
Sale Consultant vs Order Taker

SALE CONSULTANT vs ORDER TAKER

by Kathleen Gage

In today's competitive business environment one of the greatest challenges for many businesses is how to position themselves and increase sales.

The primary frustration many business owners or executives have is that their people are stuck in the old way of thinking or doing business. This frequently happens in the sales department.

Often sales people will be more of order takers than they are *proactive sales consultants*. In order to solve your customers problems you have to be willing to *consult* with them, not just sell them.

You may hear your sales people say that sales are down because your company is not advertising enough. (maybe you've even said it) Advertising is important and when done effectively can be a part of a good marketing mix. However, far too many sales people rely on the advertising to make the sale for them. This again goes back to them being order takers rather than *sales consultants*.

Selling is not just an action, it is an art. The art of building relationships and solving your customer's problems. What your customers, or clients, are concerned about are:

- **Increased revenues.** How can you help them to increase their revenues by using your product or service?
- **Increased quality** of their personal and professional life. What can your product or service do to increase the quality of their life?

- **Increased productivity?** Will your product or service increase productivity, and if so, how specifically?
- **Decreased costs?** What kind of savings will your customers experience by using your product or service?

As you work with clients look for ways to address one, two, three or all four of these areas. What this means is you must know your clients and customers. You must do relationship selling.

Relationship selling is about knowing your customers and your target market. What is their age, education, interests, culture, lifestyle, etc? How would you sell differently to a baby boomer compared to a Gen Xer, Y Generation or someone from the Silent Generation? They will have different wants, needs and desires other than the fact in some way shape or form they want your product or service to **increase productivity, quality, revenues or income and decrease their costs**. It is your job to help them make the distinction.

No matter what you are selling, you are selling a *dream*. You are selling *potential*. You are selling *hope*.

There are many sales people who will incorrectly sell their clients. The primary reasons for this are:

- One, the sales person does not know or understand what the product or service is.
- Two, they don't believe in the product or service, so they will sell something they can believe in, even if the company doesn't service it.

- Three, they have never been properly trained.
- Four, they want to make money in the short term rather than looking at the long term. Although this may get short term gain, they are missing long term benefit to themselves, their company and most importantly, the customer.

Many people are under the assumption that people do business with people they know. This is not necessarily true. People do business with people they trust. We can know someone and not trust them, so we probably will not do business with them. People also do business with people they like.

Often, your retail customers will lead into commercial business and your commercial customers will lead to retail business. It is again a matter of knowing what your customer's needs are and identifying more current and future needs and wants.

As you build your customer base and focus on a long-term solution here are some other things to keep in mind:

- Under promise and over deliver. You've probably heard this over and over, but are you doing it?
- Give back to the community and they will give back to you. Get involved in community organizations and give of your time and money. It will definitely come back tenfold.
- Know who your target market is.
- Be visible. This ties into the trust factor.
- Become an expert on your product or service. Be a sponge when it comes to information. Top sellers in any industry go beyond what is expected of them. They do whatever they can to obtain information. They read trade journals, they know what trends are impacting their customers, they know their product line, and they are always keeping up to date on the latest releases of product lines.

- Always be kind to the gatekeepers - they can be your greatest ally. If you do not treat the gatekeeper with respect and realize that they too are your customer you will not succeed in the business of selling.
- Know what makes you stand apart from the competition. What is your unique selling proposition?
- Get to know the competition. In some cases you can build strategic partnerships with them that will be more of a solution for your customers.
- Build relationships. Relationship selling takes time. There is a process involved. You may have some people who are going after the quick sell, but to truly be successful it again ties in with knowing your customers and what their needs are.
- Make sure your customer will benefit from what you are selling them. Do not sell something just to make a sale.

Being a successful *sales consultant* and building your business takes time and commitment. Some of the success you will experience may not be immediate. Some sells could be from what you did months or even years ago.

The final question you have to ask is, "Am I committed to what I am doing to truly improve the lives of others?" Your answer will determine your success.

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