



WHAT BUYERS WANT A PEEK INSIDE THEIR HEADS

SO YOU'VE PITCHED YOUR PROSPECTIVE CLIENT, THROWN EVERYTHING PLUS THE KITCHEN SINK AT THEM, AND NOW IT'S THE MOMENT OF TRUTH: DEAL OR NO DEAL. YOU REPLAY THE SALES PROCESS IN YOUR HEAD. WHERE COULD YOUR PITCH HAVE BEEN STRONGER? DID YOU RESPOND TO ALL THEIR QUESTIONS? DID YOU GIVE THEM ENOUGH PROOF TO TRUST AND BUY FROM YOU? WOULDN'T IT BE GROOVY TO BE ABLE TO READ THE CLIENT'S THOUGHTS AND FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT IT IS YOU SHOULD OR SHOULDN'T DO TO GET THE BUSINESS? HERE'S HOW TO GET A SOLID HEAD START.

To help you demystify what the buyer wants, we bring you the insights from more than 200 buyers who took part in survey hosted on www.raintoday.com. The results tell you how to put yourself on the path to closing deals.

BEFORE WE BRING YOU THE SOLUTION, LET'S LOOK AT WHAT 200 BUYERS SAID THE PROBLEM WITH BUYING ANYTHING IS.

- 38% said the salesperson did not listen
- 30% said the salesperson didn't respond in time to requests
- 30% said the salesperson didn't understand their needs
- 25% said the salesperson talked too much
- 25% said the salesperson didn't have the right chemistry
- 24% said the salesperson didn't convince them of the value they were getting
- 22% said the salesperson didn't draft a solution that was compelling enough for them to buy.

THE BUYER WANTS YOU TO LISTEN

An overwhelming 38% of buyers said, and I quote, that the salesperson did not listen to me".

The good news is that learning to listen better is one of the easier ways to improve your closing ratio without changing much in your sales process.

You know what it's like when you're trying to explain yourself and the person you're talking to isn't listening. It's frustrating, and it makes you want to end the conversation right there. Sales is no different. Listening is a skill you need to master.

Listen to what the buyer has to say – if you have a short attention span, then take notes, or record the entire conversation and draft steps forward from there.

DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW WHAT THE BUYER WANTS. ASK QUESTIONS THAT DIG DEEPER INTO THEIR NEED.

Thirty percent of buyers said that salespeople "do not understand my needs". That's a critical oversight. It means that they think you're not going to be able to solve their problem. And since your solution won't fit, in their minds they don't see the need to purchase.

Happily, you can improve your listening and better understand the buyer's needs by doing one thing – asking questions and listening to the answers.

Targeted and well planned questions should explore the buyer's specific needs. And if you listen carefully and take notes and really try to see the world from their eyes, you should be able to uncover exactly what it is that they are trying to fix.

And from there, you can draft a solution that suits their situation perfectly.

THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT. A PERFECT SOLUTION

But if you aren't listening, or you aren't asking the right questions, there's no chance in hell that you're going to be able to understand their business or their needs well enough to show them what you can do for them.

If you can't understand their needs, you can't sell. It's that simple.

BUT

If you have been listening and asking questions, the next



MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL, WHO'S THE FAIREST PROPOSAL OF ALL?

BY SANDY PULLINGER

My uncle was a sales trainer and he taught me to mirror the body language of my customer in meetings to establish a connection and make her feel more comfortable with me.

In the same way, your proposals must mirror what you have heard from customers before offering a solution. Address what they care about the most, and show you've listened and considered their interests and are not offering a canned approach.

The most deadly of sales sins is failure to focus on the pains and gains of the customer. A customer focused proposal identifies the customer's needs and goals, solves business problems for her, analyses payback and communicates value. Remember, client focus rules.

Sandy Pullinger is a seasoned entrepreneur. She has more than 15 years of experience in the software and Internet sectors, gained principally as founder of nFold (www.nfold.com).





step is to take a moment about what it is you sell, and then position it as the solution that they require. Know what to focus on – is it time? Money? Productivity? A longer-term vision? Know that, and you're ready to start your proposal.

DON'T BE LATE. NOT FOR APPOINTMENTS, NOT FOR ANYTHING

Being late for an appointment is inexcusable. Not delivering an email, a proposal, more pictures or a budget break down on time is worse. You just can't afford to not respect a client's time, and their concept of what is urgent.

Remember, we are service providers by nature. That means we must serve. Jumping through hoops and sending off info is part of the job. When you make a commitment to a time, stick to it. If you say you'll call them back by the end of the day, so it. If you say you'll have the product at their offices next week, make it early next week.

Working with you in going through the sales process is a test run of what type of service provider you'll be once the deal is done. Being late for an appointment translates into you being late with everything. Don't start off on the wrong foot.

BUYERS WANT EXAMPLES. BUT THEY ONLY WANT TO HEAR THE RELEVANT ONES

WHEN YOU WEAVE AN EXAMPLE INTO YOUR SALES SPEAK, THIS IS WHAT IT CAN DO:

- It can show that you are listening and that you understand the need
- It can show your experience and expertise in one particular area, but it can also
- Annoy the hell out of a buyer who doesn't fit the example.

So use examples wisely. They only work if you've been listening, asking questions and understand their need. And get specific – use examples of clients you have worked with that are in their same industry, or in a same situation. Weave these into your conversation.

DON'T BE TOO EAGER, OR TOO DISINTERESTED

ACCORDING TO THE 200 BUYERS WHO TOOK PART IN THE STUDY, SALESPEOPLE ARE ANNOYING IF THEY:

- Are too eager to make the sale
- Are too unenthusiastic about the sale.

So we propose a fine mix of just the right amount of excitement and enthusiasm.

But finding the right level of enthusiasm is not a formula. It stems from watching and listening. Pay attention to the buyer signals and act accordingly. Take the buyer's attitude and humor into account too.□

WHAT DOES A BUYER REALLY NEED?

There is only one thing a buyer needs. A buyer needs to resolve their problem. Not your product. Not a good price. Not even a nice salesperson. Only to resolve their problem.

And, the problem is never so acute that they need it resolved 'now'. If a buyer acutely needed your product or solution, they would have gotten it already. Lets say that again: if the buyer really needed your product they would have purchased it already.

In reality, no matter how good you are, no matter how good your product is, it's not about you. You are NOT SuperSeller: prospects won't abide by your time frame, or your view of the situation. They will do what they need to do, separate from your cajoling, and separate from what appears to you to be their need, or your understanding of the situation or your great product.

WHAT IS OUR JOB?

First help the buyer recognise and manage the internal issues that have created and maintained the status quo. And then lead them through the resolution of these factors.

After all, nothing will happen until these internal issues get

addressed and managed, and as sellers you sit and wait for that anyway. You might as well be a part of the process rather than sitting and waiting for a call to come in.

You have nothing to sell if your client has nothing to buy – separate from whether or not there is a need, or whether or not your product would solve their problem. Do you want to sell? Or have someone buy?

