

The Enemy: Words and How We Use Them

By Chuck And Sue DeFiore

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As a home based or small business owner you want to exude confidence and authority. You are an expert in your field. How are you conveying your message to your customer? Just like your body language, the words you use and how you use them can take on a whole new meaning.

Some of the words we all have a tendency to use say something completely different to our customers. Let's say you are placing a call to a customer. When I call I say, "Hi, Joe, I'm calling to tell you about the latest property we have available". I am very clear, succinct, I have a smile in my voice, and once I finish my reason for calling, I shut up and let my customer or prospect talk.

One of our clients, who we were consulting with on sales, couldn't figure out why he was having a hard time during his sales calls. What we found out was when he would call rather than being firm and confident, with a smile in his voice; he sounded very tentative, "Hi, I am just calling to see if". No this verbiage does not work. He did not identify himself, his company, and this client sounded very nervous on the telephone.

So be very careful you don't use words or phrases that sound as if you are apologizing to your customer right the off bat. In fact, don't use them at all. Take them out of your vocabulary. Be clear and concise. Speak in an even tone. Nervous people have a tendency to speak way too loudly; or so softly you can't understand them, or some people speak very quickly. Also, be aware this is not something you are going to fix overnight. These phrases are a habit for many of us. So practice, practice and practice some more. Do role plays and tape yourself. Then listen to yourself, or have family members listen to you and critique you.

Think of the teachers you had in school, or a professor in college who was able to speak in a nice even tone, yet his or her voice carried. Now obviously this is not necessary on the telephone. However, this kind of even toned, lower than usual voice is the kind you want to use. Try to emulate this person in your telephone calling or in dealing with customers face to face.

The way you speak is very important. The pitch and inflection of your voice are also very important. If you have a lot of trouble with this you might want to purchase books on speaking that address the issues of pitch and inflection in your speaking voice. Check out Amazon or Barnes and Noble. They have a wide selection. Again, you are not going to change this overnight. Remember, practice makes perfect.

Two additional common phrases we all have a tendency to use are I believe, and I think. This is fine for your friends and family. However, as a business owner and "an expert" you had better

“know”.

For all of you coaches out there be careful with the “we will hopefully achieve”. Make a list of all that they will achieve by going with your program, obviously with the caveat that they do the work outlined.

So take inventory of what you are saying on the telephone; your in-person sales and in your dealings with your customers (for those of you in a storefront). Is your “word language” conveying what you want it to. Or like our body language sometimes, are your words conveying something totally different to your customer. Check to see if you are using any of the above phrases and stop! It may take a while but you will be happy you did.

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