

Asking for the Truth

Your formula for handling the Do-Nothing Prospect

Editor's Note: In this column space of *Vet-Advantage*, we will give you insight into both basic and advanced tactical selling techniques that will help you serve customers better than ever before. But let us preface this with a warning. The material in these articles is not for salespeople who are not ready to push themselves harder than ever before. It is for the professional who seeks constant improvement, fresh ways to serve customers, and constant learners who are never satisfied with being average. If this is you, it's great to have you on board. Now let's get to work!

A warm prospect reaches out and wants to hear about your solution. You set an appointment, do your homework and show up prepared to put on a five-star performance. You build trust, engage with questions and offer a solution you know will make them happy. In the end, the prospect tells you they like what they are hearing and tells you to follow up next week. You leave your materials and off you go. The following week you place a follow up call and the prospect tells you they still aren't ready to move forward. You try again the following week and you get the same response. What happened? It all seemed so promising at the initial meeting!

So how do you get the Do-Nothing Prospect to do something? It's simple. You ask! Too many "solution" salespeople and sales consultants believe their job is simply to offer solutions and advice, and then let the prospect come to their own conclusion. That mentality is designed to reduce the pressure the prospect may feel. The unfortunate result, however, is that it often reduces the salesperson's *responsibility* and potential impact on the end result. Truth is, a third of the prospects are going to buy from you whether you stink at sales or not. A third are never going to buy from you regardless of how good you or your solution are. Which means you are fighting over that middle third. The secret



By Brian Sullivan

Truth is, a third of the prospects are going to buy from you whether you stink at sales or not.

sauce in closing that middle third lies in two words...*urgency and expectation.*

Getting the quick truth

Below are the steps to getting people to pull the trigger more quickly. Pulling the trigger doesn't mean you get a "yes" every time. It just means you are getting the quick truth, be it positive or negative, faster than most. First, it's important to understand just how important quicker decisions are. For every hour you spend chasing a customer who is never going to buy from you, you are sacrificing an hour that can be spent on other high-value activity. To avoid this, you need to do more ASKING!

- 1. Ask...who makes decisions** and how they are made early in a sales presentation by asking, "*Who as well as yourself is responsible for making decisions?*" Don't wait until the end. This will prevent you from wasting words on the wrong people.
- 2. Ask...for a meeting with the higher-level decision-makers.** Don't assume the person you are speaking has all the buying power...even if they do. If they tell you they need to take the decision higher up, ask for an audience with that person. Expect to be at the table where the real decision is being made.



Understand that your most valuable assets are your time and expertise. There is a cost associated with chasing opportunities blindly.

3. Ask...your lower level prospect what they think may be important to the other decision-makers with, *“What do the others need to hear to come to the conclusion that my solution is a good one?”*

4. Ask...what is preventing us from moving forward after you get the dreaded, *“We are still thinking it over.”* Face it...sales isn't for wimps. So why is it that so many sales “consultants” are afraid to pull the truth from the prospect? Try something like:

“Sue, please help me to understand something. You mentioned that I addressed all your concerns and that you believe my solution is a good one. The proposal meets your budget requirements and yet I still sense some hesitation. What can I do to get you to move forward with this project and when?”

Is this pushy? No. Remember, you're not a jerk (how's that for inspiration). If you've done a good

job matching your solution to their wants and needs, you have earned the right to ask. By doing so, you will either pull out a real objection and then be able to respond to it, or you will learn that this may be an opportunity that you need to give a rest for a while.

5. Ask...yourself how much you are worth. Understand that your most valuable assets are your time and expertise. There is a cost associated with chasing opportunities blindly.

So this month, focus on getting to YES and NO quicker. No more assuming! A quicker YES means quicker commission. A quicker NO means more hours to fill your sales funnel with new prospects, find new ways to delight current customers, and more time to learn. And who knows, you may even have extra time to take in that baseball game with your top customers...your family and friends. ■