

How to let the customer believe they accomplished their objective of putting you on the defensive

A customer's first objective is to take control of the sales person. This is usually accomplished by having a ready-made objection. Try this reverse psychological questioning approach.

Do you know that you can't sell anybody anything! That's right, it can't be done. No one can sell you or me anything we don't want. And if they do, we will more than likely take it back or resent the fact that they persuaded us to buy it in the first place.

No, you can't sell anybody anything, but here is what you can do. And with this concept your life is about to get a whole lot easier. All you have to do is help people make good decisions. And the good decision will be to buy from YOU.

Here's what I mean.

When you go into a computer store to buy software how do you make your decision? You look over the package and read the benefits the software will provide you. You read the problems it will help you solve. And most importantly, you will see a grid with product comparisons. After you study all the information the packaging provides, you make your decision.

Ask yourself this question: Why would someone want to buy products and services from me? Once you have your complete list of benefits you are ready to make your grid, like they do on the software package.

The next step is to take control by approaching your customer with a negative comment. For example, "This product may not be for you."

I know, I know, that is the exact opposite of how you have been taught to sell. But consider this. Regardless of what a sales person says, a customer or prospect has a natural tendency to disagree and gain control of the conversation. By making a negative statement we can actually get a positive response. On the other hand, if we make a positive statement they will respond with a negative statement.

Let me give you a couple of examples and let you decide.

I have been working on a project for the armed forces recruiting efforts. Their normal approach has been to try and convince someone to join by presenting all the benefits. Here is the negative approach I am talking about:

The Army may not be for you! Why not get the facts, see if you qualify, and then make a good sound decision as to whether this would be a good career choice.

Do you see the psychology behind this approach?

The Army may not be for you. What does that statement provoke? It makes you ask the question: Why not? Why wouldn't it be for me? It makes the prospect wonder what the facts are, what information do they have that will help me make a good decision. It doesn't insult my intelligence by assuming that they know what I want. It lowers the resistance that comes natural when someone is being presented with a sales pitch.

Why not get the facts. This implies a "no obligation" investigation into what they have that I might be interested in. It peaks my interest without undue pressure. And it takes much of the pressure off the seller as well. Instead of having the image of a high pressure sales person, the recruiter becomes a career consultant by presenting their facts and using their comparison grid to help the prospect make a good decision.

See if you qualify. This provokes a challenge. No one likes to be in a position of not being qualified.

Like a good lawyer, you always want to take control by asking questions that you know what your response will be. Here are a few more examples you can use to test the concept.

How would you answer these negative questions?

Did I catch you at a bad time?

I have a new, high quality product, but you probably don't want to look at it?

I have three consulting packages, but you probably don't want to look at the most expensive one?