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The Top 7 Sales Blunders

By Kelley Robertson

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We all make mistakes when selling our product or service. Here are the most common mistakes people make. I have to admit I have made many of mistakes listed in this article even though I have been teaching this stuff for almost a decade. I hope you can learn from them.

1. Allowing a prospect to lead the sales process. The best way to control the sales interaction is to ask questions. This is also the best way of learning whether or not your product or service meets the needs of your prospect. Quality questions that uncover specific issues, problems, or corporate objectives are essential in helping you establish yourself as an expert.

2. Not completing pre-meeting research. After several weeks of voice mail I finally connected with my prospect and scheduled a meeting. Unfortunately, I entered the meeting without first researching the company. Instead of presenting a solution to an existing problem, I spent the entire meeting learning fundamental information, which to senior executives, is a complete waste of their time. This approach is one of most common mistakes. I have received countless phone calls from sales people hawking their wares and trying to sell me `stuff' I have no need for. As a sole proprietor, I do not need a complex telephone system, additional employees, or an automated payroll system. Invest the time learning about your prospect before you call them and before you try to schedule a meeting.

3. Talking too much. Too many sales people talk too much during the sales interaction. They espouse about their product, its feature, their service and so on. When I first bought carpet for my home I recall speaking to a sales person who told me how long he had been in the business, how smart he was, how good his carpets were, etc. But this dialogue did nothing to convince me that I should buy from him. Instead, I left the store thinking that he did not care about my specific needs. A friend of mine is in the advertising business and often talks to prospects who initially request a quote for a specific advertising job. Instead of talking at great length about the ad agency's experience and qualifications, he gets the potential client talking about her business. By doing this he is able to determine the most effective strategy for that prospect.

4. Giving the prospect information that is irrelevant. When I worked in the corporate world I was subjected to countless presentations where the sales person shared information that was completely meaningless to me. I don't care about your financial backing or who your clients are. Make the most of

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your presentation by telling me how I will benefit from your product or service until I know how your product or service relates to my specific situation.

5. Not being prepared. I remember calling a prospect expecting to receive his voice mail. That meant I was completely unprepared when he answered the call himself. Instead of asking him a series of qualifying questions I simply responded to his questions, allowing him to control the sale.

Unfortunately, I didn't progress any further than that initial call. When you make a cold call or attend a meeting with a prospect it is critical that you are prepared. This means having all relevant information at your fingertips including; pricing, testimonials, samples, and a list of questions you need to ask. I suggest creating a checklist of the vital information you will need and reviewing this list before you make your call. You have exactly one opportunity to make a great first impression and you will not make it if you are not prepared.

6. Neglecting to ask for the sale. I recall a participant in one of my workshops expressing interest in my

book. I told him to look through it but at no time did I ask for the sale. Later, I heard him express this observation to other participants in the program. If you sell a product or service, you have the obligation to ask the customer for a commitment, particularly if you have invested time assessing their needs and know that your product or service will solve a problem. Many people are concerned with coming across as pushy but as long as you ask for the sale in a non-threatening, confident manner, people will usually respond favorably.

7. Failing to prospect. This is one of the most common mistakes independent business make. When business is good many people stop prospecting, thinking that the flow of business will continue. However, the most successful sales people prospect all the time. They schedule prospecting time in their agenda every week.

Even the most seasoned sales professional makes mistakes from time to time. Avoid these blunders and increase the likelihood of the closing the sale.

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Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group, is a professional speaker and trainer on sales, negotiating, and employee motivation. He is also the author of "Stop, Ask & Listen - Proven Sales Techniques to Turn Browsers into Buyers." For information on his programs, visit his website at www.RobertsonTrainingGroup.com. Receive a FREE copy of "100 Ways to Increase Your Sales" by subscribing to his 59-Second Tip, a free weekly e-zine available at his website.

Results of Poor Cross Cultural Awareness

By Neil Payne

Having a poor understanding of the influence of cross cultural differences in areas such as management, PR, advertising and negotiations can eventually lead to blunders that can have damaging consequences.

It is crucial for today's business personnel to understand the impact of cross cultural differences on business, trade and internal company organisation. The success or failure of a company, venture,

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merger or acquisition is essentially in the hands of people. If these people are not cross culturally aware then misunderstandings, offence and a break down in communication can occur.

The need for greater cross cultural awareness is heightened in our global economies. Cross cultural differences in matters such as language, etiquette, non-verbal communication, norms and values can, do and will lead to cross cultural blunders.

To illustrate this we have provided a few examples of cross cultural blunders that could have been avoided with appropriate cross cultural awareness training:

An American oil rig supervisor in Indonesia shouted at an employee to take a boat to shore. Since it is no-one berates an Indonesian in public, a mob of outraged workers chased the supervisor with axes.

Pepsodent tried to sell its toothpaste in Southeast Asia by emphasizing that it "whitens your teeth." They found out that the local natives chew betel nuts to blacken their teeth which they find attractive.

A company advertised eyeglasses in Thailand by featuring a variety of cute animals wearing glasses. The ad was a poor choice since animals are considered to be a form of low life and no self respecting Thai would wear anything worn by animals.

The soft drink Fresca was being promoted by a saleswoman in Mexico. She was surprised that her sales pitch was greeted with laughter, and later embarrassed when she learned that fresca is slang for "lesbian."

When President George Bush went to Japan with Lee Iacocca and other American business magnates, and directly made explicit and direct demands on Japanese leaders, they violated Japanese etiquette. To the Japanese (who use high context language) it is considered rude and a sign of ignorance or desperation to lower oneself to make direct demands. Some analysts believe it severely damaged the negotiations and confirmed to the Japanese that Americans are barbarians.

A soft drink was introduced into Arab countries with an attractive label that had stars on it—six-pointed stars. The Arabs interpreted this as pro-Israeli and refused to buy it. Another label was printed in ten languages, one of which was Hebrew—again the Arabs did not buy it.

U.S. and British negotiators found themselves at a standstill when the American company proposed

that they "table" particular key points. In the U.S. "Tabling a motion" means to not discuss it, while the same phrase in Great Britain means to "bring it to the table for discussion."

In addition to interpersonal cross cultural gaffes, the translation of documents, brochures, advertisements and signs also offers us some comical cross cultural blunders:

Kellogg had to rename its Bran Buds cereal in Sweden when it discovered that the name roughly translated to "burned farmer."

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When Pepsico advertised Pepsi in Taiwan with the ad "Come Alive With Pepsi" they had no idea that it would be translated into Chinese as "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the dead."

American medical containers were distributed in Great Britain and caused quite a stir. The instructions to "Take off top and push in bottom," innocuous to Americans, had very strong sexual connotations to the British.

In Italy, a campaign for Schweppes Tonic Water translated the name into "Schweppes Toilet Water."

In a Belgrade hotel elevator: To move the cabin, push the button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically by national order.

In a Yugoslavian hotel: The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.

In a Bangkok dry cleaner's: Drop your trousers here for best results.

In an East African newspaper: A new swimming pool is rapidly taking shape since the contractors have thrown in the bulk of their workers.

Detour sign in Kyushi, Japan: Stop—Drive sideways.

At a Budapest zoo: Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.

In conclusion, poor cross cultural awareness has many consequences, some serious others comical. It is imperative that in the global economy cross cultural awareness is seen a necessary investment to avoid such blunders as we have seen above.

For more information on how Kwintessential can aid you in your cross cultural needs please visit

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MLM Blunders

Why I'm Afraid of a Job Interview

Avoid These 5 Web Site Blunders!

The Five Most Commonly Encountered, Off-putting E-commerce Errors

How to Gain and Retain More Customers

Profitable Crafts Vol 4

Instant Cover Graphics!

The Amazing Bonus Pack

Clickbank Automation System



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