



Avoid sales malpractice

Make it easy for prospects to say 'yes'

Have you ever wanted to be sold, but the salesperson failed to deliver? I am in the market to buy tele-learning software.

After talking with colleagues and industry leaders, three companies surfaced. Two are well-known players but the third, lesser-known company seemed to offer the greatest functionality. I went to their website and immediately signed up for the introductory webinar. I was frustrated that I had to wait two weeks to participate, but convinced myself that, based on the recommendations I had received, it would be worth it.

The magic day came, and I signed onto the hour-long informational webinar. I listened, interacted and marveled at some of the capabilities. The facilitator never addressed what I would categorize as basic functionality issues – number of participants, bridge lines or web capability. At the end of the demo, I was instructed to download three informational pdf documents, and the facilitator signed off. That was it! No mention of follow up, pricing, package options – nothing.

Two days later, I received a voice message from a reseller who was calling to schedule a follow-up. I called him back and we had a short conversation. I asked him three questions, and each time he responded by saying either “I think...” or “I believe...” I paused a long time after this happened for the third time and kindly concluded the conversation. I immediately went to the developer’s website and found an 800 number. The gentleman who answered the phone was gracious, but again, not trained to answer my questions. I explained my frustrations, and he guaranteed me that I would

receive a call-back within 24 hours.

It took 48.

The VP who contacted me was professional, knowledgeable, courteous and responsive. He answered most of my questions and forwarded my contact information on to two people who could fill in the blanks. Toward the end of our conversation, he apologized for my initial experience. He explained that the person who initially contacted me was new to their company and had been assigned to lead generation. I sat in silence wondering to myself, “You assign your most inexperienced personal to handle qualified leads?!”

“Never leave the door open so your competition can steal business from you.”

He further explained that their company used to participate on all of the developer-sponsored webinar events but this practice was halted by the parent company who felt that that would give one reseller an unfair advantage over the other resellers. Again, I found myself thinking, “So the parent company penalized a strategic partner who stepped up to the plate and committed additional resources in an effort to streamline the prospect’s decision process? What am I missing? On what level does this make good business sense?”

I have two additional phone calls to-

morrow, and I am hopeful that I can close the deal. If not, one of the well-known players has already contacted me and indicated they’d love my business...

What insights can we gain from this experience?

1. Eliminate barriers.

Make it easy for prospects to do business with you. When was the last time you personally experienced (and assessed) your sales process as a prospective customer? What hoops must they jump through in order to do business with you? Make it

easy for prospects to say “Yes!” and become customers.

2. Be bulletproof.

Never leave the door open so your competition can steal business from you. This company had 23 participants on the webinar; they concluded the event with no mention about next steps. This violates a fundamental sales practice – every contact with a prospect should lead to a defined next step. Always gain a next step commitment so you are advancing the sale.

3. Expertise sells.

Train your sales people. Be sure they know and can communicate the features, functions, and benefits of your products and services. Train them how to strategically sell. Teach them phone skills. Practice presentation delivery. Map out how to overcome resistance. Test them regularly to keep their skills sharp. The first impression with a prospect creates a lasting impression – be intentional.

4. Secure agreement.

People want to be sold. Smart buy-

ers appreciate confident, knowledgeable and skilled sales people. Don't disappoint them. Qualify their needs and wants. Quantify benefits. Educate. Eliminate barriers. Manage resistance and secure agreement by creating a bridge to the next step.

In this era where closing new business is a celebrated event, make it easy for your prospects to say, "Yes."

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