

The One Thing Prospects Want, But Just Can't Seem To Get; "Your Value Proposition" - "What's in it for them"

Of all the things salespeople often fail to get—the value proposition is right at the top of the list. It's obvious to the salesperson why people should buy from them—they get commission. But a lot of the time, the customer is just not as benevolent as they need to be so we need to do a little better job in understanding one of life's key questions:

What's in it for them?

As a salesperson, your lifeblood is a sales call—either in person or on the phone. But I'll let you in on a little secret, it's not necessarily the customer's number one priority. To remedy this, you need to think about every call in two ways—

Why should the customer even bother to talk to me?

Why should they buy from me (when they've probably already got a good supplier)?

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The first value proposition that you have to address is this question. The customer has about a million things to do today—and you may not fit into their schedule—unless you establish some value. So why should they give you an appointment? Why should they even talk to you? A lot of salespeople are under the mistaken idea that every time they have something new that every customer is just waiting to hear about it. **WRONG.**

Before I call a customer, I ask one question—How does this (whatever it is) help them accomplish their objectives? This might point out that if you do not know what is important to the customer, you (perhaps) should find that out pretty soon. Because people tend to spend their time like they spend their money—meaning that they want value. The best value a salesperson ever adds is to tie their desire for the customer's time into something the customer (actually) wants or needs. This is the first value proposition.

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The second value proposition is really part of the sales process. I've talked about the need to use some diagnostic questions to ferret out the "reality" of

an opportunity. The last question was, “Why would you consider buying what you need from me this time?” A great open-ended question, to be sure, because it gets the customer to state (in the most persuasive voice they ever hear) a reason (or reasons) why they might actually do what you want them to do.

Remember that you should never present something unless you have a hypothesis of **why** they should do business with you—but sometimes the customer actually has a reason. So rather than help them see one that may not be evident, you can just listen to what they tell you. Remember that there are several reasons that might exist but the **two chief ones are an unmet need or a failure by the existing supplier** (and that one can be on many levels—including a plain old attitude of indifference by the current supplier’s organization).

Existing customers are easier to see than new ones—and often easier to sell. But no matter who you are dealing with, you can increase your chances of success by thinking about these two issues **before** you make the call.

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