
SALES SUCCESS

It's Not About You, It's About The Customer

by JERRY ROULEAU

Recently I was in a meeting with an investment firm that was considering buying a housing company in a key housing market. They commented on how much competition there was in that market. I said it's really simple, if they wanted to outsell their competition and be the top in their market. I don't care who is in your market already, what they sell, and how good they are. You can outsell and out-produce everyone, if you understand the simple facts of life.

- ***It not about you, it's about the customer.*** Focus on the customer. I hope that's why you're in business. Remember the customer is the one that pays your paycheck. You are not the only business in town, and people will choose where they do business. If you want to sell yourself, let the other person talk. In most cases the customer buys you first, then the product. If they don't feel comfortable with you, they are not going to buy from you. It's that simple. In the short run you may get away with it, but guess what, it will come back to hurt you.

Listening Skills

Do you want to sell to a customer? Then be quiet and listen. You'll never sell to them if you don't know what they are looking for. Most of us spend way too much time talking and don't have a clue on what the customer has on their mind. Try consultative selling. Develop questions that get your customers talking about their needs and dreams.

- ***It's about getting back to the customer.*** Why is it so hard for a customer to get a builder to call them back? Industry surveys that I have conducted show that only 24% to 33% of the builders follow up on their leads. If you want to excel, it's really easy, the odds are in your favor. The business is there if you want it. It's no different than all the other things we do in our lives.

I recently was planning a reception and called six caterers seven months in advance. I started off with one question: Are you available on Saturday evening, April 17? All six said they were, so I asked them to send me information on their services



and references. Only four sent me literature, and only one followed up. I liked the people, they were appreciative, they were professional and their references showed the same. Guess who I did business with? They were all free that evening, only one made the attempt, and only one got the \$11,000 spent for that evening.

- ***It's about making them feel important.*** Most people think very highly of themselves, and rightly so. They are the most important people, and if you treat them right, they will reward you with their business.

- ***It's about showing them you appreciate their business.*** Let your customers know that you want to earn their business and want to help them. Make it fun for a customer to buy from you.

- ***It's about doing something for the customer.*** As soon as we think

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or feel that in order to sell something, we have to do something to the customer, we are off to a wrong start. Always remember you are in business to *do* something for the customer, not *to* the customer. Salespeople who try and do things to customers are not professionals, they are con artists.

- ***It's about understanding.*** We feel good when we think people understand us, so why should there be any difference with our customers?

- ***It's about your employees, not about the product.*** Companies that are growing and becoming successful are building their company around people. When a company has key people, their

product excels, and the company grows.

In my travels around the country, it's sad to see companies in these times. I continually see companies that are set in their old ways and don't want to change. They have dated designs as well as dated attitudes. If a company wants to succeed, they have to learn that it is not about them, it's about the customer. I chuckle when I see that a company's corporate office parking lot has reserved parking near the office entrance for the owner and management, and the guests and visitors have to park farther away.

- ***It's about giving back.*** Pro-active, successful companies, are getting more involved in their community. They are making their workplace a place where people want to work. They are providing outstanding customer service, which gives them higher than normal referrals.

- ***It's about training.*** Profitable and successful companies provide all their employees training. They want their people to be the best.

Zig Ziglar has a famous saying that goes something like: "What is worse than training an employee and having them leave to go work for the competition, is not training them and having them stay."

- ***It's not about price. It's about selling value.*** Unless you have the lowest-priced quality product on the market, you shouldn't focus on price. If you care about your reputation and people in general, you need to focus on selling quality and service. Everyone does not buy on price. If you think all of your customers do, then it means you're focusing on the wrong group of people. We all know that when you buy items solely on price, you generally get what you pay for.

- ***It's not about the money.*** If you're always focusing on money issues, then it's never going to change. You project what you feel and do. You need to focus on the customer, and then the financial issues will change. When you start cutting corners here and there, it shows. When you start substituting cheaper products for quality products, it shows. When you don't properly merchandise, it shows.

The list goes on and on. Can you fill in the copy for the next five items? If you can you're on your way to success.

- It's about customer service.
- It's about customer relations.
- It's about people skills.
- It's about how you deal with people.
- It's about your choice.

You can work hard or you can work smart. You can focus on you, or the customer. The outcome is amazing. When you say you can't do such and such, guess what, you're 100% right. You have programmed yourself to that end.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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