

How BAD are the questions you're asking?

Phew what a few weeks it's been. So, So busy – and I have to confess my weekly 'news' has been conspicuous by its absence.

Well today I'm back on track – and returning to that age old subject in sales – the questions that you ask.

Firstly – and I can't stress this strongly enough, be in no doubt that **your sales results will be directly influenced by the quality of questions you ask.**

So how good are YOUR questions?

The subject of "open questions" figures in just about every sales manual ever written and every sales course ever delivered. That's not a coincidence.

To sell effectively you need information. Your prospects hold it. You need to acquire it. If you can conjure up a bank of well crafted open questions, you're in business!

If you're new to this game let me quickly define an open question as a question that cannot be answered yes or no. And when you're looking to open up a conversation with a potential customer, just about the least useful answer you can get is yes, or no.

Open Questions

Asking open questions will get your prospect talking, which relaxes them and helps to build genuine rapport in no time. They'll get a sense that you're really interested in them and their needs.

What you get in return is the vital information you need - initially to make an internal judgement on how (or indeed if) you can help your prospect. Secondly you'll be able to match your offering specifically to their needs, the very needs which you beautifully elicited earlier with your fabulous open questions!

Listen to their answers



By the way, listen to their answers! I find that good listening skills are lacking amongst many sales people. Your sales conversations will flow much more freely if you relax and focus on their answers, not what your next question will be. Listen properly and with good intent - and your next question will just appear naturally.

Here are some ideas for open questions - tailor them accordingly to your specific needs whether you're selling to other businesses or direct to consumers.

Examples of Open questions...

What's going on for you in your business right now?

Currently, what are your biggest challenges?

What's going well for you?

What's not going well for you at the moment?

Which areas are you most concerned about?

Where does your business/team need to be in x months/years time?

How do you see your business developing?

What action have you taken so far to...?

Where are you in terms of....

What's the next stage?

And if in your business the potential customer arrives/phones up and asks about the availability of the 'XYZ' product, you'll need to know the reason they chose that product from your vast range. For example you may be out of stock and want to offer an alternative, or have an even better version more suited to their needs. Or just want to build rapport as you process the sale.

The question to really open up any conversation in these circumstances is... **"What attracts you to this xxxx"**. When answering this question the customer will give you their full buying criteria ("it's got this, it hasn't got that") - golden nuggets of information to help you complete the sale.

Avoid questions starting with 'Why'...

...as they can be confrontational - no matter how fluffy and soft you make them sound. When you ask a 'Why' question you are asking for justification of their response. Your client will probably become defensive and give you an emotive response.

It takes practice

Think of your next selling or networking scenario. Think of crucial information you need to successfully promote your product or service and construct five open questions which will help you get that information.

Until next time.

Leigh



PS; Remember to grab your copy of "The 9 Biggest Sales Mistakes"

The 9 Biggest Sales Mistakes identifies those key mistakes that are stopping sales teams, companies and business owners fulfilling their sales potential. The report establishes how to identify these errors, indicates how they can be eliminated - and sets out how to avoid them.

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