

One of the biggest mistakes salespeople make is asking too many questions. For once, shut up!

I know that sounds strange coming from a sales coach. After all, we've all been taught that asking questions is important. And it is.

But sometimes the fastest way to discover the truth isn't by asking a question at all.

It's by making a statement.

Let me explain.

Recently, I came across an example where someone wanted to find out how much a supermarket employee earned without directly asking. Instead of saying, "How much do you make?" they simply said they had read an article claiming that all employees had received a pay rise to \$26 an hour.

The employee immediately replied:

"No, that's not right. I make \$17."

Mission accomplished.

No awkward question.

No interrogation.

No resistance.

The employee simply corrected the information.

As humans, we have a natural desire to correct things when they are wrong.

In sales, this can be an incredibly powerful way to uncover information and move conversations forward.

I call it “creating space for correction.”

I have always loved allowing space in a sales conversation

Instead of asking:

“Who makes the final decision?”

You might say:

“It sounds like you’re probably the only person involved in approving something like this.”

The response might be:

“Actually, our CEO signs off on anything over \$10,000.”

Now you’ve learned something valuable without putting the prospect under pressure.

Instead of asking:

“How urgent is this project?”

You might say:

“My guess is this is probably something you’ll look at next year.”

The prospect responds:

“No, we’d like to have something in place within the next month.”

Again, valuable information.

The beauty of this approach is that it feels conversational rather than confrontational.

One of the core principles from my book *Selling is Not Optional* is that sales should feel like a conversation, not a cross-examination.

When people feel questioned, they often become defensive.

When people feel heard, they open up.

That's why some of the best salespeople I have ever worked with don't sound like salespeople at all.

They sound curious. They make observations. They test assumptions. They allow the prospect to guide them towards the truth.

Here's another example.

Instead of asking:

"Are you happy with your current supplier?"

Try saying:

"From the outside, it looks like your current supplier is doing a pretty good job."

You will often hear:

"Well, mostly... but there are a few things we're frustrated about."

And now the real conversation begins.

This technique works particularly well when discussing:

Budget

Decision making

Timing

Current suppliers

Priorities

Hidden objections

Commitment to taking action

The key is not to manipulate.

The key is to genuinely test your assumptions.

You are not trying to trap someone.

You are trying to understand them.

Sometimes the most effective question is not a question at all.

It's a statement that invites the other person to tell you what's really true.

Because in sales, the truth is what moves the conversation forward.

And when people feel comfortable correcting you, they often reveal exactly what you needed to know.

Stop selling.

Start helping.

And sometimes, start assuming.

Have a great week selling your stuff.

Mike