

Position Paper
Overcoming Objections*
By Mike Swedenberg

Overview.

The three steps in overcoming objections are to Obtain, Verify and Transmit.

Obtain: You need to draw out the list of reasons your customer will not buy from you.

Verify: Determine which of his/her objections are false and which ones are real.

Transmit: Overcome the true objection by offering a resolution.

The Process.

The selling begins when the buyer says, “NO.”

When a buyer says “No.” you have the opportunity to distinguish yourself from most sales reps in the industry.

Based on my thirty-five years in sales and sales training, there are precious few who know how to overcome objections. Most just argue with the client, or worse, pack up and walk out of the door in a huff. Of all the aspects sales, this topic is the most important for you to master.

A buyer says “No” because he or she has a reason not to buy from you. It’s your job to uncover that reason and overcome it.

Thirty-three reasons buyers say “No” to your sales presentation.

1. No room for your product.
2. Wrong product or service for their needs.
3. You’re selling to the wrong clientele.
4. The buyer is satisfied with his/her present supplier.
5. The buyer doesn’t see the need.

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6. The buyer is lazy.
7. The buyer thinks it is the wrong size for their needs.
8. The buyer is in a hurry to go home.
9. The buyer had a fight with the spouse that morning and is in a bad mood.
10. The buyer has no authority to buy but likes playing the role.
11. His boss told him not to place any orders.
12. Your competitor is the buyer's brother-in-law.
13. You have bad breath.
14. The buyer doesn't like your tie or outfit.
15. You rub the buyer the wrong way.
16. The buyer thinks he/she can negotiate a better deal.
17. The buyer never says yes on the first try.
18. The buyer doesn't understand you.
19. The buyer is always in a bad mood first thing in the morning.
20. You messed up the last order.
21. The buyer thinks you're arrogant.
22. The buyer isn't convinced you understand his/her needs.
23. The buyer thinks you're a crook.
24. You are a crook, and the buyer knows it.
25. The buyer thinks you want to sell something they don't need or want.
26. The buyer hates all sales reps.
27. The buyer is stupid.

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28. The buyer is smart and thinks you're stupid.
29. It's the wrong day of the week to order stuff.
30. He has no reason; but, simply loves to give "pesky salesmen" a hard time.
31. You remind the buyer of another rep he hates.
32. The buyer is mad at your company.
33. The buyer is jealous. All sales reps are under worked and over paid.

Now, look at that list of objections. Do you think you have the time or patience to go over each one of them to determine which objection he or she has and then overcome it? You would be lucky to make two calls a day.

I dramatically increased my success level by asking the buyer, "What is the main reason you won't buy this product?" (Use your own words or simply ask, "Why not?" or "Would you mind telling me why not?")

Never use the cliché "What do I have to do to get you to buy this today?"

You may get an answer you don't like.

I will describe this multi-step process to uncovering the TRUE objection and overcoming it.

FALSE OBJECTIONS

You have given your presentation to a store manager for a display of cologne. You asked for the business, shut your mouth and waited.

The buyer scratches his head and says, "No!"

"May I ask why not?" you ask politely.

The first objection out of the buyer's mouth is probably a false objection.

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We hear and give false objections during the course of the day. Someone asks you a favor and you think of an excuse to say, “No.” You don’t want to hurt their feelings by telling them the true reason, so you offer a plausible excuse.

A clerk in a store flags you down in the aisle to show you a new line of sweaters. You smile and politely refuse, “Sorry, not today. I’m in a hurry.” The truth is you have plenty of time; you just think the sweaters are hideous. You know if you stop and look you will feel guilty if you don’t buy one. You are a nice person and you don’t want to hurt the clerk’s feelings. A false objection avoids confrontation.

After presenting a floor display of cologne to a store manager, he says, “No.”

“May I ask why not?” (Do so politely don’t sound confrontational or sarcastic.)

“I don’t have any room in my store for your display.”

The truth is, he has plenty of room. If you offered him a display filled with \$10,000 worth of merchandise absolutely free, he would manage to find room for it. However, you can’t challenge him by saying, “Oh yes you do, right over there. What’s the real reason you won’t buy from me?”

NEVER IGNORE AN OBJECTION

When a buyer says, “We have no room,” acknowledge the objection. Never challenge it or dismiss it. Doing so won’t remove the objection; it will only drive it underground. It’s better to acknowledge the objection by saying, “I understand floor space is a problem in your store.”

FOLLOW UP

Ask the buyer: “Is there any other reason you can’t buy the display?”

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He may answer: "Well I think it has too much merchandise in it for my volume store."

Acknowledge: "I understand your concern with overstock."

Follow up again: "Is there any other reason?"

He may say: "Yes, it is too much work to build the display once it comes in."

You acknowledge again: "I see, well is there any other reason?"

At this point, he will say: "No, that's about it."

DISCOVER THE TRUE OBJECTION

Instead of trying to answer each objection as the buyer spits them out, simply ask which of the objections is his real concern. Summarize his list of objections to demonstrate that you were paying attention. "Well, let's see, you're concerned with space, the amount of inventory and building the display. Of those three things, what is your biggest concern?"

Such a question not only acknowledges the buyer's objections but also illuminates the real concern. The buyer may say, "Well I'm worried that the display has too much inventory and it will take too long to sell through."

CONFIRM THE TRUE OBJECTION

DON'T RESPOND YET! You can determine if that's the true objection by asking, "Well if I resolve that problem, will you reconsider and take the display?" You have challenged the buyer, but not in a threatening manner. When the buyer says, "Yes," then you know that's his real objection. You don't have to address the other two reasons.

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If the buyer says, “No, even if you resolve that problem, I still won’t buy the display.” You haven’t uncovered the true objection.

Don’t waste time answering the false objections.

OFFER A RESOLUTION.

The true reason was the amount of inventory.

“We have a smaller display with half as much inventory. Why don’t we bring that one in instead?” You respond.

Now that you have offered a resolution to the concern, the buyer says, “OK, send it in.”

IF THE BUYER STILL SAYS NO

You asked the right question, “If I resolve that problem, will you reconsider?” If the buyer says, “No!” there maybe more than one objection. Start the process over.

You ask, “What else is on your mind?”

The buyer may say: “I don’t have space, even with a smaller display.”

You confirm again, “I understand. If I can find room for a smaller display, would you take it?” The buyer may say yes if those are the two real objections, the first display was too much inventory and he has no room for it on the sales floor. You already have scoped out the store BEFORE you made your presentation and have found several good spots for the display.

You say, “There is a great spot in aisle four by the shaving cream. It would fit nicely there and be a great tie-in profit maker.”

You have succeeded. The buyer says, “Send it in.”

Remember even when you give a great presentation and uncover all of the objections, you still may not close the sale. Sometimes the objection can’t be overcome. The buyer may not have

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the money to buy from you no matter how good your product or service is. There comes a time when you have to cut your losses and move on to the next customer. Thank the buyer for his or her time, ask permission to follow up at a later time and make a note to come back. You've done your job.

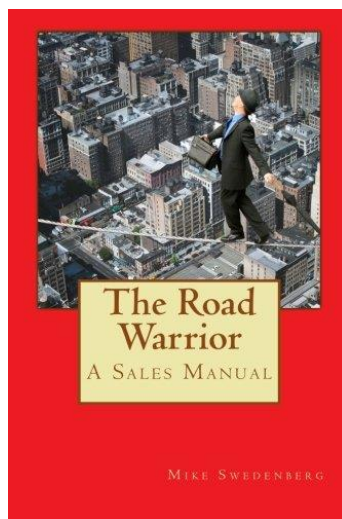
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