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Want An OBJECTIONS Roadmap?

BY JAMES LORENZEN

Most initial objections by prospects are just traps, not legitimate concerns to prevent the sale. Discover how to tell the difference, and learn to listen to those concerns so you can effectively make the sale.

Let's start with this: How many objections are there, really?

Make a list; I'll even get you started:

- I can't afford it (includes business being slow, recession, end of the world, etc.);
- It won't work for me;
- Our business is seasonal;
- Stupid prospect tricks: "You know, I have all the business I can handle"; (of course, the front door isn't locked).

Okay, you finish it. I want you to write down every objection you have ever heard. I'll wait.

Done? Okay. We'll come back to it.

For years, traditional sales training has propagated a myth that "objections" is a stage in the sales process, i.e., Opening >> Ask Questions >> Presentation >> Answer Objections >> Close.

This formula – pretty much a product of the 1940s, which became mainstream in the 1950s – is still found throughout much of the industry. Indeed, we even use it as a starting point in our training sessions simply to show how the strategic sales process has evolved over time.

One thing you won't actually see: objections as a stage. It doesn't exist. Never has. What's changed is our

understanding of the buying process, which few people cared much about in the early days of manipulative selling.

An Evolutionary Process

If you hear an objection within 60 seconds of your first contact with a prospect, whether on the phone or face-to-face, it's never, never, never, never, NEVER real.

It's not an objection; it's a trap.

When I began in sales, my early conversations with prospects usually started like this:

- Me: "Hi!"
- Prospect: "No."

I think that about sums it up.

Sure, sometimes the “No” took different forms, like “I don’t care what you’re selling, I can’t afford it.” It doesn’t matter. The words would change, but it was all the same. They were TRAPS. They weren’t real objections.

Lead generation is different today in most B2B – and even B2C – sales, but the obstacles haven’t changed much.

Write this on your bathroom mirror: a REAL objection occurs ONLY when a prospect IS interested in what you have to say and actually DOES want to change his/

Here’s what you should be seeing:
1. Early objections are not objections. They’re just “traps.” Don’t take the bait.

2. When you hear a question or statement about legitimate concerns in search of answers, it may be a sign you have their attention. Note: don’t believe this first sign. Test it. Ask a few more questions. Make the prospect sell YOU that s/he’s for real.

3. When objections or statements change to questions about specific details, it may be a sign they actually DO want to change their present situation. Again, don’t believe it.

YOU on their “location” in the buying process so you know you’re both on the same page.

Now, back to your list of objections.

Take all the objections that are really about money – I’ll bet “can’t afford it” and “no budget” are on the list – and count all of these as one objection.

Now, get rid of all other duplications; you’ll be able to see them.

How many did you get? I’ll bet you couldn’t come up with 10 different objections that weren’t traps. Many people don’t even get to FIVE!

Which ones are simply TRAPS? Which ones are statements or questions regarding LEGITIMATE concerns in search of answers? Which ones are questions about specific DETAILS?

her present situation. At that point, a real objection can reveal itself in two forms:

- Honestly raised as a statement of concern – it can be phrased as a negative or a positive, it doesn’t matter – which tells you how to address your buyer’s needs;
- Raised as a specific question – the more detailed the better – which also tells you how to address your buyer’s needs.

Now, go back to your list. Label them. Which ones are simply traps? Which ones are statements or questions regarding legitimate concerns in search of answers? Which ones are questions about specific details?

Ask a few more questions. Make the prospect sell YOU that s/he really does have a problem and wants to solve it. Good questioning skills are valuable throughout the sales process.

So, objections are not a stage – they’re part of an evolution: traps >> general objections >> statements or questions of concerns >> questions about specific details.

Each time the prospect opens his or her mouth, you are being told where the prospect is in the buying process. Note: NEVER believe the first symptom you see or hear. Always, always, always test your hypothesis. Make the prospect SELL

How do I know? I’ve never been in front of a convention of 300 professionals – brainstorming together – who could get the list to ten without duplication.

Virtually every objection revolves around the following:

1. Money;
2. A product feature/application;
3. A trap.

Find seven more. You can likely get it to five or six if you try hard (seasonal business, etc.), but there really aren’t that many. So, if that is the case, why can’t we recognize them or handle them?

It’s like a hitter at the plate (here comes another sports analogy).

How many pitches are there? Fast ball, curve ball, slider, knuckle ball, change-up. Okay, there are five, perhaps a couple others. But, if major leaguers know all the pitches they

say until YOU uncover their wants, needs, desires, dissatisfactions. And then you can get them to put a value on the solution.

Remember, your prospects do

Remember, “How much does it cost?” can be a trap for “I can’t afford it,” or it can be a legitimate sign the prospect wants to buy!

Ask yourself, “How long have I been here?” Ten seconds? It’s a trap. Ten hours? You’re probably married.

Let’s go back to your list of objections. How many of those usually appear in the first 60-seconds? How many actually appear late in the process?

Getting clear?

Remember, you need to know where they are mentally. If you listen hard enough – and long enough – they will tell you everything you need to know... and exactly what to do. 📞

LISTEN for symptoms!

will face, why do they have trouble?

They don’t know WHEN they will appear, or exactly WHERE around the plate they will be. Aha! So, it’s WHERE in the count the pitch comes that makes it hard to spot. Does this apply to selling? You bet your cell phone it does!

In Selling, It’s When, Not What

In selling, it’s WHEN you hear an objection that’s far more telling than WHAT the prospect says. Example: if you’re doing one of your fancy, glitzy, media-drenched “presentations” in front of a prospect that still doesn’t want to change his/her present situation, you’re not even in the same conversation, let alone the same sale. You have to match what you’re doing to where the buyer is mentally. You need to think strategically. Glitzy tactics won’t matter if you’re on the wrong page.

1. Make the prospect actively demonstrate to you that you have his/her full attention (glazed expressions don’t qualify). Do something to get the prospect to exhibit active physical involvement in the process. Get your prospect engaged!

2. Continue with questioning. Listen for clues that the prospect is interested – and this is key – in what you have to say! The clues? You’ll hear questions or statements that don’t sound like traps. They’ll actually start addressing legitimate concerns. Remember, no prospect will be interested in what you have to

need help. Costs are high, business is slow and they do want to get answers. They just don’t know YOU can help! So, they talk to their wives, husbands, hairdressers and neighbors. They’ll even talk to their dog. Get them to talk to you!

But, they won’t talk to you if you’re too busy selling. They’ll only talk to you if you’re not selling. So, don’t sell. Listen. They like that.

Post this on your refrigerator: listen = good, talk = bad.

3. Listen for clues the prospect wants to change his/her present situation (no one will ever buy “in” or “up” as long as they’re satisfied with their present situation).

How will you know when that happens? Listen for symptoms!

One symptom: objections change to questions. Another sign is that objections or questions are about specific concerns the prospect has. It doesn’t matter whether you’re hearing objections or questions at this point. The issue is whether they’re specific concerns. If they’re questions, all the better.

Okay, Jim, can I present my solution now? Can I, huh?

Not so fast. And, quit drooling!

Unlike the manipulative days, you don’t have to force the buyer through the process. If you’re good at helping them, *they’ll lead you!*

They key is not what they say, it’s WHEN they say it!

Give your prospect a “lie-detector” test about every two minutes.

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