

“To Brochure or Not to Brochure, that is the Question...”

Over the years, I have had a lot of fun with this one. In fact, what I am about to say is downright heretical for most of you out there—that’s why I will have so much fun in saying it. You see, I’ve never really had any brochures. (As a point of fact, I haven’t carried a business card for about twenty years). Absurd, you might say—and you may be right—but look at what happens when you give a prospect a card—all of the action is now in their court. If they want you, they can call you but if they’re not sure, all they have to do to say “no” to you is simply to do nothing. But if you get a card from them—and set an appointment to call them at a specific time, you control the action. Isn’t that really better?

Before you burn all of your literature and cards (fat chance), hear me out. I am not against literature (and certainly not biz cards). I am against the belief that in handing those out you’ve done something.

A lot of salespeople are totally dependent on business cards and brochures. In fact, I’ve heard salespeople say that they do not believe they can make calls without them. They believe that they must have something to leave behind. This idea gives rise to my notion of literature fairies/ferries. (A literature **fairy** is someone who believes that by leaving literature, sales will magically sprout and a literature **ferry** is someone who carries literature from Point A to Point B.)

My belief is that you should never let a customer/prospect tell you “No” by doing nothing. Having said, that, you are now saying, OK, wise guy, how do I use those tools?

For business cards, I’ve already given you the answer—ask for theirs, first, and set an appointment. Write it on the back of the card to show how important it is. Then, give them yours, just in case something comes up and they need to get in touch with you. (Think about how many business cards you’ve taken without any intention of doing anything about it—ever. Guess what, your customers do things just like that).

Now, for brochures, we do a little more. Again, think about how many times you’ve told someone to “send you some information” as a brush-off. Do not ask for whom the whiskbroom whisks, it whisks for you, too. If someone asks for literature, make sure to ask them specifically what they want the literature for—do they have any specific points they want to review? Are they going to share it with someone else? Is there a specific project where the literature may be applicable? If at all possible, give them a targeted letter **with** the literature. And if you really want to see if the literature is valuable, always follow it up with this question/statement. “Here is what you asked for. When can I call you to review what you’re seen and answer any additional questions?” Then shut up and see

what they say. Because if they will not let you follow up, should you even give them the literature at all?

Use the tools you have—but use them wisely and use them well.

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