

### **The Keys to Buying Motivation: Unlock the Door to Sales Success**

By: Mark Dembo

One of the key things that we teach salespeople is that your job in sales is to understand what it is that people do, and then to help them do it better. For only by understanding what people do; how they do it, why they do it that way, when they do it, and who they do it with, can you be in a position to really help them and show them what will make sense to them. Notice that the emphasis here is on the prospect; what makes sense to THEM. It's not about what makes sense to you, or what you would like to sell them. Notice also that we're not talking about asking prospects about their "needs," "problems," or "pain."

As D.E.I. Management Group President and author, Steve Schiffman says in his book "The 250 Sales Questions to Close the Deal:"

What if I ask the person to describe pressing business problems that he or she will face in the future? What if I build my proposal around those business issues? I might get a decent picture of what is going on in that person's world, but I will not get the whole picture. Even if you discover everything about the person's pains, needs, and problems, you will have only learned about certain parts of their situation - the parts that are currently causing pain and problems. You won't be getting the whole picture. What about the rest of your contact's situation - the things that don't fit in the categories of pain, needs, or problems? What's going on there? If I only ask about "needs," I don't know - and if you've only been asking the types of questions mentioned above, neither do you.

Let's explore this a bit more deeply. People will only make a decision to do something if it makes sense to them. I think that's something we can all agree on. So how do we know what will make sense to someone we meet for the first time, or whom we don't know all that well? That comes through asking questions and in taking a genuine interest in the people we meet with.

Many of us in sales were taught, at one time or another, that we need to be good listeners, and that we need to show we care by asking questions. Yet how many of us really do a good job at that? We are excited about our products and services - we want to jump right in and show our prospect that we have the fix for whatever ails them. We need to learn to fight that urge to "throw-up" on the prospect with our solution to their problem - for if we do this too soon in the process we're really just guessing at what makes the most sense to them.

An understanding of basic human motivation will help you ask better questions to arrive at the ultimate plan that will make sense to your prospect. As human beings, we are all driven by two primary motivating factors; the desire to avoid pain, or the desire to gain something. Or, to put it another way - we either want to fix something that isn't working, or we want to create a better future.

Consultant and author Mahan Khalsa in his book "Let's Get Real or Let's Not Play" says it well:

People who are trying to "move away from pain" will interpret issues as pain and may give us a list a problems, frustrations, and dissatisfaction. They may even use physical or emotional pain phrases like: "It's killing us", "We're bleeding", "It's a pain in the neck", "It's a real headache", "It's a nightmare", "It's like pulling teeth".

People who are "moving toward gain" will interpret issues as results (i.e., objectives, goals, and outcomes). They may use phrases like "What we'd like to see.," "What we think is possible.," "Our vision is.," "What we're excited about is.," "Our end in mind is.," "We'd like to create.," etc. Their language will give us some hints about where they would like to start. We'll just need to be aware of the language.

Our job in asking questions then, is to listen to what our prospect says and determine which mode they are operating in - listen to their language, and then ask more questions to find out more about their unique situation. In doing this, you will want to ask questions that relate to the past, the present, and the future. Asking about the past will help you determine what problems they may be dealing with that they want to fix. Asking about the present will focus in their present situation and the current "status quo". Future based questions will give you a sense of what goals and outcomes they hope to accomplish. All of these areas are important to gain a full sense of what will makes sense to the person and of what will lead them to buy.

Every conversation is unique. You need to focus on what your contact is telling you and then follow-up with a logical question to dig deeper. Each question you ask should follow from the question and answer before it. For example, suppose you are speaking with someone and she tells you that her company plans to open 5 new locations in the next year. What will your next question be? Here are some possibilities:

That's great. I'm just curious, why five?

That's great. I'm just curious, where will they be? How did you decide on those locations?

That's great. What are your first year projections for those locations?

That's great. What kinds of challenges do you typically face when you open new locations?

You could probably come up with several other questions you could use here, but the point is that the question is squarely focused on them - and may not even have anything directly to do with your offering. Remember, your goal is to understand as much as you can about them. Through question like this you are developing a real conversation. A conversation in which your contact's comfort and trust level will increase, and one in which you will gain real insight into what they "do" - what they hope to accomplish as well as the problems they need to solve.

Only once you've gained a better sense of their past, present, and future - along with problems (pain) and goals (gain) are you in a position to make a real recommendation or proposal.

Moving quickly through this step can jeopardize your opportunities to build a real relationship and to add real value to the selling situation. Take the time to truly understand what your prospect does, and you will see your sales increase!

### **Author Bio**

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