

How to Lose the Sale, Quickly and Easily

Here are five sure-fire ways to guarantee you will not get the sale;

Focus on yourself. I recall meeting several salespeople from a variety of vendors regarding an initiative I was working on for a client. EVERY single person began their presentation by telling me about their company rather than learning about my needs and wants. I ended up being subjected to information that had little or no relevance to my situation, which meant that 20-30 minutes of my time was wasted in each interview. I understand the importance of providing some background information on your company at the beginning of your presentation but keep it brief. I personally don't care how much your company is worth, how long you have been in business, or what projects you have recently completed. I want you to focus on my needs first. Demonstrate that you care about my particular situation or show that you are interested in learning more about my business needs and I will reward you with my full attention.

Don't listen to me. When I worked in the corporate world I gave countless salespeople information pertaining to my business requirements only to have them draft a proposal that did not take these needs into consideration. Don't waste your prospect's time asking questions if you are not going to listen to his responses. The best salespeople ask probing questions, take written notes, and clarify their understanding of the prospect's needs at the conclusion of each meeting. This enables them to create a proposal that addresses the client's specific concerns, issues and situation.

Make elaborate claims about your product/service. I once had a salesperson claim that his product was completely unique from anything on the market. When I questioned what he meant, I discovered this "unique feature" was something that several other companies offered as well. This salesperson immediately lost any credibility he may have established and failed to close the sale. Do your research and learn what your competitors offer. Know how to position yourself differently without exaggerating or overstating your product or service.

Talk too much. It continues to amaze me how many people think that telling is selling. I have window shopped in a variety of stores and excellent salespeople understand the importance of silence and have learned to become comfortable with it. Unfortunately, too many people talk far too much. I recall listening to a salesperson ramble on at great length about a product I was genuinely interested in purchasing. Unfortunately, I couldn't get a word in edgewise to tell him I wanted to buy it. In fact, when I told I wanted it, he tried talking me out of the sale by stating, "If you want some time to think about it, there's no rush." While I appreciated his low-pressure approach I couldn't help but wonder how many sales he had lost in the past.

Do not respect my time. Today's business executives are extremely busy. In fact, I recently read that most decision-makers have just one hour of unscheduled time during a given week. When you are granted an appointment or are talking to someone over the telephone, respect their time constraints. Get to the point quickly and keep your presentation concise and brief.

You may think these are pretty basic mistakes and you may believe you don't make them. I suggest that you think otherwise. The majority of people who sell a product or service fall prey to these mistakes on a regular basis. Here is a final example;

When I was the manager of training for a large retail organization I was contacted by many sales trainers. One in particular, spoke at great length about the features of his program and how valuable it was because participants would learn how to effectively qualify customers. He

told me that this workshop would teach people how to ask the right questions and listen to the answers. In turn, I would see a noticeable increase in sales. While I agreed with his concepts, I seriously doubted his ability to deliver. Why? He did not apply the concepts of his own workshop. In fact, he spent most of the allotted time talking rather than learning about my needs! If he didn't practice what he preached, how could I be sure he would deliver?

Pay more attention to your prospect's needs and respect their time. Avoid these common mistakes and increase your sales.

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