



## Over-Preparers Working Hard, Accomplishing Little

*By Jeffrie Story*  
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If you're in the office after hours, you'll probably find Over-Preparers there. They work harder than anyone, but their long hours aren't correlated with higher revenue.

Have you ever been on a contact with a sales rep who droned on until the prospect's eyes glazed over with boredom? You probably silently screamed, "Stop talking!"

Behavioral Sciences Research Press (BSRP) scientists, discoverers of the 12 types of Sales Call Reluctance®, say Over-Preparers lose sales because they morbidly yet unconsciously fear saying "I don't know."

Their habitual behaviors keep them from initiating enough contact with prospective buyers on a consistent basis, which is the key predictor of sales.

Here are some of those behaviors:

- They give prospects more information than they want, possibly deflating the buyer's enthusiasm. If they stop by your office for "just a minute," plan on spending 30 instead.
- They avoid contacting prospects without first knowing everything possible. That's appropriate for large accounts, but not small ones.
- If a customer wants to see them, they'll try to guess why rather than ask. They'll analyze and price a multitude of options, so they won't be caught off-guard. Too often, none of these options is what the customer wants and sales reps end up appearing unprepared!
- They're linear in their thinking and speaking. An Over-Preparer can drive a bottom-line prospect to tears.
- They seem inflexible in changing their style to meet the prospect's needs or personality. Their motto could be, "My way or the highway!"
- If you're in the office after hours, you'll probably find Over-Preparers there. They work harder than anyone, but their long hours aren't correlated with higher revenue.

As a licensee for BSRP, I've worked with many Over-Preparer reps. They nearly always agree with their assessment score and are usually willing to modify some behaviors.

One rep told me he spends a lot of time making sure he takes every piece of collateral with him when he makes a sales call. He was always stressed because he thought he'd forgotten something, which then made him less effective with the prospect.

Eventually he agreed to leave the collateral in his car and see prospects with just paper and pen. This helped him focus on the prospect rather than talk on end about a plethora of products. After his needs analysis, he asked for a few minutes to put together a plan of action. Then he'd go to his car, collect only appropriate collateral, gather his thoughts and return.

It worked easily for him and exemplifies a point about Over-Preparers: They need help in knowing what they don't have to know! They need help in developing strategies for better work habits.

On the other side of the coin, there are some areas where they can be slow to change, such as over-talking. This near-compulsive behavior is more difficult to change. Since they think in a linear fashion, they can't understand someone else's ability to make decisions without knowing every detail.

But you can still help. One way is to rehearse various parts of the sales process. Take time to show them how to get to the point, identify what they don't need to say and then have them practice again. When they see the light, go with them to make sure they practice the new behaviors.

If you have Over-Preparers in your sales force, don't fret. Just remember that they're hard workers and diligent in doing their jobs correctly. Your mission is to make sure they have the behavioral strategies to drive more revenue!

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