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7 Ways to Stop "Selling" & Start Building Relationships

By Ari Galper

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Sometimes we can all use a friendly reminder to keep us from backsliding into old ways of thinking about selling that lead us down the wrong path with potential clients.

I was inspired to write this article after a few coaching sessions with a client named Michael, who sells a technology solution. Michael had been struggling with a mental block about how to detach from the traditional sales thinking he had learned from old-school sales "gurus".

You know who they are. You may even have some of their books or tapes. And you know their sales messages too: "Always be closing," "Think positive, and you'll overcome all your cold calling fears," "All you need to boost your sales is a few new sales techniques."

But all these outdated sales messages fail to address the core issue of how we think about selling. And unless we get to that core, and change it once and for all, we'll go on struggling with the same counterproductive sales behaviors. We'll go on experiencing the same difficulties and frustrations. And we'll continue to believe that we're always just one new sales technique away from the breakthrough we're looking for.

New Thinking = New Results

Maybe it's time to take a different approach. Maybe we need to seriously analyze our sales thinking so we can identify why we're not making more sales. Take a look at the table below and think about your current selling mindset. How would your selling behaviors change if you changed your sales thinking?

Traditional Sales Mindset: Always deliver a strong sales pitch.

New Sales Mindset: Stop the sales pitch — and start a conversation.

Traditional Sales Mindset: Your central objective is always to close the sale.

New Sales Mindset: Your central goal is always to discover whether you and your potential client are a good fit.

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Traditional Sales Mindset: When you lose a sale, it's usually at the end of the sales process.

New Sales Mindset: When you lose a sale, it's usually right at the beginning of the sales process.

Traditional Sales Mindset: Rejection is a normal part of selling.

New Sales Mindset: Sales pressure is the only cause of rejection. Rejection should never happen.

Traditional Sales Mindset: Keep chasing every potential client until you get a yes or a no.

New Sales Mindset: Never chase a potential client — you'll only trigger more sales pressure.

Traditional Sales Mindset: When a prospect offers objections, challenge and/or counter them.

New Sales Mindset: When a potential client offers objections, uncover the truth behind them.

Traditional Sales Mindset: If a potential client challenges the value of your product or service, you must defend yourself and explain the value.

New Sales Mindset: Never defend yourself or what you have to offer — it only creates more sales pressure.

Let's take a closer look at these central concepts so you can begin to open up your current sales thinking and become more effective in your selling activities:

1) Stop the sales pitch — and start a conversation.

When you call someone, avoid making a mini-presentation about yourself, your company, and what you have to offer. Start with an opening conversational phrase that focuses on a specific problem that your product or service solves. If you don't know what this is, ask your current customers why they purchased your solution. One example of an opening phrase might be, "I'm just calling to see if you'd be open to some different ideas related to lowering the risk of any computer downtime you may be having in your company?" Notice that you are not pitching your solution with this opening phrase.

2) Your central goal is always to discover whether you and your potential client are a good fit.

Let go of trying to "close the sale" or "get the appointment"— and you will discover that you don't have to take responsibility for moving the sales process forward. If you simply focus your conversation on problems that you can help potential clients solve, and if you don't jump the gun by trying to move the sales process forward, you will find that potential clients will actually bring you into their buying process.

3) When you lose a sale, it's usually right at the beginning of the sales process.

If you believe that you lose sales because you make a mistake at the end of the process, take a look back at how you began the relationship. Did you start with a presentation? Did you use traditional sales language like, "We have a solution that I believe you really need" or "Others in your industry have bought our solution, so you should consider it as well"?

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When you use traditional sales language, potential clients can't help but label you with the negative stereotype of "salesperson." This makes it almost impossible for them to relate to you from a position of trust. And if trust isn't established at the outset, honest communication about the problems they're trying to solve, and how you might be able to help them, becomes impossible too.

4) Sales pressure is the only cause of rejection. Rejection should never happen.

Rejection happens for only one reason: Something you said, as subtle as it might have been, triggered a defensive reaction from your potential client.

Yes, something you said. To eliminate rejection, simply shift your mindset so that you give up the hidden agenda of hoping to make a sale. Instead, everything you say and do should stem from the

basic mindset that you are there to help potential clients. This makes you able to ask, "Would you be open to talking about issues you might be having affecting your business?"

5) Never chase a potential client—you'll only trigger more sales pressure.

"Chasing" potential clients has always been considered normal and necessary, but it's rooted in the macho selling image that, "If you don't keep chasing, it means you're giving up — and that means you're a failure."

This is dead wrong! Instead of chasing potential clients, tell them that you would like to avoid anything that resembles the old cat-and-mouse chasing game by scheduling a time for your next chat.

6) When a potential client offers objections, uncover the truth behind them.

Most traditional sales programs spend a lot of time focusing on "overcoming objections." These tactics only put more sales pressure on potential clients and also fail to explore or understand the truth behind what the potential client is saying. When you hear, "We don't have the budget," "Send me information," or "Call me in a few months," do you think you're hearing the truth, or do you suspect that these are polite evasions designed to end the conversation?

Rather than trying to counter objections, you can uncover the truth by replying, "That's not a problem" — no matter what clients are "objecting" to — and then using gentle, dignified language that invites them to reveal the truth about their situation.

7) Never defend yourself or what you have to offer — it only creates more sales pressure.

When a potential client says, "Why should I choose you over your competition?," your first, instinctive reaction is probably to start defending your product or service because you want to convince them to buy.

But what do you think goes through your potential client's mind at that point?

Something like, "This 'salesperson' is trying to sell me on why what they have to offer is better, but I hate feeling as if I'm being sold." Rather than defending yourself, try suggesting that you aren't going to try to convince them of anything because that would only create sales pressure.

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Instead, ask them about the key problems that they are trying to solve, and then explore how your product or service might solve those problems --without ever trying to persuade.. Let potential clients feel that they can choose you without feeling "sold."

Ari Galper is the founder of Unlock The Game™, the only selling program completely focused on eliminating pressure from the sales process. His best-selling Unlock The Game™ Self-Study Program continues to make in-roads in the U.S., UK, Australia and Canada. Visit <http://www.UnlockTheGame.com> to take a Free Test Drive!

Customer Relationships How To Build Them.

By Judi Singleton

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The Gurus all tell us this is the way to sell on the web or this is the way. New ways and techniques are daily mailed to my inbox telling me if I just do "this" then I will be a success selling on the web.

However, the psychology of selling everything goes through A simple process that is not a secret. The formula has been taught us ever since we have first been on the web. You know this secret if you are a newbie or a seasoned veteran selling on the web.

First you must get the customers attention. How do you do this? First of all the customers on the web are searchers by that I mean they get on their computers, go to a search engine and search for specific things they want to know about or buy. So it makes sense that your site title, where you are ranked on the search engine and your description of your site are the first ways to get their attention. Ok, say you have done a good job of that so you get them to your website.

You are still trying to capture their attention. So snappy headlines and good content will get their attention. They are not ready to buy yet. You shouldn't even be trying to sell them at this point. What you present on the website will either encourage them to come back or they will just click away and never return. So not only good content about the subject that they are looking for is essential. How about a five day course. This accomplishes two things it gets them to give you their email and you are giving them good content. Make this course personal and dynamic and you have gained trust. Perhaps

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you first get them to join your ezine. Where again you get their email, give them really good content and have a chance to interact with them. Again you are building trust and forming a relationship with a real person. This is not instant. Relationships take time.

After you have built a relationship you can then recommend to them products, and services. But even then you cannot sell to them if they do not need your product. If you don't believe me try selling ice in the artic. So try and target your market. Find out what your customers need and then fill that need.

The last thing you are going to do is to send your prospects to your product page. This is the one of the most important pages you will ever write. It has to tell them what your product can do for them. How it will change their lives to use your product. In other words make them really want to buy the product.

Now you are at a point in your sales that you will be successful. But to recap you can not go from get the customer's attention to sales selling is a relationship between two human beings and relationships take time.

About the Author: Judi Singleton is the publisher of Jassmine's JournalA targeted daily ezine. You can subscribe at <http://www.motherearthpublishing.com>



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