



## **The top ten mistakes your sellers can make and how you can fix them**

If you stand around wherever in your business your sales activity takes place, usually your office, perhaps at a customer's premises or home, when you tune in to what is being said, how often do you observe the following behaviours...

### **1. Sales conversations starting before rapport has been created**

It may just be a "Hi, you are you?" "How are things?" "How can I help you", or it may be a discussion about the weather or another common reference event. Whichever it is, a productive sales dynamic begins with the establishment of a sense of rapport between a buyer and a seller, and this is best achieved by design, rather than by accident.

### **2. Failure to elicit, listen (and record) the buyers buying criteria**

Precisely what is it that the buyer thinks they want to buy and what are they hoping to achieve with their purchase. What words do they use, and are these being reflected back to them throughout the sales process. Sellers need to learn to listen to what their prospects are telling them, and then use what they learn to match their products benefits to their buyer's needs.

### **3. Sellers seeing the world from their own, not their buyer's perspective**

We don't all want the same things out of life and in the selling interaction, so at this moment, it's the buyer's world that is important not the seller's. The place to start building this understanding is right at the start of the sales discussion, when establishing rapport. "How are you" is not a trite opener, it is a powerful opening question which will open up your buyer's world to you.

### **4. Seeing objections as obstacles**

"Objections" are golden gifts! They are the seller's opportunity to learn what is preventing the prospect from buying your product. Surfacing objections early in the selling process allows sellers to deal with them before they become an issue. And they must be dealt with in a manner that the buyer is happy with in order to reach an agreement.

### **5. Anxiety about closing**

Any anxiety a seller may have about how to close a sale will create huge pressure at the point of asking for a "yes" (and the buyer can sense this). The traditional closing model (leaving closing to the end) creates pressure for the buyer, and also for the seller. Proceeding through a series of "trial closes", a procession of smaller agreements, surfaces objections early, and builds a climate of collaboration, which is a great start for an ongoing business relationship.

### **6. Selling features rather than benefits**

Buyers are generally not interested in the features of your product. They are interested in what the features will do for them, and how they will support whatever it is they want to achieve, these are called benefits. Explaining relevant benefits to a buyer demonstrates that the seller knows their product, and is interested in providing a quality solution for them. Do your sellers know the difference between a feature and a benefit? If they don't, the chances are they are trying to sell features, and buyers don't buy features.

### **7. Confusing price with value**

Selling on price is easy, if you have the lowest price. Generally, buyers do not buy the cheapest products, they buy the products with the most value. Your selling process should communicate a value proposition that your buyer can recognise, because when your buyer recognises value, price is not an issue.

### **8. Sellers viewing price from their own perspective**

And not allowing the buyer to make their own judgment (from their own financial position). OK, so the price may be twice your seller's monthly salary but this does not make it expensive, especially if your buyer has ten times your seller's monthly salary as their budget. Sometimes sellers have to practice saying huge numbers just to break down their fear of them.

### **9. Sellers disagreeing with a buyer**

Worse still, picking a fight with a buyer. Whoah, unacceptable! Though it happens. Disagreements are buying-signals, the buyer hasn't walked off yet, and when you know how to turn disagreements into agreements with just four easy words, it becomes easy to build a climate of common agreement. If after telephone calls you hear frequent "they're stupid", or phones being slammed down, your sellers may be taking sides against your buyers. And guess what? If you can notice this, your buyers can too.

### **10. Not being aware of, or following a structured sales process**

Where is this conversation going? Whilst sales conversations may be social interactions, they are social interactions with a purpose, and that purpose is to sell or to buy something. Poor sellers lose sight of this and waste their time, and their buyers' time, by talking without a purpose. A powerful sales process will help your sellers keep the process on track, saving their time and increasing their sales conversion rate.

**And for good measure, here are two more...**

### **11. Not asking a customer for a referral or a recommendation**

When a buyer has just bought from you, they will want to spread the word (it justifies their buying decision) and they will be fulsome in their praise for their purchase. New buyers love to hear recommendations (it reduces their perception of risk) so gather as many as you can from the people who can best give them to you.

### **12. Sellers talking at buyers too quickly**

This is even worse when talking about technical issues, all of which is easy to do when there is time pressure and when sellers know their product inside out and backwards. Remember this, there is no point in having the conversation unless the buyer has heard and understood every word that has been said. When sellers start using technical jargon, citing technical features, to naïve buyers, understanding usually gets left behind. If your product or service is technical, use metaphors and examples to explain complicated features, remembering at all times that it is the benefits that are important not the technicalities.

If you observe "clangers" in your sales environment that you'd like some specific advice about, give us a call on **01953 498116** or drop us a line at [info@cpvconsulting.com](mailto:info@cpvconsulting.com)