

Lame Sales Questions You Need to Avoid

During a recent sales training workshop I conducted with a client, we were discussing the importance of asking the right questions; high-value, high-impact, penetrating questions. One person spoke up and said, "When I'm talking to a new prospect I like to ask, "What do you know about us?"

An uncontrollable groan escaped when I heard this. But it got me thinking, what other lame questions do sales people ask? Here are a few that I've heard over the years and still continue to hear.

1. "What are your needs?" Really? You seriously think this question separates you from your competitor? Using this question automatically turns you into an order-taker, not a sales-maker.

2. "Are you the decision maker?" Although there is nothing technically wrong with this question, it usually results in a 'yes' response. A more effective way to get this information is to ask, "Who else do you normally consult with on decisions of this nature?"

3. "What is your budget?" Many people haven't established a budget or don't know what to budget for a particular purchase. Do them and yourself a favor and focusing on exploring their problems and presenting a solution that addresses those issues. Budget will become less of a concern.

4. "Do you want to save (insert money, time, or other lame benefit)?" Don't insult my intelligence. Enough said.

5. "Do you want this (whatever the feature might be)?" I don't even know what that feature will do so how can I possibly tell you if I want it. Oh, wait! If I say that then it gives you the opportunity to start talking about your product. Now I get it...

6. "Would you give me a referral?" I might if I knew what type of person or company you wanted an introduction to. Be specific and help your customer understand

who would make a good referral. BTW: Saying "anyone" is NOT an effective reply.

7. "What do you know about us?" I know you like this question because when people say they don't know anything about you it gives you the chance to start telling them everything you do. Unfortunately, this only serves to bore them and cause them to start counting the seconds until the meeting is over. Remember, the sales call and meeting isn't about you; it's about your prospect or customer.

8. "If I could show you (insert pathetic expression such as 'how my product will benefit you) will you buy?" Really, dude? Can't you come up with anything better than that?

9. "Are you ready to buy?" Perhaps, if I could figure out how your product or service would benefit me I might. But considering I just starting thinking about this purchase and you're the first person I've talked to, I highly doubt it.

10. "Who else should I talk to in the company?" You seriously think I'm going to introduce you to my boss or colleague with an approach like that? However, if you help me solve a problem, I'll be more than willing to introduce you to another department or division.

11. "Do you want to make more money, gain new clients, increase your sales, etc?" See response for point four above.

These questions seriously affect your ability to increase your sales. If you want to grow your business stop asking lame questions like these.

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