to support claims that aren't intuitive.
- You share measurable, comparable qualities of your product versus those of competitors.

Challenges

- While striving to personalize the value proposition for your customer, you may underemphasize big-picture benefits.
- You may seem overly critical of your own offering.
- You may stress specific, niche value claims at the expense of big-picture value propositions.
- If your approach doesn't connect, you may dwell on it rather than try another angle.
- You may overwhelm customers with too many details and features.
- You may wait for customers to say what they care about when they need your guidance.





Cold Outreach

How eager and willing are you to cold pitch a stranger? Some salespeople dread it, while some enjoy the rush of uncertainty and the game-like competition to convert leads into real prospects. Our style shapes how we act and feel when calling, emailing, messaging, or approaching someone we've never met to sell them something. Crystal, here is how the strengths and challenges of your style affect your success with cold outreach.

Strengths

- You make your case with a logical, evidence-based argument.
- You go into cold outreach expecting that customers will need more time and information before taking next steps.
- You take a calm, no-pressure approach to cold calls that can make leads feel comfortable.
- You are careful with words and likely to practice your outreach script thoroughly.
- You feel prepared to answer difficult or complex questions from cold leads.
- You contact leads in a specific order and record the results or next steps in an organized way.

Challenges

- You may dread cold calling because it seems invasive or disruptive to people – and generally uncomfortable to you.
- Your cold pitch may be too long, too complicated, and too detailed.
- You are likely to take rejection hard and dwell on the calls and messages that didn't go well.
- If someone interrupts your pitch with questions, you may struggle to pick up where you left off.
- After honing a strong pitch, you may deliver it the same way every time without adapting to the lead's style.
- An angry or impatient response from a lead who dislikes cold outreach might deter you from making the next call.





Level of Competition

Sales managers tend to manage their teams the way they would like to be managed. While a high level of competition might motivate Eagles or feel like a fun game to Parrots, Doves may not be eager to compete against peers for fear of conflict. Owls, too, might feel like competition is a distraction that incentivizes salespeople to move too fast and make mistakes. Because competition is so ingrained in sales culture, it's important to understand how your style can help or hinder you in competition.

Strengths

- Give prospects time to answer your questions. Some styles like to think before talking.
- You genuinely celebrate the successes of others, even if they beat you in a competition.
- Your listening abilities might alert you to sales tactics and opportunities others miss.
- You anticipate market trends and your competitors' moves to stay one step ahead.
- You play by the rules of the competition and insist that others do too.
- Though you don't savor competition, you respect it and participate if it incentivizes quality work.

Challenges

- You may feel isolated from a team and culture that revels in competition.
- You likely find competition uncomfortable, as it can lead to disharmony and conflict.
- If market conditions change during competition, you may find it difficult to adapt quickly.
- You may suffer from analysis paralysis, prolonging low-stakes decisions that hardly affect the outcome of the competition.
- You may feel stressed by having to meet sales goals, as you don't want to disappoint the team or your manager.
- Averse to risk, you may go with tried and true strategies but still lose to those with bolder, more innovative approaches.





Managing Stress During the Sales Process

Stress is unavoidable, but when, why, and how we experience stress is often a reflection of our style. Moments that might stress a Dove salesperson, like a tense negotiation, could energize an Eagle. Conversely, an Eagle might find it stressful to enter notes in the CRM because that leaves less time for closing deals. Meanwhile, a Dove may find the CRM to be a comforting tool for debriefing and planning the next steps. If we know what is most likely to stress our style, we can anticipate it and manage the impact more effectively.

Strengths

- You find sales processes and guidelines reassuring and helpful rather than constraining.
- You can perform solitary, detailed work for long periods of time without experiencing stress.
- When coworkers are overwhelmed, you help them out in the spirit of service and empathy.
- You check all boxes and follow all processes, minimizing the chance of conflict with management.
- Organized and methodical, you tend to avoid the stress others experience when they drop the ball on something important.
- By listening to customers, coworkers, and supervisors, you understand how to maintain healthy, low-stress relationships.

Challenges

- You fear conflict with your customers and coworkers and may perceive even slight tension as extremely stressful.
- Changes in the sales process, organizational structure, or culture might provoke feelings of dread and uncertainty.
- Being promoted to another team, given a new product line, or being transitioned to a new incentive structure may feel jarring rather than empowering.
- Technical errors in marketing collateral, web copy, and sales documents may undermine your trust in colleagues.
- Rejection—a frequent occurrence in sales—can lead you to question your competency and feel acute self-doubt.
- Your perfectionist tendencies can cause immense stress when you are given complex tasks on short notice with tight deadlines.





Your Easiest and Most Difficult Customers

Generally, people assume that whatever they find important will be important to others too. That's why we find it easy to sell to customers who share our style. They care about what we care about. When we sell to other styles, however, that assumption breaks down and can lead to conflicts, misunderstandings, and lost sales. With awareness and practice, you can go into any sales process ready to flex your style like a Chameleon rather than impose it on your customers.

Strengths

- You give Owls and Doves the space they need to think through their buying decision.
- Doves appreciate your willingness to educate them and patiently explain options in a way that helps them make confident decisions.
- Thoroughly prepared and knowledgeable, you are ready to field the most difficult questions.
- You tend to make people of all styles feel heard and understood.
- Your dedication to truth and your anti-fluff nature connect well with Eagles who just want reliable, straight answers.
- You give Parrot customers the space to share stories and express their needs.

Challenges

- Eagles and Parrots are unlikely to absorb what you're saying if you give long, complex answers to their questions.
- Blunt, aggressive Eagles may rattle you with interruptions or their demand to skip to whatever they want to know now.
- You may clash with Eagles who don't want context or background and just want you to get to the point.
- Your emphasis on logic and reason isn't going to go far with Parrots who prioritize emotion and gut feeling in decisions.
- You may experience burnout in a long sales cycle with a Parrot—especially if they miss deadlines or ask the same questions more than once.
- Your tendency to answer yes-no questions with qualifications like “It depends” can quickly anger Eagles who want a direct and clear answer.





Chameleon Selling in the Virtual World

Up through the 20th century, sales conversations happened face-to-face. Now, they span emails, text threads, instant messages, phone calls, video meetings, social media threads, forums, and more. In some cases, the entire sales process is virtual. These channels can amplify our strengths or challenges depending on our style. In this section of Chameleon Selling, we're going to explore your style's strengths and challenges in the context of different communication platforms.





Written Communication

In today's world, there's almost no avoiding email and text messaging. Whether we use it for outreach, scheduling, negotiations, or post-sale service, our style comes across in text and can influence how the recipient reacts. As with all aspects of sales, we need to recognize how we write habitually and how we might have to flex that approach to resonate with other styles.

Strengths

- You may recap recent decisions and steps in the sales process to ensure readers are on the same page as you.
- You respond to buyers asking for advice or opinions with a thorough, logical response.
- Your respectful emails ensure that no buyers ever feel like they asked a “stupid” question.
- You write long, comprehensive questions and may bullet point your thoughts.
- Your tone tends to be polite and professional, which minimizes the odds of conflict or misunderstanding.
- You probably read email threads in full before adding anything to them to avoid missing important context.

Challenges

- Straining to be polite, you may be too indirect when emailing clients for overdue payments and paperwork.
- Your emails may be too long-winded, meaning the recipient is likely to skim, miss key details, and come away with the wrong interpretation.
- You assume that readers will review any documents or links that you send, but a lot of the time, they won't.
- You may spend too much word count on background or context that is important to you but not to your reader.
- You may feel extremely uncomfortable writing emails that disagree with the buyer or correct an inaccuracy.
- You may feel paralyzed when writing emails in which you have to tell someone “no” or say that you cannot fulfill their request.





Video Meetings and Webinars

Although video meetings and webinars seem to approximate an in-person sales conversation, researchers find that they differ in significant ways. While we're conversing on video, brain scans show less social and emotional engagement, and we don't take turns speaking nearly as often. Moreover, buyers are likely to have a side chat in an instant messenger, which means their focus is fractured. Most distracting of all, email and the internet are only a click away. Of course, our style shapes how we navigate this relatively new medium and its unique barriers to connection.

Strengths

- You are thorough about following up on questions or requests made during the presentation.
- Because you don't like being the center of attention, you get others in the meeting to participate, which makes the experience more engaging.
- You prepare carefully for video presentations and give an overview of what you'll cover before the meeting or at the beginning of it.
- You tend to set clear expectations and an agenda for video meetings, which helps participants prepare.
- Your slide decks follow a logical progression with a clear thesis, supporting material, and a conclusion that ties it all together.
- You probably encourage participants to enter questions in the chat box or use the "raise hand" button to maintain order throughout the meeting.

Challenges

- You may get flustered if buyers interrupt or ask you to skip over material that you feel is important to share.
- You may get stressed if the video connection doesn't work well or if participants can't join it.
- Your tendency to be thorough and detailed can mean that your presentations overwhelm the audience's attention span.
- You may read your presentation word for word, which will almost certainly disengage the audience.
- You may not like being seen on camera, which can make the call uncomfortable if there are a lot of people in attendance.
- You may overload slides with text, which means participants dedicate more focus to reading than to listening.





Social Media

Social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and TikTok are a hodgepodge of content types and norms. On these channels, we can choose to post short-form text or long-form blog posts. We can use well-known images from the public domain, overlay text, or edit photos to depict different characters and stories. We can choose which people and brands to @-mention and which hashtags to invoke. We can even livestream to our audience. Social media doesn't favor one style. We all have the potential to overuse or underuse social media as a sales tool. Of course, most companies have rules about what can be shared on social media. So, make sure you follow proper guidelines!

Strengths

- Skeptical of social vanity metrics, you put forward a consistent message to a targeted audience without worrying about how popular your posts become.
- You vet content and links shared by marketing teams to ensure that you're not posting anything inaccurate.
- Rather than shoot from the hip, you think deeply about what to say and how to say it.
- You research content and influencers in your field to identify topics that interest your buyers.
- You aim to post content that will be helpful and supportive to viewers.
- When a potential buyer asks a question on social media, you give a helpful, informed answer without being self-promotional.

Challenges

- Your hesitancy to post publicly can limit the reach and impact of your social media activity.
- Preferring the control of written posts, you may avoid videoing or livestreaming yourself, which can limit how engaging you are on social media.
- Your data-driven posts may be too long and complicated for the context of social media.
- Unmotivated to compete for attention, you may spend time convincing yourself that social media isn't valuable instead of working to make it valuable.
- Fear of being criticized or trolled may stop you from posting content that could spread far.
- Because social algorithms tend to promote drama and outrage, you may find it difficult to stand out with reserved, factual statements.





The Sales Cycle and Your Style

The sales cycle follows predictable steps, each propelling the buyer toward a deal. Depending on what you sell, the cycle could take half an hour, half a year, or far longer. The substance of the sales conversation depends on what you sell. Are you solving a problem for a business using software? Helping a consumer buy a car that reflects their aspirations? One product, like a home, might be a living space to one customer but an investment to another.

Regardless of what you sell, personality plays a role in the outcome. If you are aware of your style's tendencies, you'll recognize and be able to change behaviors that limit your success. Moreover, you'll learn to ratchet your style up or down based on your customer's style.





At a Glance: The Sales Cycle by Style

The Eagle, Parrot, Dove, and Owl styles act differently at each phase of the selling process. These behaviors may connect with some individuals and repel others. The chart below explains what each style is likely to do during each stage.

	Eagle	Parrot	Dove	Owl
Prospect/ Qualify	Asks a few direct questions and moves on if there's no match	Speeds through this phase and jumps to creating a connection	Asks some questions but may not want to put someone on the spot too soon	Asks lots of questions to ensure a good fit
Connect/ Bond	Asks a few obligatory questions and moves on	Spends an inordinate amount of time creating connection and telling stories	Invests much time to build a relationship	Dislikes small-talk and spends little time creating connection
Interview/ Probe	Asks a few bottom-line questions to determine the goal	May spend too much time talking and not asking/listening	Asks lots of questions and listens empathetically	Asks many questions and gathers every bit of possible information
Present/ Propose	Focuses on outcomes not process or details	Generates excitement but shares little detail	Shares lots of info to make the customer comfortable with the product	Shares everything they know about the product
Questions/ Objections	Asks direct questions and appreciates when prospects share concerns	Answers questions with stories to paint a mental picture	Answers questions with empathy so customers feel heard and understood	Answers questions thoroughly
Negotiate/ Close	Directly asks for the close	Makes you feel like a winner	Gets commitment without pushing	Provides clear strategy and parameters
Maintain/ Post-sell	Knows exactly what they want to sell next and when to upsell	Becomes friends with clients and checks in periodically	Creates deep connections with clients and engenders long-term loyalty	Ensures that clients are satisfied with quality and results in follow-up calls





Prospect/Qualify

Before selling anything, you need to identify potential customers and evaluate if they are a fit for your product or service. Targeting the wrong customer wastes time and energy, and ultimately impacts your bottom line. Whether prospecting and qualifying take place on social media or at a trade show, your style shapes how you will identify potential customers.

How are you likely to Prospect/Qualify?

- You may search for signals of interest rather than directly ask prospects if they're interested.
- You determine which competitors your lead has used to better position your offering.
- You examine industry fit, budgets, and long-term growth potential before investing effort in a lead.
- You like to use a data-driven, thorough framework for scoring leads.
- You like to conduct thorough research on leads before reaching out.
- You are likely skeptical of lead-generating services and demand to know the criteria they use.

How might you become more effective during the Prospect/Qualify stage?

Do

- Review changing industry trends, market forces, and customers to keep your approach relevant.
- Respect your prospect's time. You might not be able to cover every question, and that's okay.
- Set boundaries to avoid overworking for low-quality leads.
- Warm up leads by starting with easy questions and moving to difficult ones.
- Ask detailed, problem-oriented questions that make prospects feel understood.

Don't

- Bombard prospects with too many questions! It can be tedious or stressful.
- Take it personally if a lead ignores you. You are probably not their priority.
- Waste hours trying to research questions your prospect can answer in seconds.
- Overcomplicate your criteria for leads. Streamline them to the most important factors.
- Expect your colleagues to have provided 100% accurate CRM notes.





Connect/Bond

After you identify a potentially strong lead, the next step is developing a relationship based on trust. Eagles, Parrots, Doves, and Owls each have different ways of making this connection. At this stage, being the Chameleon is especially important. If your prospect doesn't feel comfortable and understood, it's easy for them to walk away. Your style influences how you are likely to build rapport in the early phase of the selling process.

How are you likely to Connect/Bond?

- Because you seem to have discerning tastes and judgment, customers feel especially good about themselves when you appear to like them.
- You may connect by teaching customers something new or questioning a widely held assumption.
- You prefer to ask, rather than answer, bonding questions.
- You make customers feel respected by asking about the nature of their work and their areas of expertise.
- You like to learn about family and loved ones—and ask about them later in the sales process.
- You go from shallow to deep conversation quickly, bypassing topics like the weather and traffic.

How might you become more effective during the Connect/Bond stage?

Do

- Give your opinion when asked, even if it's not what the customer hopes to hear.
- Be vulnerable and open. Remember that buyers want to understand you as well.
- Find out what really makes your customer tick. Business isn't their whole life.
- Be vulnerable and share personal examples or stories to humanize your product.
- Invite customers to share their expertise, too. They might teach you something.

Don't

- Be afraid to mention your work or product. Bonding happens in a sales context.
- Try to share everything you know about a given topic. Know-it-allism is exhausting.
- Treat building rapport like an unnecessary obligation. It'll show.
- Make prospects feel like they're being sized up. This isn't a competition.
- Forget to learn about the prospect's family, friends, and interests.





Interview/Probe

While the Connect/Bond stage favors Parrots and Doves, who are natural relationship builders, the Interview/Probe stage brings out the best in Eagles and Owls. The aim at this stage is to understand your prospect's needs, challenges, and goals. While these topics likely came up during the Prospect/Qualify stage, prospects tend to be much more transparent once you've built a connection.

How are you likely to Interview/Probe?

- You take diligent notes, reference them later in the conversation, and use them to prepare your sales presentation.
- You ask technical questions about the customer's resources, processes, and systems.
- You likely conduct a longer interview than other styles, being sure that no stone is left unturned.
- You ask customers for a wish list of data that you intend to review between the Interview/Probe and Present/Propose stages.
- You tend to prepare and ask questions in a logical and intentional order.
- You guide customers through defining, specifying, and quantifying goals until they become clear.

How might you become more effective during the Interview/Probe stage?

Do

- Be transparent if you're struggling to get certain information you expected the customer to provide in response to your questions.
- Raise questions about problems or needs that the client may not think to mention.
- Ask prospects to share the evidence or reasoning behind their views.
- Ask prospects for specific, measurable goals. Be willing to help define these.
- Interrupt customers when you need clarification on something important they've said.

Don't

- Treat prospects with too much skepticism. Trust they are trying to be accurate.
- Focus solely on risks and unsolved problems. Try to understand your prospect's goals and vision for the future.
- Project fear of change on prospects who are ready to innovate and transform.
- Criticize customers for failing to answer your question. Ask again but in a different way.
- Judge prospects for wanting something you wouldn't want.





Present/Propose

This is the big moment when you showcase your offering. It's probably exciting if you're a Parrot or a battle to win if you're an Eagle. You might dread the spotlight as a Dove or feel stressed about preparing and perfecting your pitch if you're an Owl. One way or another, you'll make a case for why your offering fits the prospect's needs.

How are you likely to Present/Propose?

- You identify what could go wrong with your solution—and potentially bring up risks the customer never would have considered.
- You explain not only how you will solve the customer's problems but also why your approach is the most logical and effective way.
- Your presentations repeat the customer's needs and challenges word for word to show that you listened.
- You avoid making claims you cannot support with evidence, and use words like “may,” “might,” and “could” to qualify anything you cannot guarantee.
- You trust in conventional presentation structures that proceed from introduction to conclusion in predictable ways.
- Your slide decks tend to be filled with dense graphs and metrics.

How might you become more effective during the Present/Propose stage?

Do

- Try to anticipate doubts or concerns and address them during the pitch.
- Make eye contact with your audience. No hiding.
- Practice your pitch, preferably with an audience, and ask for candid feedback.
- Scan for confusion or loss of interest in your audience. Be willing to switch gears if you're losing their attention.
- Develop pitch material that can be reused. Too much customization is inefficient.

Don't

- Expect everyone to intuitively understand your charts, graphs, and other visualizations. Walk the audience through those.
- Try to share everything you know. Prioritize the information most likely to influence a purchase.
- Expect Eagles and Parrots to savor technical details. Stick to the big picture for them.
- Assume your audience knows everything you know. Phrases like, “As I'm sure you already know...” can make prospects feel self-conscious if they don't know.
- Panic if you get lost. Review aloud what you've shared so far to reorient yourself.





Answer Questions/Handle Objections

Your customer's style will come out strong in this part of the sales cycle. Points of confusion, worries about user experience, unaddressed risks, or missed details can trigger strong reactions. How you address those reactions will determine whether you maintain the trust you've worked so hard to cultivate. Like all the stages, this one can happen in person, over the phone or video call, through email, or via multiple channels over time.

How are you likely to Answer Questions/Handle Objections?

- You validate customers with lines like, "Thank you for asking that question" or "That's a really interesting question."
- You give thorough, well-reasoned answers to all questions, even when a "yes" or "no" might suffice.
- You often ask customers about the origin or source of their questions.
- You tell customers when you don't know the answer to something and offer to follow up.
- You call out non-factual objections and explain why they're wrong in detail.
- You ask customers questions about their questions to ensure you provide the information they really want.

How might you more effectively Answer Questions/Handle Objections?

Do

- Script answers to the questions you are most nervous about being asked .
- Refer back to needs your prospects raised earlier in the sales cycle.
- Take note of the most common objections and test various responses to them.
- Cut the length of your answers to match the style of the questioner.
- Ask about the rationale behind objections and questions if it's not obvious. Try to get to the root of your prospect's concerns.

Don't

- Turn the conversation into a debate or contest of knowledge. Being "right" won't make you any likelier to close a deal.
- Try to hide the weaknesses in your offering. Explain how you overcome them.
- Set the expectation that you'll answer every question and objection perfectly.
- Point to dense documentation as an answer. Summarize it for your customer.
- Overcomplicate answers to simple yes-no questions.





Negotiate/Close

The climax of any sale is to work out the final terms, sign papers, and complete a transaction. In that last push, however, the heightened stakes can amplify our style strengths to the point they become weaknesses. The buyer, likewise, might experience doubts and second thoughts, particularly with an expensive purchase. Staying aware of your style *and* the buyer's is crucial at the closing.

How are you likely to Negotiate/Close?

- You develop and share a logical explanation of why your terms are the best for both parties.
- You negotiate patiently and tend to outlast customers who, though outwardly tough, just want to be done with the process.
- You may dread negotiations and the sense that you must “pressure” buyers into a deal.
- When the buyer is unwilling to budge on something, you get to the root of why and try to address the real need.
- To mitigate pressure on buyers, you encourage them to sign only if they genuinely feel good about the terms.
- In negotiations involving teams, you try to speak privately to the individual customer with whom you feel closest.

How might you become more effective during the Negotiate/Close stage?

Do

- Clear up any confusion or vagueness in the terms to ensure that you and the buyer share the same expectations.
- Ask what it will take for your customer to sign the deal.
- Study the closing documents for discrepancies and gaps others may miss.
- Assume that last-minute misunderstandings about the contract are genuine.
- Strategize add-ons or incentives that are inexpensive to offer but helpful in sealing a deal.

Don't

- Assume that everyone has spent as much time reviewing the contract as you have.
- Forget to read the buyer for emotions. What they say and how they say it matters.
- Tell customers that you find negotiating stressful or unpleasant.
- Check out of a negotiation that seems stuck. Accept the discomfort and carry on.
- Treat customers with suspicion. They're not out to get you; they just want a good deal.





Maintain/Post-sell

Closing the deal is the beginning, not the end, of the relationship. The post-sale experience shapes whether customers will renew their contract, buy from you again, or refer leads to you. When issues or questions inevitably arise, customers may come to you rather than consult support or customer success teams. How you use your style in these situations will shape whether this customer relationship endures.

How are you likely to Maintain/Post-sell?

- You are likely to send customers detailed surveys about their experience.
- You probably send customers detailed status updates about their implementation.
- If a customer is having a poor experience, you may hesitate to discuss it for fear of getting sucked into a conflict.
- You make yourself available to clients and aim to be helpful, even when handling the issue is someone else's duty.
- You like serving as a translator between customers and technical teams to ensure that both sides understand each other.
- You tend to get involved in the post-sales process to ensure that implementation teams execute properly.

How might you become more effective during the Maintain/Post-sell stage?

Do

- Request feedback on your product or service that you can share with those who helped create it.
- Help customers measure progress toward their stated goals.
- Follow up proactively with customers, ideally before they come to you with issues.
- Educate clients about how to optimize the functionality of your product.
- Document common post-sale issues and pass the feedback to product teams.

Don't

- Tell customers what they're doing wrong with the product. Focus instead on how they can get more value out of it.
- Make post-sale issues complicated for clients. Save the complexity for your team.
- Delay support responses to get a complete answer. Be quick, then be thorough.
- Let perfectionism delay support. Solving 80% of a problem in a day beats 100% in a month.
- Be overly apologetic about problems. Just state how you'll solve them.





The Salesperson in the Red Zone

When we overuse our strengths, they become our weaknesses. In accounting terms, we might say that our greatest assets become our greatest liabilities. Following are some ways that individuals might push their style into the red zone where it works against them instead of for them.

				
Pace	Too fast, may miss things	Too fast, may miss things	Too slow to avoid pressuring the client	Too slow as there are many details to work through
Tone	Too direct and blunt	Too bubbly	Too soft-spoken	Too impersonal
Assertiveness	May become aggressive	May soften directness with humor	May become too passive	No need to apply pressure as logic wins the day
Communication	Listens for action-steps, then stops listening to detail	Listens to speak and talks too much	Listens empathically but talks too little	Listens for details, but fails to pick up emotions
Level of information sharing	Not enough information as it's unnecessary	Not enough detail as it's not important	Too much information provided to create comfort	Way too much detail!
Shortcuts this Phase of the Selling Process	Connecting/ Bonding	Present/ Propose	Negotiate/ Close	Maintain/ Post-Sell
Taking Notes	Minimal	Minimal	A little more than needed	So much detail, it slows down the salesperson
Building a Strong Relationship	May get short-cutted	May become too close	May become too close	May get short-cutted
	Eagle	Parrot	Dove	Owl





Practicing Chameleon Selling

Selling like a Chameleon means recognizing your customer's style and knowing what to do with that information. You must also understand how your style can help and hinder you. You can't control anyone else's behavior, but you can control how you treat them.

The following questions will help each style think and act like a Chameleon. You may wish to review the questions for your secondary style as well.

Questions for an Eagle Salesperson

- When speaking to a detail-oriented customer who has highly specific questions, what can you do to satisfy their needs? With your product or service in mind, provide answers that go beyond, "I would provide more information."
- When selling to a customer who is nervous about change and its impact on their colleagues, what can you say and do to ease their concerns?
- When a customer sends an email that is beaming with enthusiasm and loaded with exclamation marks, what three things should you do in your response?
- If a customer seems uncomfortable with highly assertive negotiations, what can you do to take the pressure off and still close the sale?
- During the post-sale period, a demanding, blunt customer tells you that the implementation team is missing deadlines in pursuit of a flawless integration with your technology. How do you speak to this individual to ease concerns and address the issue?

Questions for a Parrot Salesperson

- You have successfully bonded with a hard-driving, results-oriented client and need to plan the next steps in the sales engagement. What are three things you should do to keep this sale moving in the right direction?
- You are getting ready to present to a potential customer who seems highly analytical and hard to read emotionally. Given your product or service, how should you structure and deliver this presentation?
- A soft-spoken, thoughtful prospect has not responded to your last email, which you sent a week ago. What should you say or do to re-engage this person in the sales process?
- You're very excited to pitch your service to a potential new client because you're certain it meets their needs. You give your presentation and the customer isn't nearly as enthusiastic as expected. What might be happening, and how can you regain positive momentum?
- You work with a detail-oriented account manager who regularly complains about the lack of specifics you include in CRM notes about customer interactions. What can you say to this person to address this point of friction?





Questions for a Dove Salesperson

- A bold, outspoken customer has just lost their cool during negotiations and seems to be yelling at you. How do you manage the tension and move toward a final deal?
- Your energetic sales team partner seems to shoot from the hip and change the sales process willy-nilly. What can you say to this person to bring their creativity and spontaneity in compliance with the established sales process?
- You're about to cold call a prospect who you've discovered writes detailed, critical reviews on social media about all the products they use and the vendors they work with. How will you win this customer over?
- In one hour, you are going to lead a webinar with 150 participants whom you know little about. How do you mentally prepare for the session? What three things should you strive to do throughout the webinar?
- You smashed the company sales record this quarter, and your manager wants to give you an award in front of a large audience and talk about your success. How will you handle this request?

Questions for an Owl Salesperson

- During a sales presentation, your energetic, happy-go-lucky partner says something about your offering that isn't quite accurate. How will you handle this situation?
- A hard-driving, fast-moving customer wants to buy something from you ASAP but doesn't realize that their chosen product won't actually support their goals. How will you meet this customer's needs?
- During a video presentation, you start talking through your proven, fine-tuned script, but the previously energetic, enthusiastic customer suddenly seems bored. How will you turn this call around?
- Your short-fused, demanding manager pulls you into a meeting to discuss why your prospects are taking so long to convert into customers. How you will handle this feedback during the meeting?
- Your sales partner, a soft-spoken and empathetic person, seems to be withdrawn and even passive-aggressive toward you. What can you say to this person to restore and improve this partnership?





Dynamic Action Planning

Learning to sell like a Chameleon will take some thought and practice, but before long, you will learn to adapt your style to meet the needs of your clients and coworkers. These action-planning questions will challenge you to manage your style as you anticipate and meet unspoken needs.

While fielding questions and objections from a group of assorted styles, which aspects of your style should you moderate?

When a customer asks why your product or service is better than the competitor's—and they don't share your style—what style tendencies do you need to keep in check?

To raise the response rate on your cold outreach, what could you try that is usually uncomfortable for your style?





When fielding detailed questions and objections from customers, what style tendencies will you need to moderate?

You need to reach out to a bunch of prospects you briefly met at a trade show. How will you prepare yourself, emotionally and tactically, to get this done?

When presenting to a prospective customer who is decisive and seems indifferent to the details, how should you flex your style?





Conclusion: Style Flexibility Wins

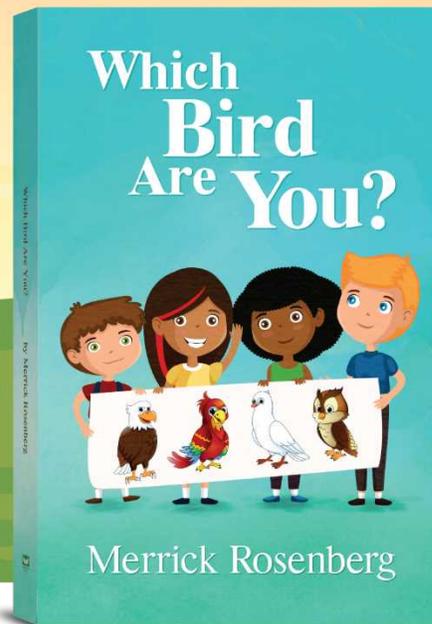
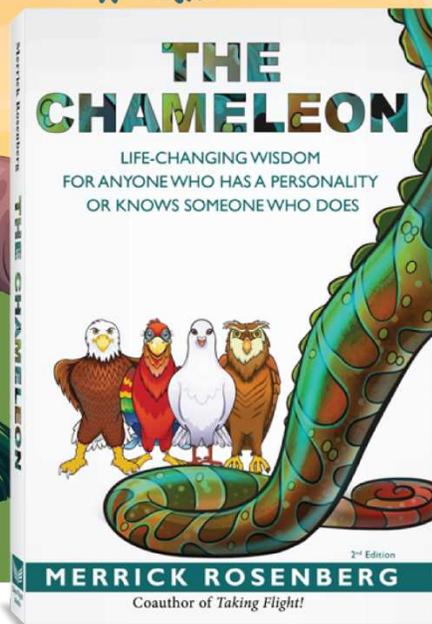
In your *Chameleon Selling Profile*, you may have noticed some recurring themes that are particular to you and your style. However, some themes of Chameleon Selling are universal. They are lessons we apply no matter who we are or whom we interact with at work, home, and elsewhere. As time passes, you may find moments when you want to be reminded of these themes. Let's conclude with three principles that can awaken your inner Chameleon whenever you need it:

1. **Start every sales engagement by tuning into the style of your buyer(s).** So many thoughts, ideas, and inclinations can run through our minds when we kick off the sales process. When you recognize the style of your buyer, that noise quiets down, and the path forward becomes clearer.
2. **Be aware of how your style presents itself on “autopilot.”** The strengths and challenges of your style seem to surface on their own. Notice when you're overusing your strengths or letting your challenges take command. Awareness is the key to moderating your style.
3. **Sell to others how they like to buy.** When we impose our style on customers, they are much less likely to buy from us. Our job is to flex our style to meet the needs and preferences of the individual we are trying to serve.

No matter what you sell or whom you sell to, these principles can improve your odds of success. Remember, regardless of your style, you have some Eagle, Parrot, Dove, and Owl traits within you, and you can always tap into them. You have everything you need to be a successful Chameleon Salesperson.



LEARN
MORE



Take Flight Learning

856.807.0200

www.TakeFlightLearning.com