



Stop selling and stop pitching, especially during those crucial first minutes with the customer.

Consider the pressure removed from both you and your customer when you stop selling. In most cases, sales pitches and clichés are exactly what your customer expects when entering your dealership. These tactics will most likely engage the customer's force field, making the sale a long and sometimes volatile one.

Let's review a scenario:

A customer enters the showroom of the dealership.

Your manager says, "Who's up?"

"I am," you say, with little enthusiasm as you approach the customer.

"Hi folks, I'm Adam and you are?"

"Charlie and Mary," they respond apprehensively.

"How may I help you today?"

"Well, we are just looking."

Case in point: You have made a detrimental error by creating an uphill battle. What can you say when the customer tells you he or she is merely looking? Anything you say at this point means either you didn't understand them or you are being overly pushy. Most sales people at this point are prepared to pounce and start selling.

"Well, okay, but we have a big sale going on," you say.

The force field is engaged, and the typical customer response is: "Let us look for a while, and we'll look for you if we need assistance."

This is how many sales people sell themselves into a corner. If your ultimate intention is to sell and close the deal, you must realize that your initial focus should be to disengage the customer's force field. This is accomplished by building a relationship based on trust and emotion. If you are able to tap into the emotional cords of your customers, you will undoubtedly transform yourself into a sales leader.

It's fair to assume that almost every customer you meet has heard the same spiel from another sales person. Just like you, their product is the best, they offer the best service, etc. As powerful and relevant as your message may be, unless you disengage the customer's force field, your message will fall on deaf ears and sometimes even have a negative effect on customers.

The most powerful tool in your sales toolbox is to stop selling and start communicating with your customers.

Stop Selling

W.I.T.H.

OK, you have introduced yourself to the customer. Most good sales people will welcome, introduce and thank. The question, "How did you hear about us?" is usually missing, but this question sets the stage for small talk rather than selling.

Find out about the customer. People love to talk about themselves. These are great conversation starters and offer you the important information you will need to consummate the sale.

Will the small talk feel strange? You bet it will. But it will enable you to relate, find common ground and expand your comfort zone. Most sales people can't sell to people they can't relate to. This technique helps overcome that. But don't venture beyond three minutes.

During the small talk, you will be able to gently ask, "How much time did you plan to spend with us today?" Follow that with, "What are you driving now?"

Get them to talk about their car and the experiences they've had with it.

"How do you like it?"

"Is this the car you are looking to replace?"

Answers to these questions usually open the door for further conversation and afford you the opportunity to ask, "How much time did you plan to spend with us today?"

This answer alone will tell you precisely how much time you have left to disengage the force field, if you have not already done so. It will also bring up legitimate time constraints, and no matter what the answer is, it works.

If the customer's response is, "I only have five minutes" or "I only have one minute" or "20 minutes," your response should be, "To make the best use of your 20 minutes, let me ask you a few quick questions, so I can point us in the right direction." Turn toward your office and go.

What's in it for the customer? You are respecting his or her time, and after a few quick questions, they will see what they came for.

Using the word "us," is important. It conveys the message that you and your customer are a team and that you will be working together.

Bring the customer to your desk. This not only sets the pace for you to be in control, but it enables you to build on the relationship.

David Jacobson is founder and president of GrooveCar Inc. He can be contacted at 866.663.9038, or by e-mail at djacobson@autosuccessonline.com.

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