

Overcoming Objections: P.R.E.P.P.S. your way to closing deals

By Todd Natenberg

Objections: Buying signals in which emotions are expressed.

People buy on emotion. Whether they are introverts or extroverts is immaterial, if emotions are not expressed, no purchase will be made. Just because not all people are vocal about their feelings does not mean they do not have them. It is the job of the salesperson to uncover emotions.

In any sales opportunity, a top salesperson wants one of two outcomes: closing the deal, naturally, or the opportunity to overcome objections.

Yes, you heard me correctly. If prospects are not ready to become clients, the next best thing is for them to object. The key, though, is for it to be an objection.

If a concern by a prospect can't be overcome by you -- or another vendor -- it's not an objection. It's a deal-breaker and it's time to move on.

Think of your own buying habits. When you've made a purchase, if you have not done so from the get go, but were waffling, did you ask questions? Did you "object?"

When people are interested in something, whether it is good or bad, they react. They have their emotions generated. The world of sales is no different.

But how do we determine what are true objections? And once we do, what do we do to overcome them to skyrocket our sales?

Pause

Let prospects gather their thoughts. Who says they were objecting? Have you ever thought aloud? Have you ever been in a situation where your "out loud" comment was more for your sake, then who you were speaking with?

You'd be amazed. What you think was an objection may have just been an immaterial statement that prospects themselves will overcome because they were never issues from the get go.

Relax

Gather your own composure now. Count to 10. Take a deep breath. Take another moment before responding. Remember, there is still silence, but in the world of sales, silence at this point in the process- is a terrific thing. We said above that objections are "emotions being expressed." Silence is an emotion. The question is, What emotions are going on in

your prospect's mind?

When silence is abounding, the prospect is always thinking about why to buy your product, not why not to buy.

For instance, when I sold long distance service for LCI International, I often ran across scenarios like this:

Prospect: "I really wanted to bring my rate all the way down to .07 per minute."

Me: Silence, 10 seconds pass.

Prospect: "But I guess .08 is pretty good, too. After all, my rate now is .15/minute and you do have much better billing. I also like the effort you have put on the account. Okay, sign me up."

(Note: Yes, this was 10 years ago. Long distance rates have dropped dramatically).

Empathize

Notice how I say empathize, not sympathize. There is where the "feel, felt, found" technique is effective, but you have to be careful. If you are talking to seasoned salespeople, you might want to change the words around, because they might get annoyed if they recognize what you are doing. Then again, they might be impressed and even have a good laugh with you, not at you, as they will know what you are trying to accomplish. It goes like this:

"Mr. or Ms. Prospect, I do understand how you feel. Frankly, lots of my customers have felt the same way when they first heard about our program, but what they found out after further discussion was the benefits heavily outweighed the limitations."

Probe

I disagree strongly with the premise "buyers are liars." Buyers want to tell you their true concerns. They just don't know sometimes what these concerns are. The job of the salesperson is to bring out this concern.

A better saying: "Buyers are not liars, when the right questions are asked."

When prospects object, ask what they really mean in an open-ended format. For instance, you may say, "How do you mean?" or "Please explain." Then make sure you are quiet to let them answer.

Playback

If you make it to this point and the objection has still not diffused itself, it's now your turn

to address the matter. But first you have to repeat back what you view as the objection-verbatim and slowly. Then ask prospects if you understand it properly. There are two reasons to do this:

- 1) Ensure you understand prospects' issues
- 2) Ensure prospects understand their own issues.

Often when people hear something repeated that they said, they say, "Oh, is that what you heard? That's not what I meant."

Solve

Only now, do you address the objection itself and try to offer a solution. It's important that you utilize all the information you received in the first four steps. Referring to the prospects' words and needs will get you the deal. When you get that nod of agreement then you ask for the business. Now, and only now, have you earned the right to not close the deal, rather pursue the partnership. Don't miss it.

Happy selling!

Todd Natenberg, President, TBN Sales Solutions, is the author of the book, "I just got a job in sales. Now what?" A Playbook for Skyrocketing Your Commissions.

He also is the producer of the new home study course: "How to Double Your Sales in 1/2 the Time: Sell How You Want to Buy." This 10-hour interactive cd series can be listened to in the car or on the computer.

TBN Sales Solutions increases commissions for salespeople and prosperity for businesses through customized training and consulting. They establish structures and procedures in all facets of the sales process, through workshops and individual one on one sales education, to teach clients to control their own destiny, to impact the bottom line.

Visit www.IJustGotAJobInSales.com for more information. Todd can be reached at 866-464-0339 or e-mail Todd@ToddNatenberg.com.