The Selling Process: Steps to Success

By Peter Matthews

Business owners understand the importance of fulfilling the needs of existing customers who are usually easier to work with and less time consuming. However, to be successful and grow your business you need to direct a lot of energy and effort toward landing the new customer. This means that you have to sell and not just be an order taker.

We have all experienced the salesperson that seems disinterested in what we want and uninformed about the products and services of the company that they represent. This is a sure sign of the need to introduce that salesperson to the selling process.

The selling process involves a series of steps that may appear to be a straight-line process, but there is a lot of movement back and forth between the different steps that will ultimately lead to closing the deal. The selling process will vary by industry and personal preference, but these six essential steps will help you close more deals.

1. The Meet and Greet This initial introduction will set the stage for the rest of the selling process. This is the icebreaker, the time to get the customer to relax and feel comfortable. This is your chance to build rapport with the customer so you need to be sincere, friendly and humorous. You try to capture the customer’s interest by asking them questions that make them think.

2. Qualifying the Customer’s Needs This is the step where you ask questions to help you identify what the customer wants. It really is the who, what, where, when, why and how of the selling process. If you qualify the customer properly you will be able to fulfill his/her needs and wants. Don’t rush through this step; time spent qualifying will allow a smooth transition into the next step.

3. Presentation or Demonstration This is the step where the salesperson can show all they know about their products or services. Naturally, the presentation will cover the features of the products, the physical characteristics. But, you need to concentrate on the benefits of your products or services, as well. The benefits will show the customer “what is in it for them” and benefits are why people buy the products/services that they do.

4. Overcoming Objections This step is critical to the selling process since objections are usually the customer’s reasons for not buying your product or service. Objections are just another step in the selling process and give you the opportunity to reinforce in the customer’s mind the benefits to them while you move them toward completing the deal. Now is not the time to give up. Ask them why they feel like they do and respond directly to their statements.

5. Closing After you have handled the objections that the customer presents, you must ask for their business. Generally, the customer will have given you signals along the way. Your job is to pick up on those signals and ask for their business. There are many techniques that can be employed in closing the sale, and you need to find the techniques that you can use comfortably.

6. Follow Up Now that the sale has been made, don’t just let that hard work go to waste. Follow up with the customer and start building that long-term relationship that will assure you of a satisfied repeat customer who will most likely send referrals your way.

Remember, your future success relies upon making the sale. So, always try to improve the quality of your salespeople through training and skills development.

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