

Listen Your Way to Sales Success

There are many factors and variables that affect our sales on any given day. There is however, one key skill that will increase help you increase your sales immediately.

Listen to your customer!

That's it! That's all it takes to close more sales. Sounds simple doesn't it? Unfortunately, the majority of salespeople fail to do this.

In the countless sales transactions I watch, I notice that most salespeople don't ask their customers enough questions. Sure, they generally uncover a few basic needs that the customer has. They know what they're looking for in a product with regard to features, specifications, color, and price.

What they don't do is probe to uncover additional information about the customer. They don't ask them **why** they want that specific product, or **why** they're considering our store. They don't learn **where** the customer has been shopping or **what** they've seen. They don't ask what they **like** and/or **dislike** about the other stores they've been in to. They don't find out what their hot buttons are or what makes them tick or what will motivate them to buy. They fail to gather enough information!

I believe that there are two primary reasons for this. First, we don't believe that people will give us this information. The fact is, people will tell you anything you want to know providing they trust you and as long as you ask the right questions in the appropriate manner. For example, if a customer tells you that they are buying a product because they are going on a vacation, do you ask where they are going? Do you show interest in their holiday or are you too concerned with closing the sale? Are you more interested in your personal problems or watching the clock to care? In many cases, we are so preoccupied with something else that we miss vital clues customers give us.

An amazing thing occurs if you demonstrate even a tiny bit of interest in your customer. They'll begin to open up! They'll provide you with information you may not have learned otherwise. They'll talk. They'll tell you everything you need to know in order to close the sale. People love to talk about themselves and they'll start to feel more comfortable with you as they talk. When people feel more comfortable they relax. We all know that a prospect who is relaxed will be more likely to buy than someone who is tense and uptight.

The second reason for not gathering sufficient information is that we feel it takes too much time. In my training sessions I frequently hear that this time is better used overcoming objections. My response is that if we gain more information and fully understand the customer's motives and needs, we can often overcome objections before they occur. Use your time more effectively during the sales process. Instead of spending so much time overcoming objections find out what your customer's true concerns are beforehand. This will help you adapt your sales presentation to meet their

specific needs, address their concerns, and move you closer to closing the sale. Ask yourself, "What information do I still need to help the customer make the appropriate buying decision?"

We've all heard the expression that information is power. Gain the extra leverage in the sales process by investing the time gaining extra information from your customer. Do it consistently and you'll develop stronger relationships with your customers, which, in turn, will help you close more sales.

Copyright 2004 Kelley Robertson, All rights reserved.

Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group, works with businesses to help them increase their sales and motivate their employees. He is also the author of "Stop, Ask & Listen – Proven sales techniques to turn browsers into buyers." Visit his website at www.RobertsonTrainingGroup.com and receive a FREE copy of "100 Ways to Increase Your Sales" by subscribing to his 59-Second Tip, a free weekly e-zine.