

Denver Business Journal - July 12, 2010
[/denver/stories/2010/07/12/smallb3.html](http://denver/stories/2010/07/12/smallb3.html)



Friday, July 9, 2010

Deal with common objections early in the process

Denver Business Journal - by [Garry Duncan](#)

You're lucky if buyers clearly voice objections, making it easier to respond. By far, the most difficult buyers are those who cloak their objections and fears under a shroud of silence. Their objections are unspoken and therefore never resolved.

Direct objections are the easiest to handle. The most prevalent reasons for direct objections are:

- The seller shares too much information too soon.
- There is little or no need identified.
- The solution is not a good fit.
- There is no money.
- There is no trust (they don't believe you), or there is a misconception about your offering.

Better qualifying techniques and better clarification questions usually resolve these obstacles.

The difficult buyers are those who conceal their concerns or stall rather than being open and up front.

When buyers don't see the value or are unclear just how to express their concerns, they may stall. They avoid confrontation, because they just don't want to say "no."

Two other common reasons for hidden objections are that your contact has no authority, or there's a fear of risk and it's easier to do nothing. To learn the real objection, the salesperson must ask clarifying questions and carefully listen to the answers.

Two schools of thought exist on how to handle unspoken objections. The first is resolute about not bringing up anything negative and prefers to stress the positives in an attempt to overpower any perceived drawback. The second takes the position of addressing commonly known objections early and communicating clearly to resolve those issues, which is preferable.

Look at four of the common reasons for unspoken objections:

- You receive the same voiced objections repeatedly.

Chances are good your competition is talking about them with your prospects, and you should suspect some buyers aren't voicing them at all. Knowing your competition is mandatory, and you should know what they say about you, your services and products. Bring these up so you can address them before it's too late.

- You're in the middle of replacing a current vendor where a strong relationship is likely in place.

It's easy to focus on the product differences and forget that competitors have great people working for them as well. Talking up features and benefits will never address the real issue. Be brave. Bring up the existing relationship as a question, and ask the buyer how they'll handle the screaming and counteroffers that are sure take place.

Knowing that you recognize their fear and want to act objectively lessens the chance the buyer will hide behind this unspoken objection.

You can easily use a third-party story: "Others in your position have found it difficult to break their current relationship. Is that going to be a problem should you decide to move forward?"

You're now in a position to review the benefits of changing vendors and to coach them for the argument sure to come from the current vendor. In a practical way, you've removed the objection by addressing it before it becomes a stall.

- Don't overlook the fear of change.

Buyers know problems are more likely during vendor changes, and they know it can be challenging to get everyone on board with the new decision.

One software vendor learned this lesson the hard way. It failed to address the problem early, making the sale only to the executive suite. Once the implementation started, the executives received so much resistance that they reversed their decision and canceled the order.

Bring up how the change and its implementation will affect others internally. Be prepared to offer support and resources. Second, involve

as many of those affected by the decision as you can as early as possible.

Concern about how the decision will affect your buyer personally, should your solution not work well or if unforeseen problems occur, is always an issue. Personal fear of looking bad is the reason a buyer will go with a known or recognized vendor — even if your solution is better.

Use testimonials and reassurance, and provide a backup plan should something occur. Site visits and calls with company executives are other ways to increase their comfort level if your organization isn't listed in the Fortune 500.

Identify all the common objections you don't hear from prospects and ask about the likelihood of those happening. These include internal resistance to change, time concerns about implementation or budget reallocations. Ask where they see obstacles or issues that could delay moving forward.

Work on these earlier during the sale, and you'll find your sales cycle shortened, your credibility enhanced and most importantly, more sales closures. The old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," has merit.

Garry Duncan, principal of Denver-based Leadership Connections, a sales training company, can be reached at 303-462-1277 or garry@leadershipconnections.com.

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.