
Overcoming Obstacles To Believing In What You Sell

by BILL BROOKS

If you are an honest person, you cannot convince a prospect that your product or service has value unless you believe in it yourself. Even if you try, people seem to have an uncanny knack for spotting a phony.

There are two things that frequently cause lots of salespeople to doubt the value of what they're selling.

First, you cannot believe in what you are selling if you or your organization make false claims for its products, services or business practices.

Let's face it, the old saying is true: "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear!" No amount of glossing over or looking the other way will convince you that a product has value if you know it will fall apart as soon as it's delivered. Likewise, you cannot believe in your product or service if it consistently fails to deliver what it tells you to promise. If there ever was a time when you could "promise them whatever it takes

to close the sale," that time has gone forever.

Your personal reputation with your customers is one of your most valuable assets as a salesperson. You owe it to yourself and your own career to be able to assure your clients of a quality product or service.

Not Delivering on Promises

How do I deal with the problem of a value promised but not delivered? First, I never make any claim I know I can't back up; then I simply refuse to work for any organization that consistently fails to deliver what I was told to promise my customers. I usually confront them with my findings

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and give them an opportunity to either:

- Prove me wrong.
- Correct the abuses.
- Get themselves another salesperson.

You don't have to work for anybody who knowingly misleads customers. There are far too many honest and upright businesses looking for good salespeople for you to squander your reputation on the few who operate unethically.

Second, it is most helpful to realize that all of us perceive values differently.

A young person who is crazy over sports cars loaded with ev-



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ery conceivable gadget might find it difficult to understand why a conservative older person would be willing to invest good money in a stripped-down sedan, and vice versa. This simple observation has strong implications for connecting with your prospect's perception of value later.

It's important to see that since a product or service has little value to you personally, it doesn't

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mean it has no value to anyone else.

Here's a principle that can help you keep in mind that few things have universal value: The seller usually determines the cost of a product or service, but only the buyer can determine its true value.

If you are healthy, you might consider an artificial heart a very poor bargain at \$398, but if your heart were failing rapidly, you would probably trade everything you had for it. Just because you personally would not pay the asking price for a house is no sign that someone else would not be delighted to get it for that price — even if they knew everything you know about it.

Deciding Value is Subjective

So, if you have difficulty understanding the value of what you are selling, keep in mind that ultimately it is always the buyer who decides how much it is worth. Re-

member: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

"If You Ain't Sold, You Can't Sell!"

You can only convince others of the value of what you are selling when you are convinced of its value. As salespeople, our task is not to impart value to products that have none, or even to determine the value of a product to the end user. Your task is to convince your prospects that what you're selling has more value than the money they would pay for it or for anything else they could ever buy with that money.

You can only do that when you are thoroughly convinced of the value of what it is you're selling. You've got to believe in what you're selling to make your customers believe in what they're buying. It's as simple and straightforward as that.

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