

How do you train your salespeople to have fun selling?

People can learn to ask open-ended questions. There’s a great exercise I do with salespeople, called “What’s in my pocket?” It was taught to me by one of my best staff members—and

best friends—at NRS Media, Stephen Pead.

In a training session, you secretly put something unusual in your pocket. Be careful not to choose objects that are too easy to guess, like keys or a handkerchief. Instead, pocket something slightly out of the ordinary, like a wedding ring or a bottle top.

What’s an Open Question?

In the setup, clearly, explain the difference between open and closed questions. Open questions invite discussion, while closed questions usually elicit a “no” answer.

The team is instructed to ask 10 closed questions first to try to identify what’s in your pocket. As a trainer, you can only answer “yes” or “no”. The team never guesses it this way.

Open questions are the next part of the exercise. Have the trainees ask 10 open questions to ascertain the treasure you have hidden away.

What’s a Closed Question?

Example of a closed question might be, “What do you have in your pocket, is it useful?”

The answer is either, “Yes, it is useful,” or “No, it is not useful.” That response doesn’t get you a lot of information.

An open question might be, “What can you do with the object?”

You can answer these questions any way you like. Most of the time, the salespeople get it right within five or six questions.

The answer to this type of question will give you a lot more to go on. Just switching up a few words makes all the difference. Constructing good questions pays off, but people are reluctant to take the time to develop them.

Asking open questions might make some folks feel stupid, weak, or uncertain. My challenge to any salesperson is to assume leadership around asking the right questions.

Model it for your staff. Take the time to train them. Your team must understand that the client is not always ready to buy.

Sometimes you have to have a conversation to get them alongside. Salespeople need to know—and practice— the difference between open and closed questions long before the customer walks in the door.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR.



Mike Brunel started Mikebrunel.com after being a successful entrepreneur and founder of NRS Media. He co-founded NRS Media in Wellington, New Zealand, expanded it into a global powerhouse in media sales and training, and was eventually responsible for opening offices in London, Atlanta, Toronto, Sydney, Capetown, and Bogota. His products and services are now sold in 23 countries and in 11 languages generating $350 million annually in sales for his clients. Mike sold the company in 2015 and now spends his time following his passions which include rugby, travel. His promise: “I can find thousands of dollars in your business within minutes – GUARANTEED” TRY ME OUT!