

Take Control – There is only 1 Driver’s Seat

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Just like in a car, in every relationship, there can only be 1 “driver” (lead). You or them? The sooner you “grab the wheel”, the faster your audience will naturally move into the “passenger” seat (which ultimately means they trust you).

Here are some keys to “taking & maintaining control”:

1. **Use Phone Meetings:** See the *Phone Meeting Instead of Playing Phone Tag* module to see the “qualitative” benefits and how they impact your leadership within the relationship.
2. **Always Have an Agenda:** Come to every meeting (phone or face-to-face), even if it’s a 5-minute phone conference call, with an agenda. Make sure they are aware of the agenda by emailing it to them prior and by communicating it to them at the start of your meeting. This will show them how organized you are & keep the meeting on track.
3. **Lead & Manage the Conversation:** Leading the conversation means introducing each topic, asking questions to set the tone and keeping it on track.
4. **Make Buying from you Easy:** This sounds silly but if you are driving every step of the way, your customer will naturally move into the “passenger” seat. This means you have to manage their expectations by doing all the work for this relationship including booking each meeting, getting them to commit to their deliverables, reminding them of when their deliverables are due, etc...
5. **Direct Their Eyes:** Like you, your customer is busy so the more guidance you give them the more likely they are to follow your direction and respect you for it. For example...when you send out information, the plan or the terms & conditions, tell them in the body of the email where they should look – page? Paragraph? Line? You can even highlight key information you want them to view and let them know you did this. This will immediately draw their eye.
TIP: When providing a printed brochure, put an upside down Post-It note or bookmark on the page(s) you would like them to read with hand written commentary at the top. They will naturally flip to that page(s).
6. **Don’t Stop Until you Win the Business:** Too often, sales people do a great job maintaining control, setting the pace and driving the sale forward until the customer has the proposal in their hand or gives them a verbal “yes”. Then, they sit back and wait for the order (perhaps feeling they don’t want to be too pushy). Don’t waste all of your hard work. Finish the job.
7. **Use your CRM:** With so many relationships & opportunities at any one time, you are bound to forget to schedule the “next action” ... especially for those actions that need to be done in weeks or months. Use your CRM to remind you when to follow up & what to talk about.

Quick Evaluation: Are you in the Driver Seat, Passenger Seat or Back Seat?

Go through some of your opportunities today and determine if you are in the:

Seat	Definition	Example
Driver Seat	Leading and directing the relationship, step by step.	<i>Next meeting, let’s review the proposal, discuss the budget & finalize the timing to begin.</i>
Passenger Seat	Sharing some leadership with your audience ... nobody is firmly established as being in control.	<i>Let’s continue our discussions at our next meeting.</i>
Back Seat	You are waiting for things to happen, people to get back you, next actions to be booked &/or feedback to be given.	<i>Please review my proposal and let me know if you have any questions.</i>

NOTE: if they won’t follow your lead, they are probably not interested or not ready