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# The 10 Biggest Mistakes in Sales

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Sales people, sales organizations and sales teams have to change the way they are handling customers today in this very competitive world. The old ways of selling are changing and require all sales people, sales managers and sales organizations to think differently.

Here are 10 essential selling principles that most sales people and sales organization either get wrong or don't implement:

## 1. Not selling the solution

People and companies buy things only in an attempt to solve a problem. Sales people spend too much time on the offer rather than assuring the buyer that the product, company and individual will solve the problem. This typically results in presentations that are too long and prices that are too low. Focus on how your product and the company can solve the three most critical problems your client is trying to solve.

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## 2. Too dependent on the "sales presentation"

I have seen sales people spend hours creating presentations and then become so dependent upon the slideshow and every detail that they are no longer aware of vital buying signals. You being present is more important than the presentation. Of course, you want a great presentation, but never become so dependent that you are unable to know what is important, who the influencers are and when you are getting the buy in and when you are not.

## 3. Not asking the hard questions

It is my experience that sales people miss opportunities to build trust by not asking the hard

questions. This either comes from naivety or a lack of proper training to truly get in communication with the client. I was on a sales call with one of my top people and while he was presenting to the group I sensed that the decision-maker wasn't buying what he was saying.

I interrupted, "you don't believe a word of what he is saying, do you?" The client started laughing and said that was exactly what he was thinking.

Ask these questions: "How do you feel about our price?" "How do you feel about our term?" "Why would you do business with me when you have done it with our competitor for so long?"

If you don't get the answers to the hard questions you will find yourself not closing deals and not learning why.

#### 4. Believing price will solve your clients' problem

No one buys a price, ever! I have been in sales my entire adult life and have been tricked by thousands of buyers who said "price is the only issue." Your buyer may seem obsessed with price, demands your lowest price and claims the budget cannot be violated. Despite all this, every one of them will pay a higher price.

#### 5. Presenting without the intention to close

When I start a presentation I make it clear to the prospect that my intention is to have the product or service being used by the client this week. "Thanks for your time today, my goal is to have my product to your company by the end of this week."

The customer usually then tells me they have no intention of doing anything that quickly, at which point I simply say, "I understand. I just wanted you to know my intention."

You have to present with confidence, not arrogance, and set the stage early that you know your product can solve their problems.

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#### 6. Not asking for the close early enough

I noticed my sales team was presenting long after the buyer had seen enough. So I took all of our presentations apart and broke them into five stages. At the end of each stage I require them to ask, "have you seen enough information to make a decision?" This worked like a miracle with customers saying, "no I haven't," allowing the sales person to continue with the presentation. In other cases the buyer closed 80 percent faster than previously or we found out we didn't even have the right decision-makers in the room.

#### 7. Waiting until the end of the presentation to share the price

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Most sales people make this mistake because most of us were taught to build value, then show the price. This results in a buyer that, no matter how intrigued they might be by your presentation, is wondering the entire presentation what the cost is. This results in your presentation being interrupted over price rather than the customer being able to evaluate what your product or service will do and how that relates to the price.

After letting the buyer know my intention is to get the product to their company this week, I then share the price. "Before I demonstrate how my product will solve your problems, I want to share with you our pricing so that you have it while I present the product." Initiate price -- don't wait to answer "how much?"

They may tell you before the presentation, "that is too high," at which point you can simply agree with the customer. "Of course it's too much, you haven't even seen what it will do. Allow me to show you why it's this price and what it will do for you and why it is the best value in the marketplace."

Bringing price up early makes you look confident, shows you have nothing to hide and takes out the mystery. Bring price up early then use the rest of the time building value.

## 8. Ignoring influencers

I have made the mistake many times where I put too much attention on the decision-maker and missed the influencers. Ask, "Who else other than yourself will influence your decision or that you would like involved?" Find out why they are important to the decision and what is most important to them.

## 9. Using a free trial to close a deal

Free trials without some timeline and commitment to invest money and energy almost never work and become cash flow problems for the company that offers them. Grow up and close the deal or go get another customer, because free will break your company.

## 10. Not practicing urgency

Too many sales organizations never insist on closing a deal for fear of appearing to be a nuisance. If you truly believe in your company, product and service, you must learn how to insist on closing the transaction now. I have made the mistake too many times of not practicing enough urgency and then having time and events beyond my control steal my deal. Your sales team should train and drill on how to press without being unprofessional or appearing to pressure.

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