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"THE 9 MOST COMMON MISTAKES IN SELLING"

by Brian Azar

Do you wish that your quest for clients and customers were more **fruitful**? It will be if you avoid falling into these common traps.

1. Does selling often feel like begging?

Too often, salespeople fail to think of their time with a prospect as an interview to find out whether the prospect qualifies to do business with their company. Instead of asking the questions that will determine whether it's possible to move the prospect to the level of customer, salespeople often find themselves hoping...wishing...and even begging for the opportunity to just show my wares and maybe make a sale.

Think of yourself as a doctor instead. A physician examines the patient thoroughly before making a recommendation, using various instruments to conduct the examination. In selling, questions are the instrument to conduct a qualifying examination of the prospect.

2. Do you talk too much?

Salespeople who are too focused on their pitch, end up monopolizing the time with a prospect with their talk, while the prospect must listen (whether they're interested or not). As a result, for every hour spent in front of a prospect, five minutes is spent selling the product or service - and **55 minutes saying things that might actually be buying it back**. Result: no order, canceled order or I'll think it over.

The 80/20 Rule (80 percent of your business comes from 20 percent of your clients) applies to selling, as well. The goal should be to **get the prospect to do 80 percent of the talking**, while you do only 20 percent.

3. Do you make too many presumptions?

Most companies are no longer in the business of selling products but of providing solutions. This is fine, except that often salespeople try to tell the prospect the solution before they even understand the problem. If salespeople were seen as accountable for their solutions, as doctors are for their prescriptions, they would be forced - at the risk of malpractice - to **examine the problem thoroughly before proposing a cure**. The salesperson must ask questions up front to get a thorough understanding of the prospect's perspective.

4. Do you answer unasked questions?

When a customer says something like, Your price is too high, salespeople often switch into a defensive mode. They'll begin a lengthy speech on quality or value, or they might respond with a concession or price reduction. If customers can get a discount by merely making a statement, they will reason that they shouldn't buy before trying something more powerful to get an even better price. Your price is too high is **not a question; it does not require an answer**.

5. Do you fail to get the prospect to reveal budget up front?

How can the salesperson possibly propose a solution without knowing the prospect's priority on a problem? Knowing whether money has been allocated for a project can help distinguish someone who is ready to solve a problem from someone who is merely fishing around. The amount of money the prospect is willing to invest to solve a problem will help determine whether a solution is feasible, and if so, which approach will be best

6. Do you make too many follow-up calls?

Whether because of a stubborn attitude that every prospect can be tamed into a customer or ignorance that a sale is truly dead, salespeople sometimes spend too much time chasing accounts that don't qualify for a

product or service. This fact should have been detected far earlier in the sales interview process.

7. Do you chat about everything and avoid starting the sale?

Building rapport is essential, but not if the small talk doesn't end and the sale doesn't begin. **Unfortunately, the prospect usually recognizes this before the salesperson.** The result: the salesperson is back on the street wondering how he or she did with that prospect.

8. Do you prefer to hear I want to think it over rather than no ?

Prospects frequently end a sales interview with the standard think it over line. The salesperson often accepts this indecision. It's easier to tell a manager or convince yourself that the prospect may buy in the future than to admit that the prospect is not a qualified candidate for the product or service. After all, isn't it the salesperson's job to go out and get prospects to say yes? Getting the prospect to say no can make you feel rejected or a failure. **But a no allows you to go on to more promising prospects.**

9. Do you have a systematic approach to selling?

When you find yourself ad-libbing or pursuing a hit-or-miss approach to a sale, the prospect controls the selling process. Salespeople who are disorganized in their presentation often leave a sales call confused and unsure of where they stand. This happens because they don't know where they have been and what the next step should be. Following a specific sequence, and controlling the steps through the selling process, is vital to an organized, professional sales effort.

