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Add a Little Patience

Here comes your prospect, ready-set-go and you're off to the races. Your objective, to sell them something, anything or whatever. Ideally, you would like to sell them something as quickly as possible before they decide not to buy anything at all. Moving them from product to product your customer begins to favor an item. You are sure this is the one they want so you start selling. You tell them everything you know about the product, demonstrate the features and benefits the manufacturer told you about in the promotional flyer and you are now poised for a decision.

Wow, that was fast. In a matter of minutes, you've taken them from being a new prospect and transformed them into an almost customer. But, as the saying goes, "almost only counts in horse shoes and hand grenades." Perhaps this sounds like something you have experienced either selling or as a consumer? There are a number of reasons why this dynamic is so prevalent and I thought this would be a good forum to explore a few.

The first issue I am sure you can identify with is the management squeeze. This is where your management team so encouragingly reinforces the fact you need to sell more starting right now! Although this is a necessary element of sales management it is often done improperly. The result is often a frantic attempt to remove the pressure placed upon the salesperson from management by quickly selling more. This is the desired effect. However, the problem is salespeople seem to internalize managements sense of urgency. The output is often externalized to the consumer in the form of a hasty sales presentation where very little interaction takes place.

To illustrate this point, imagine yourself crossing a beautiful field of flowers with an objective of reaching the seashore off in the distance. If you keep your eyes focused on the seashore you eventually will get there but you'll miss a lot of scenery along the way. If selling on the other hand was as simple as walking to the sea shore through a field of flowers, I wouldn't be writing books and articles on the subject. Selling is more like painting a seashore rather than walking to one. With each brush stroke you determine your end result. The foreground, flowers and scenery leading up to the seashore or in sales the close can make all the difference. Under pressure, salespeople are often in such a hurry to get to the close, they miss all the important stuff along the way.

This next issue is really something to think about. I call it "U-P-S" and it's not a special delivery package. It's more of a self addressed package, UPS stands for Under Performance Syndrome. Salespeople who are under performing seem to have a real problem making even the easiest sales. Why? Well its simple, desperation makes your prospect uneasy. Under pressure, desperation changes the way you conduct yourself and the way you are perceived. It changes the way you interact with your prospects. You begin looking at everybody as if they represented your next pay check. People get a little uneasy about that.

Top performers maintain their sales production as a result of their skill and because of their ability to relate to and put their customer at ease. Ask the old timers and they'll tell you, "It's easier to make the sale when you don't really need it." They interact with the prospect like they were long lost friends. They're more interested in the prospect getting the right product than getting the sale. Through questioning and interaction they discover a solution that so closely fits the prospects needs, instead of selling it to the prospect, they just end up buying. Given a choice, people would much rather buy than be sold.

As for the sense of urgency, keep that, stay sharp. Look at your sales technique rather than churning more prospects. Remember that in order to discover, you must first explore. Ask a lot of questions, be interested in their needs and when it comes to interacting with your prospects, add a little patience.