Thinking Again About Objections

Dealing With Objections
Think Again About Objections

By Sean McPheat, Managing Director Of The Sales Training Consultancy

As a Sales Coach I observe salespeople all the time.

In the past we trained salespeople how to sell by using a range of selling techniques, many of which originated from America in the sixties. These were often perceived as being pushy and aggressive.

What has changed, in recent years, is that we now focus more on behaviour than techniques. We teach relationship selling. Our aim as salespeople is to develop a relationship with our customers, so that they trust us and have a positive buying experience.

What does this mean? It means that our behaviour influences our success. Sales techniques are fine, but if the customer doesn't trust or believe you, it is unlikely that a sale will take place.

Think about it. When you buy things. If you are being sold to by a pushy salesperson who is a poor listener and who tries to give you the hard sell you will probably be put off. Often, our response to this kind of behaviour is to get rid of them by making excuses. Your customers are no different. They say:

“I'll think about it” “It's a bit expensive”
“Can you send me some literature?”

The way salespeople deal with objections is really interesting. Guess what most salespeople do when they hear an objection?

They interrupt.

I was with a salesperson recently and we were seeing a customer. The customer said at one point “I think it is a bit expensive”

The reaction of the salesperson was really funny to observe, but I think not untypical.

He interrupted the customer by trying to deal with the objection, which he had obviously heard many times before. The funny thing was that he also raised his hand like a traffic policeman as he interrupted.

He then said “We aren’t expensive when you look at the overall lifespan of the product....” And so on.
We did not get the sale.

Afterwards I asked him for his feedback and he blamed the customer for being awkward.

I pointed out what had actually happened.

“You interrupted him. Do you like being interrupted?”

He said “No”

“You then said he was wrong. Do you like being told you are wrong?”

By now he could see where this was going. He said “No”

“You then proved him wrong. Do you like being proved wrong?” “Okay” he said. “What should I have done?”

This:

1. Listen to the objection. Don’t interrupt
2. Ask questions. Clarify the objection. Find out the real problem
3. Once you understand the concerns the customer has, try to deal with the objection
4. Having dealt with the objection, close, or move on; depending where you are in the sales process

To clarify a price objection, ask an open question like: “So when you say it is a bit expensive, can you be more specific?”

To deal with the objection, try the feel, felt, found method

“I understand how you feel. Other people have felt the same. People in the same business as yourself, who are now our customers. When we first did business with them there were other companies who were a little bit cheaper than we were”

“However, what they found was that because we have invested heavily in new technology and are able to guarantee a 3 hour response to any problems that may occur during implementation, it was very much more cost effective in the longer term to pay a little bit more up front.”