

Ask yourself these Powerful Questions.

In my training I talk about the importance of asking yourself powerful questions when it comes to conditioning your mindset.

To finish off that discussion here are some business questions you might want to think about as you move into another week of selling.

• What am I most happy/excited about in my business?
• What am I most proud of in my business?
• How does it make me feel to employ other people?
• What am I committed to doing to improve sales systems?
• How/why do I value my customers?

Set up Systems

With all of these questions, you are asking yourself about your business is it not the time to set up systems to routinize these questions for your sales team so their conversations with customers flow more naturally? Efficiency is especially important with today's shorter buying cycles and your clients are considering several competitive offers at any one time; there is little time to waste.

What does a quality question look like in practice? A quality question is one that cannot be answered with a simple "No." Can I help you is the wrong question, because "No, just looking" is not the answer you want? Where can you go from there? Nowhere.

The phrase that you thought was helpful has just shut down the conversation you were hoping to have with a potential client. Is it hard to come back from a dead end? You bet.

The Other Guy's Shoes

How do you get your sales team to open up the conversation? Get them to think about the customer's experience. Many salespeople are concerned about coming across as nosy. In reality, there are few topics that are truly off-limits. Obviously, you wouldn't ask anything too personal, but if you genuinely indicate your desire to help, people are quite willing to talk about themselves.

Keep in mind that the customer's most urgent need at the moment he or she walks in your door may not be to buy your
product.

It may be something much more basic, like a need to be understood. Before they buy anything, they may want to know that you appreciate them.

The importance of considering the customer's current circumstances is succinctly told in a famous sales story, called The Man in the Desert.* It goes like this: A man comes into a store after living in the desert for months. The store sells best quality food and clothing, but those are not the first things the customer needs.

What he needs is water. The best conversation starter for this man is a glass of water. Maybe

after his thirst is quenched, you will learn that he also needs lunch or a new jacket. He might need other things to help him feel better.

If you sell those things, you are in business. You have opened a dialogue that would never have taken place if you had not recognised the customer's most basic need.

So many people stop at the glass of water. You almost always have to ask more than one question to find out what the client wants. If that person says, "I'm just looking," you can respect that, but you know they must have come in for a reason. Have the courage to ask another question.

For example, if someone is looking at a product, ask them what they like about it. Get them talking. The only questions that don't work are questions that close the conversation.

Of course, for a salesperson to be willing to let the conversation wander, he or she must be prepared with the things we talked about earlier, including sufficient knowledge of the product to confidently answer any questions that come back from the customer.

If you know your product well enough, the answers come intuitively, which makes a sales interaction feel more like a friendly chat.

Have a good week selling your stuff.

Mike

ABOUT THE AUTHOR.



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