

## The Objections

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I have run into a lot of objections to purchasing my service. Some I'm sure are just stalls. Here are a few: different departments can't agree, buyer doesn't see it as urgent enough to act, not enough money, there's another external party involved who's never available, don't want to do anything that might rock the boat. Any suggestions for dealing with these objections would be appreciated.

Finding the bottom of the "objection well" is crucial in any sale. It's important to identify everyone involved in making or influencing the buying decision, and give them every opportunity to voice their concerns. Don't make the mistake of focusing just on the top dog.

When you're dealing with a lack of perceived value in the product or service, the buyer is trying to tell you they don't get it. You may see the value, but that doesn't matter. Go back to square one and look at why the buyer is spending time with you in the first place. Do they understand their needs, or do they need your help to get clear on the problems they're dealing with? Here's 2 good questions to try. *"What have you tried to do, so far, to fix this situation?" "How did the things you've tried work out, and why are you still looking?"*

Lack of urgency is another problem. Look for more information. *"When you found that solutions you tried didn't work out as planned, what did that cost you or your organization?"* For some people, the answer will be personal reputation, for others it might be more direct in terms of time and dollars. Until you get an understanding of the costs related to failure to solve the issue at hand, you won't get an answer about urgency, so keep asking questions until you get there.

If you find that they've tried competitors, or are looking at in-house alternatives, and they don't see the merit of your solution, don't start in with a list of your features and benefits. Instead, ask questions about the alternatives. *"What do you see as the advantages of the other options, and why?" "How does that fit with your longer term needs?"* Don't be afraid to probe and find out, because until you fully understand your competitive threats, you're not going to make a sale anyway.

If you find there's politics going on, and different parties or departments are lobbying for different solutions, offer to be involved in working with the various departments to profile needs. Gather a list of competing needs. See if you can put your product or service at the center of those needs. Use the opportunity to survey needs as a platform to build relationships that you can draw on during the course of the sales process.

Funds availability is a big issue, especially in this economy. Find out if there's a real funds issue, or it's just a stall. Ask, *"How do you plan to pay for this? Do you have a budget? Who's in charge of the budget?"* Go speak to the budget person. Make inquiries about the company's financial health - both by asking the company and by pulling financials.

Make sure you want to sell to this prospect, because selling them something they don't ultimately pay for is worse than making no sale at all. If you spend your time chasing a prospect that's in financial trouble, and you get the sale, you just wasted time, effort and have an obligation to exchange your goods or services for a uncertain payout. That kind of behavior can make your company go broke.

Know who is involved, at every level and stage of the buying process. And get to know those people. Do your own homework. Without a relationship with all of the buyer types: banker, end user, in-house expert and decision maker, chances are you won't get a sale.

Many companies are stalling right now, believing that it's better to do nothing, sit on their buying decisions and ride out the economy. Know the difference and don't go barking up the wrong tree. Ask prospects, *"What really happens if you delay this decision?"* Find out how urgent the need is (back to the first set of questions). If you can uncover urgency, then keep going. If you can't uncover urgency, then find a way to stay regularly in touch with the people involved, until urgency comes around.

In this economy, it's all about paying attention to the basics. Build a list of questions that you can use to help you listen carefully to what the prospect has to say. Open a lot of doors with a lot of prospects. Keep hunting!

Looking for a good book? Try *How You Make the Sale* by Frank MaNair.

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