



*Providing experienced Interim Management, Fractional/Part Time Management, Project Management and Advisory Services
WHEN you need them – WHERE you need them!*

Skills of our Sales Team

Attitude of our Organization

Leveraging our Strengths

Efficiency/Effectiveness in Selling

Strategy of our Business Model

Effective Selling - Ask the Question . . . then LISTEN!

The best salespeople are like expert detectives searching to find the exact needs of their customers and prospects. These needs are not exactly clear, so the detective looks for clues and puts the pieces together to better uncover the potential customer's hot buttons and close the sale. The best method for uncovering clues and needs is to ask the right questions.

Here are a few ideas to help you understand how questions can separate great sales people from those that are average.

Facts Don't Lie

In the book **SPIN® Selling**, author Neil Rackham, discusses traits of the most successful sales people. Rackham observed 35,000

sales calls over a 12-year period and analyzed why some sales people succeed and others fail. He found that the best sales people are highly skilled at matching the needs of their products and services with specific, customer-defined benefits. This is easier said than done. Many sales people can claim to understand this concept, but only a very small percentage can pull it off. It is the art of asking the **right questions and listening for solutions**.

Types of Questions to Ask

Rackham found that top producers in sales ask four types of questions: situation, problem, implication and need-payoff, thus the title of the book **SPIN® Selling**. The book reviews what the best sales people do when qualifying prospects. They use probing questions to best meet customer needs and add real value.

Situation Questions

These questions are used to gather the facts and data. They are concerned with the specifics of the situation and the customer.

Examples of good situation questions include: What is your budget and time frame? How many employees do you have? How long have you been in business? How many children do you have? Other than you, who are the key decision makers? What do they do? What are you looking to do? What are your greatest challenges and goals? What is your vision for your business? What is your level of commitment? You get the idea; fact and data collection. Most sales people have very little difficulty in this area. However, the problem is most go no further in their question asking process.

Problem Questions

Problem questions are used to uncover the pain experienced by the prospect. This is step one in getting a handle on how you might actually help the prospect. Understanding why they need to buy your product or service is connected to what they are looking to change or fix in their lives. This can be described as the pain you are going to take away from them when they buy from you. Experienced sales people generally have a handle on these questions, however the real pros realize that before the sale can be closed, there must be a direct connection between the pain experienced by your prospect and the solution you are recommending.

Examples of these questions include: Where are your problem areas? What would you like to fix? What is your current problem? What kind of obstacles are you facing in this area?

Implication Questions

These questions are very important, as they determine the consequences of the pain and how it is unique to your prospect.

Implication questions include: Why is solving that problem important? What would it mean for you? What are the implications of fixing that problem (cost/time saving)? How do you see this moving forward?

Need-Payoff Questions

The final set of questions reveal how the product or services offered can add real benefit. These questions bring it all together so your solution makes sense to your prospect and they are ready to buy.

Examples: How can I help you reach your goals? Why is this important? How would that help? Where do you see returns? How can my product or service help them/you do it better? Would it be useful if...? Is there any other way this could help you? What kind of benefits would you like to see?

Selling is hard work. Sales People are not “Born”. The best sales people train to understand their customers’ needs and deliver a solution. And through becoming skilled in sales tools such as questioning techniques like these, they are SUCCESSFUL.



Lawrence P. Howorth is the President and Founder of HOWORTH International, LLC, (www.HOWORTHLLC.com) a multinational provider of Interim Management, Fractional/Part Time Management, Project Management and Advisory Services. With a global focus, HOWORTH International provides services across multiple industries in strategy, operations, finance, and business development.

Contact us:

8745 Gary Burns Drive, Ste 160-202, FRISCO, TX 75078; Tel: (562) 544-5300;
SKYPE: HOWORTH; Email: Lawrence@HOWORTHLLC.com