

Be More Persuasive in Conversation

Helpful tips for sales people

In a perfect world, your service would sell itself. You know how awesome it is; you have seen it in action – why would you need to convince someone otherwise? But, as it goes, people have options and a choice has to be made between service “A” vs. service “B.”



While it certainly could be true that your service is unique, if the facts that separate it from the pack cannot be effectively communicated, then you might have the world's best kept secret. Selling can be a tough task, especially if you haven't had the right training. In fact, according to a sales statistic compiled by Brevet, 55 percent of people making their living in sales don't have the right skills or the right training to be successful.

Gilbert Taylor, a seasoned sales executive, has offered some of his best advice on how to grab some more sign-ups for your service.

Channel relatable qualities

Taylor, a senior account representative at Electronic Systems, Inc., has been in the sales industry for 32 years. He has had many successes in both the insurance and technology fields and has honed his persuasive process throughout the duration of his career. Taylor believes the art of being a persuasive sales agent all boils down to relating to your prospect or customer at hand.

“Customers know when they are being played,” said Taylor. “The conversation should be a natural one, and being able to relate to the person or people you are talking to is essential if you're to get them to pay attention to what you have to say. You're competing with other sales people who are calling them all day long.”

Taylor stressed in addition to knowing the ins and outs of your service, do a thorough background check on the prospect's business before making your presentation. Research the business, know the competition and gain an understanding of both strengths and weaknesses.

Tailor the pitch

Taylor believes there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the sales pitch. All customers are different and their needs vary by individual, by market, and by industry. Knowing and catering to those needs is key to getting ahead of the competition. The stats can attest to this as well. Brevet states that only 13 percent of customers surveyed believe a sales person can understand their needs.

“Many sales folks get in the habit of thinking they can solve everyone's needs with the one product they offer,” said Taylor. Fact is, no product fits every user's needs. That's why it's so critical to do a

comprehensive review of your customer's business to ensure you fully understand his or her pain points. Indeed, consider your product not as a product, but as a *solution*. How can it meet specific business objectives? What problem will it solve? What benefit will it offer? Make sure that your product's value proposition is applicable to your customer's situation.

Keep it brief

Being cognizant of your prospects' time can mean the difference between being effective and being annoying. If you want to persuade them to join in, you have to be aware that their time is valuable, too. Being respectful of this, Taylor believes, is the foundation of successful customer communications.

"The pitch needs to be brief – no longer than 2 minutes tops," he said. "And whatever the pitch is – it needs to roll off the tongue naturally." Often expert salespeople reference the famous "elevator" speech. As the story goes, a salesperson stepped into the elevator with his company's CEO. The CEO introduced himself and asked the salesperson to explain – by the time they reached the CEO's floor – what he did for the company and how he added value. In short, he was asked to provide his personal value story. Allegedly, he had less than two minutes to achieve the task. The salesperson was promoted a few weeks later.

Confidence and brevity are key. Taylor emphasized that good selling is truly nothing more complex than a conversation. You can't build business relationships if you can't have a friendly chat.

The art of persuasion isn't reserved specifically for a select few. The skill can be developed with the right approach and a thorough understanding of what motivates prospects and current customers. Spending a little more time listening and understanding their needs will give you the leg up when it comes time to making the ask.