



Control Clinches the Sale

How to Keep Control

Last issue, we looked at the need for the salesperson to be in control of the sale, both for his or her sake and for the comfort of the customer. Today, we'll look at ways to make this happen.

Keep it simple for both you and the customer. You are losing control because you have not answered the customer's big question, "What's in it for me?" The only way to possibly regain control once it is lost is to change gears quickly. Put your brakes on and change the subject. Be outrageously honest:

"You know, folks, I believe I have found the perfect car for you. I feel that you are comfortable with me and quite frankly this seems like it really makes sense. I have been wrong in the past, so if I have missed something, please share it with me. It is important for both of us."

Or

"I am a customer myself and sometimes I don't want to hurt the salesperson's feelings, so I hesitate telling them what is really bothering me. Please share whatever may be in our way, so I can try to make you happy."

Use this type of verbiage, no matter what the challenges are, to bring you and the customer closer together.

Customers, like all people, have distinctive personalities. Therefore, you must be able to adjust to each of them. We call this concept the *comfort zone*.

Each salesperson has a certain type of customer that they work with best. The problem here is that the customer does not have to adjust to your personality, whereas you must adjust to theirs.

For instance, you are a quiet, laid back

salesperson. If you are confronted with a take charge, controlling person, how do you handle them? You must have a plan and practice how to handle each type of customer. You are given opportunities and you must do the best you can. Smart managers will direct customers to the salesperson best suited for their personality type.

Customers typically fall into categories such as hostile, talkative or quiet, and each type needs to be handled differently.

The hostile customer, for example, is the one who knows everything, has been hurt by a previous salesperson and probably starts off by saying something like, "I just want your best price."

Most salespeople will say something sure to cause confrontation. What can you say? Remember the force field. Think about it. It is so easy to make this an uphill battle. In fact, it already seems like one.

One of my favorite ways to handle this is to say, "That's a good question. Let me ask you something. Would you recognize the best price if I gave it to you?"

There are only two answers — yes or no. If a customer says no, they will probably lighten up. However, you must not take away their pride. If you do, it will be conceived as a put down and will be counter-productive. To avoid this, you must follow up with:

"I'm guessing that you just want to be treated fairly, is that right? They say "Yes." Then you ask: "How much time did you plan on spending with us today?"

What if the answer is "yes" to the question? What if they would recognize the best price if they heard it? Your response should be confident such as,

"That's great. I always appreciate a customer who knows when they are treated

fairly. How much time did you have to spend with us today?"

You now have control. A hostile customer is usually the easiest to win over when handled correctly. They are also the most loyal when you have earned their business.

Your immediate goal is to disarm them of their weapon, which is fear. This is usually why they are hostile. By understanding your customer, putting your emotions aside, and using the tools you have learned, you will win them over.

We disarm hostility by using empathy. Once again, empathy plays a major role in your sale. Whether a customer is hostile, talkative or quiet, empathy will soothe them.

You must confront the challenge, and do it without confrontation. Staying in control means staying one step ahead.

For instance, take the case of the talkative customers, one who says they are buying a car today, they know more about your product than you do, they tell you their life story in 15 minutes, and then they say "thank you" and leave.

We are trained as salespeople to get a customer talking. When we meet the talkative type of customer, we believe they are interested because they are talking to us. We think, "Hey, they like me." The truth is that they are in control and are likely done with you when they have no more to say or when you are no longer willing to listen to them. This is what I mean by comfort zone. You must be able to slow them down without insulting or stifling them.

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

Training + Marketing = **AutoSuccess**
THE #1 SALES-IMPROVEMENT MAGAZINE FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE PROFESSIONAL
6-269-8604, or go to www.SellingSuccessOnline.com