

The profitable sound of silence

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By John Saxon

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More sales people talk themselves out of a sale than you could possibly imagine. As a professional sales person I was always in awe of the one with the 'gift of the gab' but I soon learned that they do not usually make a lot of money. So here is a secret that will double your ability to sell (at least)

Good selling is more about good listening than smooth talking, you cannot put water in a full glass.

In other words human beings are all full of thoughts, ideas, problems, smart remarks, things we have to say, or are thinking about saying, and until we 'empty out' a little there is no room for anyone else's thoughts or ideas to exist.

Let your customers talk, allow them space to think and empty out a little – this creates room for your ideas, products and services.

When they stop talking – wait for three seconds before you speak. It will improve your sales immediately. By waiting 3 seconds you allow them to voice the real problem, the real objection, or talk themselves into buying. Try it, it works!

What is your attitude to listening? Have you heard it all before? Don't you wish they would get to the point? Or are you genuinely interested in what they have to say? Negative attitudes to listening stifle conversations – as a business person you need to become a professional listener. You'll make a lot more sales.

The profitable sound of silence

When ever two, or more, human beings are together their attention span is limited. While you have been reading this you may have been away to find out what's for tea, spoken to the kids, heard them playing in the garden, listened to the TV, wondered what you were going to do at the weekend – all without leaving your computer.

We all do this all the time. In a sales situation you need to ensure that the customer is there now, immediately and stays there, both physically and mentally – How do you do this ... by asking a question ...

"Can you tell me, what was it about my advertisement that caught your eye?"

"How can I help, Mr / Mrs Smith?"

"What is it you're looking for"

Then listen!!!

Note that the question you ask should be an open question – that is a question which cannot be answered Yes or No, otherwise you cannot make sure they are there, and the conversation becomes a little short.

A closed question is one that can be answered by a Yes or No, such as "Do you like our product range?" and these should be avoided during the sales process, if possible.

There is no need to become paranoid about open and closed questions but, once again, practice makes good (if not perfect)

So, rather than saying "Do you like our products?", how about "What do you think of our products?"

Listening to the answer to an open question will allow you to identify the customers needs and wants and find out what turns them on (and off).

This is a vital part of the successful sales process – practice it.

Believe it or not, by asking questions and listening I became the No 6 sales person in a team of 300 within 2 months, I was operating in a rural area and earned over £1200 commission in one day (and that was in 1987)

You can become a star salesperson for your business by become a star listener, or – keep talking and losing out on sales that could have been.

John Saxon This e-mail was sent from fastlink solutions limited for further information please

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10 Things to Know About Silence in Communication

By Susan Dunn

One of the most important parts of any conversation is the silence. Silence can serve many functions in a conversation and how you manage it determines your level of sophistication.

Here are some points to keep in mind about silence in communication.

1. Allowing silence in a conversation puts pressure on the other person.

It's conventional in the US not to allow any sort of extended silence in a conversation. Therefore, to allow one puts pressure on the other person to "fill air time". Some interviewers, for instance, use this technique to see what will happen. Often the person will "spill" - saying exactly the thing they didn't want to say.

2. Silence can indicate hostility.

Withdrawing, "stonewalling," and pouting in silence are ways some people handle anger. Such a silence can be pulsating with bad feelings and elicit anger on the part of the other person.

3. Silence can indicate disagreement.

While it's almost never an indication of indifference, silence can indicate that the other person is having negative emotions. When we experience anger, fear, or embarrassment, our thinking brain shuts down. We sit there fuming, unable to speak; enraged and unable to find words; afraid and scared speechless. Some people are "flooded" with these emotions, and unable to respond.

4. Silence can indicate profoundness, such as awe or horror.

Sometimes when we're listening to someone else, we hear something that leaves us speechless because it really goes beyond words. Listening to someone talk about a dreadful trauma they've endured, or a beautiful, almost-sacred interaction with another human being, or a description of an awesome natural event such as a sunset or a volcano eruption are examples. Somehow when we listen to such things, the ordinary "Oh" and "Wow" and "That's awesome" don't seem enough, and so we fall silent.

5. Silence can indicate respect.

In some cultures more than others, silence indicates respect. A young person may be expected to approach an older person or a person in authority and remain silent until recognized, acknowledged and spoken to.

6. Silence can indicate contemplation.

The more introverted your communication partner, the more likely they will think before they speak. Extraverts discover what they're thinking and how they feel by talking. Introverts figure it all out inside their own head and heart before giving voice to it.

7. Silence can be intentional rudeness.

Because of the nature of normal conversation in the US, allowing an extended silence can be perceived as rudeness. It can also be meant that way. Refusing to reply to the other person is a way of ignoring them.

8. Silence can be the creation of a listening space.

When you are profoundly listening to someone, you create an open space for them to talk into that's almost palpable. Good listeners know how to do this, and it can be learned. It's an openness that you transmit through nonverbal means.

9. Silence can be an indication of empathy.

When we're really tuning in to how the other person feels, we're listening more to the tone of their voice, cadence and speed rather than the actual words, so reply with words may not be the most appropriate response. Sometimes sounds are more attuned ... a murmur, a sigh, sucking in the breath in shock, soothing sounds, clucking (tsk tsk), or shaking the head and going uh, uh, uh.

10. How you manage silence in conversation is an important part of emotional intelligence.

Excellent communicators can allow silence when it's effective or called for; can avoid being pressured into "spilling" when silence is used manipulatively; offer silence as a gift or sign of respect; interpret the silence of others appropriately; understand how other cultures use silence; mindfully regulate the use of silence; and are comfortable with silence and understand its many uses.

©Susan Dunn, MA Psychology, Emotional Intelligence Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . I help people become better communicators and develop their emotional intelligence through coaching, Internet courses and ebooks. Susan is the author of "Nonverbal Communication," <http://www.webstrategies.cc/ebooklibrary.html> . [Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc](mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc) for FREE ezine.

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Following a Formula for Silence

Listen to your Wisdom

4 Ways To Avoid Looking Stupid When Making Small Talk

The Power Of Laughter

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