

Sales Shadow Project

Jimi Fox



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Introduction

Background on company, products sold and to whom, and salesperson

BYU Broadcasting is the umbrella brand that is home for Brigham Young University's broadcast channels. Those channels include BYUtv, BYU Television International, KBYU Eleven, BYU Radio, and Classical 89 KBYU-FM. In addition to being found on various cable and satellite providers, their services can also be accessed online. "BYU Broadcasting aims to inform and enrich audiences by acquiring, creating, and distributing programs that reflect the values of Brigham Young University and its sponsoring institution, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the shared values of good people of all backgrounds and faiths." (<http://www.byub.org/about>)

I work for BYU Broadcasting as a member of the web team. The web team handles the various online streaming services and content distribution over the web. Currently, BYU Broadcasting collaborates with the company Move Networks to sustain and streamline its online streaming service of BYUtv. However, because of a shift in the business model of Move Networks, BYU Broadcasting is seeking a new company to work with in order to provide their online BYUtv viewing service. As a result of my role with BYU Broadcasting, this paper will be written mostly from the buyer's perspective.

One of the companies that BYU Broadcasting is learning more about and exploring is called Ooyala. Ooyala was founded back in 2007 by a couple of Google engineers and is based out in the Silicon Valley in California. Their mission is to provide "an end-to-end solution for media and non-media businesses to transcode, manage, deliver, analyze, and monetize their video assets." Their flagship product is called *Backlog*. *Backlog* lets the user view and interact with all of their online data in one simple interface. Some of Ooyala's current clients are Electronic Arts, Vans, Red Bull, Dell, the WB, and General Mills. (<http://www.ooyala.com/about>)

Description of product knowledge and selling skills needed for job

The two sellers at Ooyala that BYU Broadcasting is working with are Rob Beesley and Luke Dyer. Along with BYU Broadcasting, they are also working on closing a deal with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter known as "the Church"). First and foremost, these sellers must

have an extensive knowledge of the products and services they provide. In addition, they must have a sound understanding of the current programs in the market and their capabilities as well as upcoming technologies. With Ooyala playing in the relatively new online multimedia arena, they must be up-to-date on all the current trends. Sellers must be aware that their interactions and potential clients will all be well-versed with web capabilities. They need to be confident in their knowledge and be able to speak the “techy” knowledge lingo.

Sitting in on the call were 5 people; myself, Mark Mitchell, Ryan Holmes, Rob Beesley and Luke Dyer. Mark and Ryan work for BYU Broadcasting (their roles will be discussed later) and Rob and Luke were calling on behalf of Ooyala out in California. This is the 2nd communication between the two parties, so relatively early in the sales cycle.

Sales Call

Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the selling presentations

I was impressed by a tremendous amount while shadowing this sales call. From the very beginning, the Case Open was exceptional. All the plays that I have come to know and love were there: the position play (“data driven and innovation company who is the leader in video analytics”), the benefit play (“let us streamline your services”), and proof play (“we have helped the Church...”). A statement that I really liked was “let us explain how our solution makes sense.” Mentally, this prepared me and gave me the confidence that I would understand their presentation and solution. I also liked their adaptation of the permission play; they said, “As we go through, tell us what is relevant, and what is not, we don’t want to waste your time.” This statement assured me that they were there for business and respected not only my time, but their own work time as well.

Another aspect about the CO that I was impressed by was that Ooyala tried to make their connection to BYU Broadcasting more personal. They mentioned that they had been recently working with the Church for General Conference streaming and also that one of the sellers had recently become the president of the BYU Business Club-Idaho. Those references helped to form more of a mental bond between us, and not just a traditional buyer-seller relationship.

This was only the second communication between Ooyala and BYU Broadcasting so Ooyala jumped straight into a Needs Audit. I was impressed by the quality of questions that were asked. I picked up on some vision questions and status quo inquiries. Overall, all of the questions were very intelligent and thought-provoking for the buyer. The questions really helped the buyer understand

about *their own* situation better.

An item that was discussed related to BYU Broadcasting's financial and budgetary constraints. The seller asked if BYU Broadcasting would be teaming up with the LDS Church on a deal or whether they would be forming a separate contract. Then the seller commented that if it would be possible to have the two contracts together then the costs would be cut in half for BYU Broadcasting and the Church. This was a nice statement of trust that made me feel like the sellers were looking out for our best interests and that they wanted to make the sale with us and the Church.

An example of an effective drill-down also occurred during the call. One of the status quo/vision questions posed was "what the BYUtv site wanted to eventually become." Ryan responded that the site has a "Hulu-like feel." The seller dug a little deeper, "And what do you mean by that." "It is a place where people can come online to watch a show they might have missed or to re-watch a favorite show." Then the seller remarked, "And then where do you want to go with the site?" Ryan again answered, "We want to ultimately have the users come to the site and engage with the content, not to just watch it, but to share it, to engage with the *principles* and use them in their lives. We want the users to go beyond information to application." This led to a perfect validation play from the seller, "We absolutely get it, you sound very sharp." Ego-boost all the way.

In fact, the two sellers seemed to make an honest effort to validate us whenever possible. Some of their statements were "I'm glad you brought that up" and "you are forward thinking and ambitious with those goals. For you to produce 1,000 hours of original footage is comparable to ABC." When we showed them the new beta site for BYUtv, they responded with "very cool" and "we're excited to see this happen." Validation plays play well with the buyer, and everybody loves an honest compliment.

With all the good and great examples in the sales call, there were also some areas where improvement could have been helpful. One area that I noticed was very little was mentioned by the sellers about "great big benefits." They did not go as far as to become a "feature creep," but they shared a large handful of features and advantages without giving many benefits. They compared with the competition, and drove home their advantages, but failed to bring it home to us with a "great big benefit." Granted, benefits were mentioned here and there throughout the presentation, but they were very directly stressed or pointed out. We could find the benefits in between the lines, but the presentation would have been even more convincing if the benefits were stated directly.

Another area of improvement was the length of the actual call. Since this was my first B2B sales sit-in, I do not have anything to compare it to, but it seemed a little long-winded to me. The call

began at 2:07 pm and their presentation lasted until 3:05 pm. Then we began a little negotiating session that went until about 3:35 pm. For me, it was difficult to maintain high focus for that length of time. Also, a lot of information was exchanged by both parties. It would have been helpful for me to not have had such a long initial meeting.

During my interview with Ryan Holmes, I asked if he felt there were any flaws to their proposal; he was quick to bring up one point. A huge “if” of the whole deal was whether or not BYU Broadcasting would join with the LDS Church to sign a deal. If both organizations would come together on a deal with Ooyala, it would have saved BYU Broadcasting \$100,000 over the course of a year. On the surface, I felt like that would be a great deal for us.

Ryan then tried to convey the point to Ooyala that BYU Broadcasting was the bigger sell in comparison with the Church. Although the Church may have the bigger name and brand presence, BYU Broadcasting would be using their service in a greater capacity. Ryan was trying to emphasize our value to Ooyala. The reason that this was such a big deal is that Ryan was concerned that if we signed a joint deal with the Church and Ooyala, but down the road if the Church were to back out, then it would put BYU Broadcasting in a tough financial spot. So the weakness of Ooyala was failing to realize that BYU Broadcasting, with its continual production and use of online video, would be a bigger sell than the LDS Church.

Role of nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication played an interesting role in this sales presentation. Ooyala is based in California, and BYU Broadcasting is of course here in Provo. In addition to the sales presentation being conducted over the phone, gotomeeting.com was used. Prior to this experience, I had never used gotomeeting.com before.

Gotomeeting.com is a web-based service that allows its users to host online meetings. This web conferencing tool enables its users to share any application on their computer with others in real time. (<http://www.gotomeeting.com>)

This tool was very helpful with this sales call. Without it, the sales pitch and demonstrations would not even have taken place. This type of tool is especially useful in the technology industry, because it allows for the demonstration to be done without the seller even having to be on-site. This was fabulous for us, because we could see the actual program *Backlog* and they walked us through the process we would take to get content on the web. By using gotomeeting.com Ooyala showed us the actual steps we would take in the process of getting video up on the web, and emphasized the benefit to us that it would be really easy for BYU Broadcasting and save us on labor and allow our

resources to work in other areas.

The nonverbal communication of showing us how simply and easily we would be able to use their services was brilliant. However, because the presentation was only given by phone, this is all the nonverbal cues that I was able to notice.

Objection handling

This was an area that could Ooyala could have done better at. Although BYU Broadcasting did not have any strong objections, there were a couple of concerns that were brought up. One question Ryan had was related to Ooyala's business model. He asked if there were any liabilities in their business model because they claimed to be a technology company, but they had little invested in hardware. I am no genius about the technology industry, but Ryan seemed concerned about the matter. I was expecting (and hoping) for some Verbal Judo Validation, but was disappointed that it did not come. The seller began his reply by "Yes, understandably..." Not bad, but not the greatest. He was able to address the concern and used a permission play before proceeding to the rest of his presentation.

Towards the end of the presentation a price/value objection came up. Again, not too much of a validation play was made. Immediately after the objection came up though, the seller emphasized the value of Ooyala's product. He remarked that "our toolset is at a different level." Then he encouraged us to start up a demo account, and that he would give us extra permissions in our demo account to more fully see the benefits and superiority of the product. I really liked how he stressed that we would not find a better product with the competition, emphasizing more the value than the price. However, Ryan persisted about the price. The seller continued, "I need to do some more research on our end, but lets see how easy we can make it for you." The seller continued to tell us that there may be a way to negotiate quarterly or monthly payments, in contrast to the normal 100% payment up front. He ended by saying that "we do not want to lose you over this." This gave me the sense that they really wanted our business, and were very willing to try and work out a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Closing and asking for the order

The step in the sales cycle that I shadowed was only the 2nd meeting between the two parties. Thus, I feel like an attempted close would have had an overall negative effect on the meeting. Luckily, Ooyala did not try to close the sale.

That being said, the Schedule Next Event was fantastic. Ooyala mentioned a number of

specific “action items” to be completed by each party. They made it clear that they wanted BYU Broadcasting to create a demo account, and they would give the account extra privileges and permissions. That way BYU Broadcasting would be able to interact with the software and test out the services on their own test sites. They also asked for some specific numbers pertaining to the amount of content that would be used, and they said they would get back in a couple of hours on some clearer pricing figures. I was not around a couple hours later, but I asked Ryan and Mark and they said Ooyala did contact them again with the specific numbers.

What are the ways they maintain relationships with customers?

Ooyala sets up each sale with an account representative. That person serves as the link between the client and the seller. That person also acts as the main contact for customer service. Another way that the relationship is maintained is that Ooyala said they would send out a rep from California to provide training of their services.

I was also impressed that Ooyala placed the same sales reps from the Church to also work with us. Although this may seem like a common sense move given the similarities in goals and content that BYU and the Church shares, I felt it was brilliant on Ooyala’s part and could have easily been overlooked. By using the same sales reps, the relationship with the LDS community (whether BYU or specifically the Church or some other entity) will only grow stronger and possibly lead to other opportunities.

Buyer Interview

I was able to interview both Mark Mitchell and Ryan Holmes from BYU Broadcasting. In this sales call, they both were the main buyers and the final decision rested on them. Mark Mitchell has been with the company for about 7 years and he is the New Media Manager. He oversees all development and content distribution processes for the web. Ryan Holmes joined BYU Broadcasting earlier this year as the Web Station Manager. His primary responsibilities include strategy development and implementation and he works closely with the top management of BYU Broadcasting. In the end, it will be Ryan’s decision on what online multimedia service provider to select.

Why they buy from one company rather than another?

Mark commented that for him customer service can be a real differentiator, especially in the

technology industry. Technologies rapidly change, and if a service provider is unable to adapt and customize their products, then they lose tremendous value. He mentioned that a past provider was very poor at customer service and was difficult to get in contact with. When specific changes needed to be made, or questions needed to be answered, that rep was nowhere to be found and impossible to contact. As a result, BYU Broadcasting left that provider and would never recommend them to other organizations. So for Mark, customer service was a big reason to buy or not buy from a selling company.

Ryan said that for him, the product makes the real difference and separates a company he is seriously considering with a company he is only looking at. Ryan is very much a driver personality; he wants to be able to get the job done right, and to get it done quickly. He really liked Ooyala because the product fits what he was looking for in a service. On a side note, Ryan liked when I asked him these interview questions directly, so that he could answer them directly.

What are the main benefits they look for when buying?

Both Mark and Ryan agreed that the toolset and its ability to analyze data was the main benefit they are looking for when making a purchase related to online media distribution. The toolset is the feature that allows the big benefit of using the data from the toolset to drive business decisions. They need the tools and the ability to streamline the process in order to save time and money. It was interesting; Mark seemed to be able to identify a benefit, because of where a previous seller failed. He was dissatisfied with a few features of an old seller, so those became the main benefits for what he was looking for in a new seller.

How does the salesperson influence their decision?

Mark said that the extent of the ability of the salesperson to answer a direct question is very important in influencing him. He wants a salesperson who knows their product's abilities, but also their areas where growth is possible. He has very specific needs and wants to know if a company can satisfy those needs.

Ryan commented that a seller can really influence him if they show that they have done due diligence in their research and that they care about your operations. A question that Ooyala asked that Ryan appreciated was when they asked about BYU Broadcasting's work flow and decision making process. After that question, he was able to shed a little light on BYU Broadcasting's processes, and in-turn, Ooyala shared on how their product would help improve those processes. As a result of the seller asking these intelligent questions, he was able to trust and rely more on the seller's judgement and insights.

What makes a good, bad, and ugly salesperson?

A bad salesperson in Mark's opinion is one that is too pushy. He wants a seller to be able to handle a "no." He also dislikes sellers who present data that is obviously skewed. If he wants to see data, he wants that data to be as impartial as possible. He also dislikes when sellers use data as a way to push their buyers. Relating to this call, Mark said that he was very impressed. At the conclusion of the sales call he said that he was "ready to get going."

Ryan had a lot to say about what a bad and ugly salesperson is. He really dislikes it when sellers do not give the proper attention to objections. He mentioned the book "Lets Get Real" by Mahan Khalsa and the street light analogy. Ryan remarked that sometimes when sellers hear an objection, it is almost like a yellow light to them and they try to ignore it and zoom past the objection. He really dislikes sellers that don't treat his concerns and handle them. He appreciates when sellers encounter a yellow light, or an objection, but work with it until it becomes a green light.

Summary

Discuss the main takeaways from this experience.

Easily, the biggest takeaway that I had was that people out in the real world really use what I have learned in class. This is a very reassuring feeling for me personally. This call with Ooyala and BYU Broadcasting was my first direct experience with B2B sales so I did not know what to expect. Sellers really have Case Opens, they really have Rapport Plays, Status Quo questions, they have Position Plays, Vision and Breakthrough Inquires, they have Benefit Plays, Financial Ability questions, they use Verbal Judo Validation. It was fantastic to be able to see those plays and principles in action.

I was also impressed on how conversational the sales call was. It really was a Needs Audit and the sellers acted like business consultants. At the beginning of the semester, I was apprehensive about the whole Needs Audit portion of the sales process. I thought that it seemed a little fake. I thought that the questions seemed a little too awkward. However, after sitting in on this sales call between Ooyala and BYU Broadcasting, I have completely changed my attitude. BYU Broadcasting knew they were in the market to buy, and Ooyala knew they were in the market to sell, each was aware of the other's intentions, and the Needs Audit was still very genuine and sincere. I noticed the questions were very engaging and the answers were honest. None of it seemed fake or scripted to me.

I was impressed with how relationship-based the selling was. Both sides were very flexible in trying to keep the relationship alive. Often Ooyala asked BYU Broadcasting if some of their requests were “deal breakers.” Ooyala stressed that they wanted to continue the relationship and work with BYU Broadcasting as best they could, but they would not be able to satisfy all the requests. As a result, they asked if items were deal breakers, and if it was a deal breaker, they said they would do their best to meet those needs. For me, this was a very big takeaway. The seller and the buyer both have specific needs when doing business. Neither side can just give and give and give without receiving. By identifying the deal breakers from both sides, both parties were able to understand the others’ priorities and what they really wanted out of the interaction.

Another major takeaway for me is coming to the knowledge that sales is a dynamically changing business function. Gone are the days of manipulative sellers, now sellers are business consultants. Technology is also having an impact on the dynamics. In my shadow, gotomeeting.com was used to engage buyers and sellers that live 100s of miles apart. Only a few years ago, this type of sale would not have even been possible. With that sort of technology, it is also making selling, and giving pitches easier to do with more people. At the same time, buyers will have more and more options to look for business solutions. As a result, I think another shift will occur in the sales world. A shift will occur as sellers’ sell more and more to peoples’ needs and emphasize benefits because geographical proximity and location will not be as necessary as it was in the past.

A benefit that Ooyala kept emphasizing to BYU Broadcasting was that they wanted to “make your life easier.” This really hit home to me. As an employee, I know that one of BYU Broadcasting’s biggest barriers to breakthrough is man-power. From the CO of the call, Ooyala said that they would “streamline your workflow because of *Backlog’s* ease and ability to integrate with other programs.” One example, with their service, BYUtv would be able to make one upload of a movie file, and then it would automatically be encoded in up to 12 different bitrates streams for us. Ryan commented that would “take a big pain in the neck off our load.” Ooyala did really well at driving it home that they could and would make our lives easier, and that stuck. Benefits. Benefits. Benefits. Buyers buy benefits.

Another takeaway is that seller’s need to be excited about their service; possibly even more than that, they need to be excited about the product their potential client works with. This may be the expressive personality type in me, but I really appreciated their emotion about their own product, but also about the activities that BYU Broadcasting is pursuing. Countless times they said “that’s cool” or “we are excited to see that happen on your end” when we would mention our goals

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and vision. Another phrase that spoke to me was "we are committed to innovation, and we will be the first to give you what you want and need to accomplish your goals." This made me feel as if Ooyala had faith in the ability for our product to really take off and succeed. It also made me feel as if they were honest and sincere about helping me achieve success.

I will be graduating here in a few weeks and this has been one of the neatest projects that I have been engaged in. It is refreshing to attend class, learn theories and concepts, and then see how they are used out in the work force. Sales are an important part of anyone's career, whether or not they are directly involved in their company's sales or not. These techniques can help people succeed, whether they are trying to present business ideas or manage a home. As a result of this class, I have learned important selling techniques that will undoubtedly help me in my personal and professional career.



Gus Carlisle

From: Jimi Fox
Sent: Thursday, April 08, 2010 3:05 PM
To: Gus Carlisle
Subject: FW: Ooyala Sales Call

From: Mark Mitchell
Sent: Thursday, April 08, 2010 3:03 PM
To: Jimi Fox
Subject: RE: Ooyala Sales Call

No problem. Thanks for coming!

Mark

From: Jimi Fox
Sent: Thursday, April 08, 2010 2:53 PM
To: Mark Mitchell
Subject: Ooyala Sales Call

Mark,

Thanks for letting me sit in on the sales call with Ooyala.

Jimi Fox

BYU Broadcasting
Web Marketing Specialist
james.fox@byu.edu
336.880.3584

2 sellers

2 buyers

1 sales call