Asking Questions Part 3

The Most Important Skill In Selling
Asking questions is the most important skill in selling. We have previously looked at designing questions; whether to make them open or closed. Now we need to think about sequence.

Some questions are sensitive. We need to find out about decision making processes, budgets, competitors and a whole load of other issues which the buyer may not wish to reveal.

The quality of our questions is therefore very important.

Think of a situation where you are trying to open a new account. What concerns does your potential customer have?

- Are their products/services of good quality?
- Will buying from them make me better off?
- Are they better than my current supplier?
- What are the risks in changing suppliers?
- Do they really understand my business and my needs?

When I am talking to a potential customer, there is one question I always ask. It is what I call a ‘killer’ question.

“When you are looking to take on a new supplier, what is really important to you?”

You know what they always reply? Service. So, what does that mean?

I study sales behaviour. At this stage, most salespeople respond by going into presentation mode.

“We give a great service. This is what we do........ “ Blah, blah, blah. They present information that the customer doesn't find very interesting. Do you think any salesperson ever said they gave a bad service?
People have buying criteria. They have needs and wants that need to be satisfied. The answer is to ask more questions.

**Think about this sequence of questions:**

“When you say service is important, can you be more specific?” “I want deliveries to come on time”
This suggests to me that this customer has had a bad experience on the past.
Keep asking questions.

**Here is the sequence:**

1. Facts
2. Consequences
3. Feelings

**Here are some examples of questions you need to ask:**

**Facts:**

What happened? Tell me about it?
What happened next?

**Consequences:**

What affect did this have on your business? How did it affect your department?
How did it affect you?

**Feelings:**

How do you feel about that?

What we are doing is to take the customer back to a time when they had bad service. We can now tell them what we could have done to make the outcome much better.

**Remember the sequence:**

1. Facts
2. Consequences
3. Feelings
4. Solution

Asking questions is 3 times more persuasive than presenting information. Work on your questioning skills and you will sell more.

At The Sales Training Consultancy, we specialise in helping salespeople perform
better. Contact us if you need more information. Also, feel free to pass this on to anyone you feel might benefit from improving their communication skills. Good luck with your selling.