



Get Commitments from Every Sales Call

After contacting your prospect, is your ultimate goal to close the sale? All good salespeople would answer, **“ABSOLUTELY!”** Maybe the question to ask is, “Should that be your only goal?” And, the answer should be, **“ABSOLUTELY NOT!”** You may not close a sale at every customer contact, but you should get some type of commitment every time.

If your only goal is to close a deal then you have failed every time you contacted your prospect prior to you getting the deal. That’s a pretty grim way of looking at it. But it’s true if your only goal is to close a deal.

Many salespeople experience extreme highs and lows in the pipeline. A further look at each of their accounts normally uncovers that they have a single-minded focus that directs them only to closing the deal. A salesperson’s job is to gain commitment.

The top salespeople are able to reduce the fluctuation in their pipeline by gaining various forms of commitment from each contact with their prospects. Each commitment brings them closer to turning a prospect into a customer.

Gaining commitment on every call can help you isolate the contenders from the pretenders. If prospects suggest that they alone won’t or can’t make a decision, they might be brushing you off. If you can’t get a commitment from them, even a minor one, it’s pretty likely they have no intention of ever doing anything. On the other hand, if they are serious, they’ll have no hesitations about committing to some type of action before the next contact.

For example, consider the scenario where you’ve questioned, made a presentation, and the prospect says, “Thank you for coming out. This decision isn’t just up to me. I’m going to need Tom Gardner to approve your proposal. I’ll talk to him and get back to you.”

Left at that, you likely won’t get this person’s enthusiastic support. Consequently, Tom wouldn’t do cartwheels upon hearing the offer either. Instead, to get a commitment from this person you could say,

“Do you personally like the idea?”

“If it were left to you, would you go with it?”

“Would you be comfortable recommending it to Tom before I call him?”

The prospect’s answers let you know whether this sale is worth pursuing.

A Future Occurrence

Lets say the prospect tries putting you off because he or she is waiting for a future occurrence. For example, the prospect says, “We can’t do anything until we get our new computer system fixed.”

To deal with this, first, draw on your logic to discern whether that event should even affect what you sell.

For example, acquiring the new computer system shouldn't affect the service you provide. You could ask, in a justifiably confused way,

"I guess I'm not following you Mr. Prospect. How are those two decisions related?"

Some pretenders throw out any excuse – some ridiculous – to get salespeople off the phone. Most work quite splendidly because the salesperson doesn't question the excuse. On the other hand, if the future event must precede the purchase of what you sell, you should get the prospect's commitment they will buy from you when that event takes place.

"When you do get your new system installed, can I be the one to provide that maintenance contract?"

"When you do decide to open it up for proposals, can I be one of the first to receive the Request for Proposal?"

"When you do have a need to upgrade your existing system, will you call me to provide you with that service?"

Be sure the prospect isn't stalling you, and then go for the strongest commitment you can get today, which will move you closer to the sale.