

How to Lose the Sale Quickly & Easily

By Kelley Robertson

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Today's business world is more challenging and competitive than ever before. That means you need to ensure that your approach with prospective customers is more effective than that of your competitors. Here are four sure-fire ways to guarantee you won't get the sale:

1. Spend most of your meeting talking about your company.

When I worked in the corporate world, I was once tasked with a major training initiative. We lacked the resources to complete the project internally which meant we needed to hire an outside vendor. I met with several salespeople from a variety of vendors and noticed that every single one of them began their presentation by telling me about their company. Instead of being given the opportunity to discuss my situation, I ended up being subjected to information that had little or no relevance to me. This meant that 20-30 minutes of my time was wasted in each interview.

While it is important to give your prospect some information about your company, it is critical that you invest more time learning about their specific situation. Rather than spending ten or fifteen minutes talking about your business, state one or two facts, and begin asking them about their business. Prepare a list of questions and do not be afraid to refer to it.

2. Don't listen to your prospect.

I've given countless salespeople information pertaining to my business requirements only to have them draft a proposal that didn't take these needs into consideration. Don't waste my time asking questions if you aren't going to listen to my responses.

The best salespeople take written notes, ask probing questions and clarify their understanding of my needs at the conclusion of each meeting. This enables them to create a proposal or deliver a presentation that addresses their customer's concerns, issues and situation.

3. Make elaborate claims about your product and/or service.

I once had a salesperson claim that his training program was totally unique in the market. This surprised me because there isn't a lot of new information when it comes to sales training. When I questioned what he meant, I discovered this "unique feature" was something that I, and at least one of his competitors, offered as well. This salesperson immediately lost any credibility he may have established.

My philosophy is to under-promise and over-deliver. While this sounds simple, my experience has

taught me that salespeople often stretch the truth in order to close a sale. Unfortunately, this will usually come back to haunt them at a later date. Long-term relationships with your clientele will be difficult to develop and you will need to work harder to maintain their loyalty.

4. Dominate the airtime.

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 his product. I was genuinely interested in purchasing this product but couldn't get a word in edgewise to tell him. In fact, when I told I wanted it he continued talking and said, "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.

You may think these are pretty basic mistakes. As a sales trainer, business owner and consumer, I have found that many salespeople often fall prey to them. Here's a final example; several years ago, I spoke to a trainer about a sales training program he offered. He talked for fifteen minutes, extolling the features of this workshop and how valuable the program was. He stated that participants would learn how to effectively qualify prospects be able to 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 attention to your behaviour during the sales process and avoid these costly mistakes.

Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group, specializes in helping businesses increase their sales and motivate their employees. Learn powerful tips and techniques to improve your sales results in the 59 Second Tip @ www.robertsontraininggroup.com . Receive a FREE copy of "100 Ways to Increase Your Sales" by subscribing. Contact Kelley at "mailto:info@robertsontraininggroup.com" or at 905-633-7750.

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