
The Emotions Of Buying

by BILL BROOKS

A major objective for any salesperson is to enable prospects to discover, and in turn verbalize, their deepest needs or desires as they relate to your product or service. During talks with thousands of salespeople at seminars, we have discovered that most of them simply do not know how to help their prospects clarify their feelings and desires.

The way you present facts and focus relative values can either reinforce or destroy the emotions that lie behind a sale. Let's take a hard look at four specific pointers that can help you sell much more effectively.

Seek to Understand the Prospect's Deepest Feelings

A prospect is not an adversary. In spite of this reality, some things a prospect feels or thinks can at best be a hindrance or at worst, even an enemy to your success. Some common elements that produce negative feelings in prospects are confusion, misinformation and false conclusions. If you are a skillful listener, your intuitive insight will tell you if your prospect's emotions are hindered by any negativity. If you understand what your prospects are thinking and feeling, you will be at a distinct advantage.

Attentive listening involves the art of being alert, perceptive and creative in searching out what your prospects feel or think about their needs and desires.

Assure Prospects

Assure your prospects that you want to help them meet their needs and solve their biggest problems.

Scores of scientific studies into human nature have repeatedly shown that most people approach buying decisions with anxiety and often have very mixed emotions. Yet, those same studies also show that many prospects regularly look to salespeople to help them make up their minds.

For example, as an opening question, if a prospect asks you, "How much is it?" they are often looking for an excuse not to satisfy a need or desire they strongly feel. It often indicates mixed emotions based on confusion or anxiety.

The question of "How much is it?" often scares salespeople. Don't be intimidated. While that question is usually a sign that you are selling in a crowded market with many competitors, you should not see it as an indication that you will have to deal on price alone or lose the sale.

When greeted with this ques-

tion, ask "In order for me to be of service to you, do you mind if I ask you a few questions?" Then proceed only if they say "yes." If they give you permission to ask questions, then focus questions so that you can figure out how to be of service. End your questioning by assuring the prospect that you want to help them meet their needs. With that solid foundation laid, you are ready to proceed with a productive sales interview.

Ask Questions

Before concluding your investigation and moving on to build value for your prospect, it is important to clear up any issues that

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may be unresolved. A common mistake made by many salespeople is to believe that an issue has been settled once they have voiced their opinions. By talking instead of listening, the salesperson may have left the issues lingering in the prospect's mind. You may then leave the sales interview wondering what happened, when the true reason for the refusal lies

in open issues that have not been brought to completion.

To reinforce your application-based presentations, you should regularly ask your prospects about how they perceive the value you have shown them so far. Then, repeat the answer they give, turning it into a summary statement. For example, you might say, "You told me that you want a telephone system that is expandable and flexible, yet will fit into your current budget and will include on-site training. Is that correct?" Rephrasing the answers to your questions as a summary statement is of paramount importance. This final questioning segment accomplishes several key objectives:

- It proves you are interested in correctly understanding not only what they said, but what they truly meant.
- It provides the prospect an opportunity to agree with or to correct your interpretation of what they said.
- It gives you the opportunity to ensure that you are on the right track as you begin to transition to the coming application phase.
- It helps you and your prospect begin to make the mental jump

from probing into thinking of how to tie what you have learned together with your product knowledge to create value-based applications that fulfill your prospects deepest wants and needs.

All Values Are Considered Equal in the Absence of a Value Interpreter

The best strategy for focusing a prospect's needs and feelings is to keep weighing one value against another. If there is no obvious standard against which to measure the value you offer, you must provide some yardstick.

A key goal of any questioning is to focus and interpret relative value for your prospects. By focusing on value for the client, you become a respected consultant who has a proven interest in serving the customer's needs. The prospect will trust you and be at ease with you because you never treated them as adversaries. If you do it well and use the answers to reveal ways to offer your clients a valuable benefit, then they will reward you. And reward you richly. □