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# The One Characteristic All Buyers Have In Common

by BILL BROOKS

**T**here is one particular situation or circumstance that must absolutely exist in a prospect's mind before they will ever become a truly qualified prospect for your product or service. Surprisingly, it isn't money (they can borrow, direct or release funds) and it isn't really the authority to buy (you can find your way to the buyer).

It is simply this: a relative sense of urgency on their part to solve a problem, resolve a situation, improve profits, eliminate waste or enjoy the benefits you promise. But allow me to let you in on a little secret: You are not going to create that urgency through transparent ploys like price increases, product shortages or the like without running the risk of at least eroding, if not totally destroying, trust and mutual respect between you and your prospect. Using those ploys will guarantee a short-term relationship between the two of you. And remember, no matter what you sell, you are looking for a long-term relationship and residual sales!

That said, what does all of this mean to you as a sales professional? Let's look at a few possible solutions:

- You need to understand buying cycles, be observant of trends, understand the pressures and complexities of your prospects, and become a true expert at market trends that affect your customers related to the timing of their decisions.
- You need to be working above the fray — you need to have a “viewing point” instead of a “point of view” as it relates to your personal prospecting or marketing strategies. Knowing where to place your effort and precisely when to exert it is far better than throwing a lot of mud up against the wall!
- You need to invest in a solid contact management program that allows you to automate your efforts. This

will allow you to develop a presence that is regular and consistent — but do it in ways that don't require manual or physical effort on your part.

- You need to master the science of “permission-based prospecting,” the process that allows you to contact your prospects with their approval. Provide valuable reports, white papers, research, tools, audios, videos, studies — or more — that continually position you as the best alternative for them when they are ready to buy.
- You need to know exactly what a failure on your prospect's part will cost them if they don't act now. Surprisingly, lots of prospects simply don't know the cost or downside of failing to make a decision. However, instead of telling them what the cost will be, master the skill of getting them to tell you! For example, “Do you have any idea what not solving this problem has cost you over the past six months?”, followed by, “If this continues, how much additional expense do you think you'll incur?”
- You need to stay alert to potential internal changes within accounts that can directly or indirectly impact the timing of your sales effort — good or bad.

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## Sense of Urgency

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There is one single, clear thread that winds its way through each of the solutions I suggested. You'll notice that the thread is not “creating a sense of urgency” or “building impending doom” — both old-school selling ploys. Instead, it is the role that knowledge and education play in your success.

Understanding your buyer's world requires educating yourself and gaining knowledge. Knowing pre-

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cisely how and when to leverage your talents requires the same thing. Researching and learning about how to use an effective contact management program requires you to step up to the intellectual table, too, as does understanding and implementing the new science of permission-based prospecting and researching the actual costs and losses your prospect will incur without your product or service. Staying on top of shifts, changes and reorganizations or realignment is also not armchair work!

Contemporary, 21st century selling champions understand that it is knowledge over brute force, unfolding data versus a “data dump,” finesse over power, and sophistication versus overly simplistic “tie down” or “closing questions” that place you ahead of the pack. Yes, the game has changed. However, certain things have not changed — and never will. One of these is this: Remove legitimate, sincere, heartfelt urgency from the mind of your prospect and you don’t have a qualified prospect.

Remove a salesperson’s desire to learn more, ask the right questions and implement 21st century strat-

egies, and not only do you not have a qualified salesperson, you have one who is underpaid and eventually even unemployed. □



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