



the **sales** consultancy

Why you must know your customer's "Action Filter"

Are you the type that never seems to stop...or do you respond to things as they happen?

Are you always thinking of starting the next activity before you finish the one you're doing?

What about your team?

Proactive?

If your activity isn't prompted by anything particular other than your desire to get it done you will have a **Proactive preference**.



If you're **Proactive** you'll initiate things and are always keen to start something new. You don't wait for others to initiate stuff. You will use direct and positive language like "I shall begin by outlining the agenda for the meeting".

Clearly, the best sales people are likely to be proactive...just because these guys just get things done.

Reactive?

If you might be equally as busy - but responding to things around you like answering emails, returning phone calls, completing reports that your boss wants or the like then you have a **Reactive preference**.

If you have a **Reactive preference** and you're left to your own devices, you will probably take a long time deciding what to do...and may never actually take action at all! Your language will be more tentative and you'll seek to qualify what you say "If it's OK with everyone, I think I might begin the meeting by".

That's the Action Filter

Whether **Proactive** or **Reactive** we're talking here about the "**Action Filter**", one of many Meta Programmes that 'wire your brain' and dictate your approach to life - and sales. Where you are on the Proactive/Reactive scale will differ depending on what you are doing i.e. shopping, socialising, housework etc - or selling.

How well do you know your customers?

What about your customers? Each and every one has an Action Filter. And there's the rub. What if you are highly Proactive (common in sales people) and your potential customer is highly Reactive. Or vice versa? Frankly it's already happened, probably many times - it's just that now you can perhaps explain a few lost sales better than you could before! Because if you're at the opposite extreme to your customer, it could make for a difficult exchange!

And your colleagues?

Opposing extremes of the Action Filter can also cause conflict with colleagues. Often I'll go into an organisation with Proactive, go getting people who are constrained by an underlying Reactive culture. The people want to get things done but are prevented by rules, red tape, financial constraints and procedures. This is such a source of dissatisfaction...the people are employed because they have a proactive nature but then find that the company culture, regardless of what's said, turns out to be reactive.

Adjusting the way you sell

You need to tune in to your customer's way of being. Identify their Action Filter traits - and adjust your message accordingly. Basically, watch and listen. You'll soon be presented with clues and be able to make a judgement. Common sense really.

The **Proactive** customer will buy because they like what they see and want it. Just show them something they like and they'll go for it. Put your effort into bringing your service or product to their attention, give them the benefits and observe them get into buying mode!

The **Reactive** buyer is likely to have already identified a need, thought it through, and maybe still be undecided. They will prefer to carefully weigh up all the possibilities, ask others for their opinion and only decide when pushed by deadlines. The best approach is to give them time to consider - and a deadline for a decision.

Decided yet?

So are you proactive or reactive? And your colleagues? And your customers? How about your team?

Yes, you guessed it - it's all about the psychology of selling.

Until next time.

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