

SALES/ COLLECTIONS: HOW SIMILAR ARE THEY?

By Ann Nobbs Director Telmark Training. October 2009

People buy people. If they like you, they'll buy from you.

Do you like yourself?

Do you believe in yourself?

Believe in yourself and others will believe in you.

We can learn sales/ collections structure.

So much business today is done over the telephone. We have a whole area of Business that previously was done by letter, or face to face and is now done quickly and efficiently by phone. Two of these areas are Sales and Credit Collection. Two completely different areas, or are they? Let's have a look at this more closely.

**What is selling? Making someone want to buy what you have on offer!
What is credit collection? Making someone want to pay the money they owe you!**

Quite simply we can learn a specific call structure for this and surprisingly perhaps, they are almost identical.

We need to ask open questions to obtain information about needs and wants/circumstances re outstanding debt.

We need to confirm this to lead into reaching our objective.

We need to give features and benefits of our product/payment solution.

And we need to close the call in a positive way, to reach our primary or secondary objective.

(Getting rid of bad habits)

We are all creatures of habit. The good news is that good habits spread as quickly as bad habits. The hard thing is coming out of one, and into the other. Awareness is the first step to change. Many people are totally unaware of habits that could be improved on until someone points them out. Once new habits have been adopted, it would be just as hard to change back. Think of the first few weeks in a new company when you still want to answer with your old company name.

When ringing out to sell or collect money owing the golden rule is: the more information you give to the person answering the phone, the less chance you have of speaking to the decision maker/account holder. And yet the simple question who's calling brings forth a mass of

information...too much information Name Company Name reason for call. This can often prevent you from getting through to the decision maker/account holder.

How often have I heard "I'm sure he's there, but won't come to the phone?"

Or the response heard is "we are not interested in buying any widgets".

What are the basic assets we use when we're on the telephone? We use our voice we use our ears. Another habit we have is often using these the wrong way around. We have two ears and one voice so we should be listening twice as much as we're talking. Do we listen? There are many habits that prevent us from listening.

CORRECT QUESTIONING.

Ask a team of people to explain the difference between open and closed questions, and often even those who are able to have great difficulty putting it into practise in simple exercises. We need to ask the right type of questions. Open questions to uncover a need (Sales) or circumstances (Collections)

In my experience we confuse being positive with being pushy and feel justified in closing an open question by putting:

Can I ask? In front, thus closing the question.

POSITIVITY,

One of the biggest, most common bad habits we have is using negative vocabulary. We specialise in looking on the dark side: We frequently use words like:

Unfortunately,
The problem is.
I'm afraid.
I'm sorry but.

DON'T SOW NEGATIVE SEEDS!

Positive vocabulary allows us to change people's perceptions of a situation by changing the words we use to tell them.

If you think you can or if you think you can't.

You're ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

In other words, analyse not only what you are saying, but what effect your words have on the other person.

People tell me that they think being positive is being pushy, and being negative is being polite.

IT'S ONLY A HABIT!!! You can change a habit. The first stage is awareness.

We tell people what we can't do, not what we will do.

What I'm talking about here is the psychology of words. We cannot change the situation, we can change the way it's received because of the way we tell it.

Which would you rather hear "Unfortunately we close at 4.30" or "We're open Monday till Friday between 8.30 and 4.30?"

So much damage is done through simple lack of awareness or bad habits.

So, let's get back to the sales/collection call. We are now through to the decision maker/account holder. To be in control of the call and be positive and assertive to reach our objective is our aim.

To achieve this we can learn a simple call structure which is:

A.ATTENTION only when through to the decision maker.

This must include: your name/company name the decision maker accountholders name, a reason for the call...plus your first open question.

Then...shut up and listen!!!

I.INTEREST Ask more open questions, linking each one to the answer you got to the last one. It's like going up a ladder. The answer takes you to the next question.....HOW WHEN WHAT WHY WHERE WHO WHICH

S/Q/A

Make the statement/ask the question (closed) get the agreement. This will agree, clarify/confirm/commit

D.DESIRE

Features and benefits of your product or payment options.

A.ACTION

Take positive action to close the call.” What I’ll do is.....”

Conclusion

So, to summarise what IS the difference between these two types of call?

Well, as I have just proved, very little. Both calls need the same structure, which is used to achieve your primary or secondary objective. In both we need to ask open questions to uncover a need/ascertain the situation regarding payment. We then need to confirm this using the closed question technique S/Q/A and follow up by giving benefits to the decision maker/account holder to make him want to buy/pay, and then we must take positive action to close the call to reach one of our objectives.

This call structure is for outbound calls, however, inbound are exactly the same except the structure begins at Interest,

The important thing to remember is to be positive, assertive and in control, and

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF.