

How to use silence as one of your most valuable and important selling strategies

One of the most difficult things for a sales person to do is to effectively use silence. A slight pause before giving an answer can have a dramatic effect on how your following statement can be received. Give it a try and watch what happens.

Silence is a tactic used by seasoned and experienced sales people. If you find that you are doing most of the talking, the customer is probably using your information to see how much they can find out about you or your company. If you ask a question and fail to get an answer from the customer, do not jump in and answer for them. You will end up putting all your cards on the table before the game begins. Instead, use the power of silence or simply a slight pause.

When you use a pause, you freeze the sale for a moment. You step away, physically or psychologically, to review the work you have done up to that point and check over your plan for the rest of the presentation. You take a break. It may be purely mental, it may be imperceptible to the customer, but you give yourself whatever time it takes to review matters before you continue.

Using a pause gives you the opportunity to review the entire process of the sales presentation and to make sure that you are not overlooking anything. It allows you to avoid getting boxed into a corner. By using a pause, you keep your emotions from ruling the presentation.

Everyone has a different way of using a pause. Sometimes, how you pause depends on the situation. In a selling situation, having someone with whom you have to consult before giving a final answer is a convenient excuse for pressing the pause button. Simply say, "I will have to run

this by my partner (or consultant, sales manager, etc.) and get back to you at 9:00 tomorrow morning."

Taking notes is helpful at many points in a sales situation. One of the best times to pull out your pen is when you need to pause. Writing down statements that are confusing or upsetting is an excellent way to use the pause. Rather than stating an inappropriate remark, tell the customer to hold on while you write down the statement. Ask the customer to check what you have written to be sure that you got it right. The process of putting those words on paper almost always causes the customer to backtrack, amend, or, better yet, erase the words altogether.

Use a pause at each critical moment to review the presentation or to decide when to close a sale. Use a pause whenever you are feeling pressured or under stress.

Sales people can get caught up in the emotions of making the sale. They are afraid to lose. They fall in love with the idea of the sale and ignore facts that are important to decision making. They let their own moods, or the moods of the prospect, rule the presentation, causing the things to wander off course. These problems disappear when you use a pause.

Pause before you give into a price discount. Your moment of reflection gives the price discount some significance. You must treat the discount as significant, or you are not perceived as having given a discount. No price discount is unimportant. By emphasizing the importance of each discount with a few seconds of thought, you have added value to the transaction and not given ground for nothing.