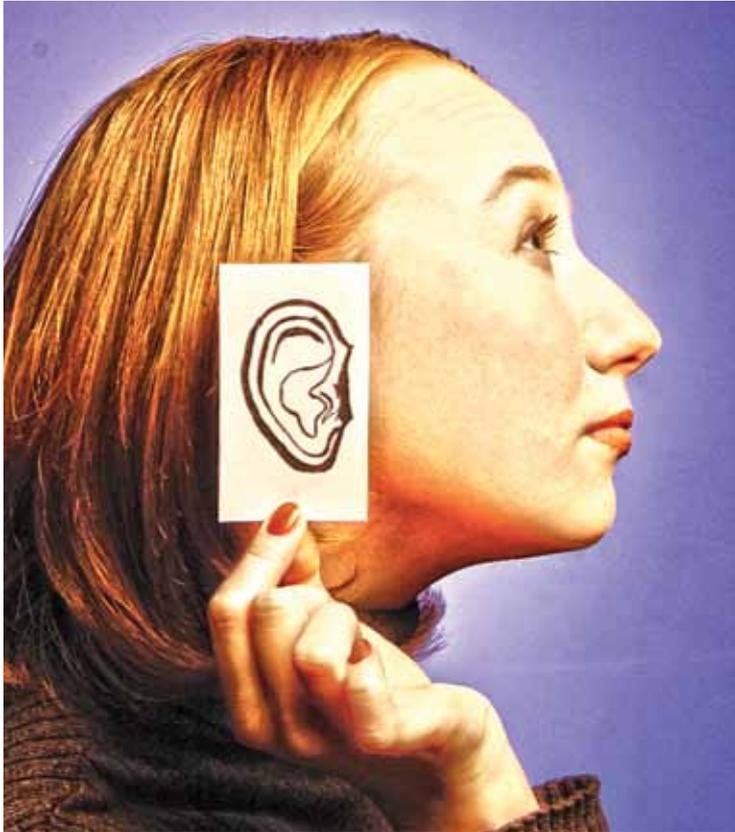


SHANE
DECKER

ON SALES STRATEGIES



Listen Up

TWO EARS ARE BETTER THAN ONE MOUTH AS SALES TOOLS.

Ever wonder why you have two ears and only one mouth? (A hint: They're not just for wiggling.)

One of the biggest, most serious sale killers in any industry is not listening to the customer. Too many salespeople talk too much. They're so worried about what they're going to say next, they don't even hear their customer. On the other hand, great listening skills can exponentially increase

your closing ratio.

Listening starts with asking. Ask the right questions, and you'll hear all the information you need to close the sale. There are two kinds of selling questions: relationship questions and sale-specific questions. Relationship questions help you get to know your client while reaffirming the reason he came in.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- How did you meet?
- What's the special occasion?
- How long have you been wed?

Always make the presentation

about your customer, not about you. The more interested you are in his story, the more special he will feel.

Sale-specific questions pertain to the wants or needs of a client.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- What size diamond did you have in mind?
- Do you know what her favorite color is?
- Did you have a particular color and clarity in mind?
- What shape of diamond is her favorite?

With both relationship questions and sale-specific questions, always listen carefully to the answers. Look the client in the eye when he's speaking. This shows him that he is important to you. Sometimes when a client is talking, he's telling you he wants to be in control of the situation — that means you've got to let him talk, without interruption. Listen for trigger phrases, like "she's always wanted ..." or "she's told me many times she wished she could have ..." These phrases usually mean the sale is already closed.

When clients give you information, write it down with a nice writing instrument — don't use a pen from Walmart. It raises the level of professionalism. Have you ever asked someone their name at the beginning of a presentation and then forgot it and had to ask them again? If you'd have written it down at the beginning, you'd have seemed far more professional. Every bit of information you write down can help you later in the sale.

Listening is more powerful than talking. It will help you build a more professional rapport with your client. And the more important you make him feel, the more likely he is to ask for you when he returns. And the second time you wait on a client, it's easier to close than the first.

SHANE DECKER has provided sales training for more than 3,000 stores worldwide. Contact him at (317) 535-8676 or at ex-sell-ence.com.

FRESH IDEAS
TO BETTER YOUR
BUSINESS



TIPS
SALESFLOOR

GENIUS TIP #34

Long before it symbolized hot new gadgets, the apple represented knowledge, so we don't feel bad about going back to the well again to draw from Apple's sales manual. Example #34: In-store technicians are urged to deal with emotional customers by using "simple reassurances" that they are listening, such as "Uh-huh" and "I understand."

GO LIGHTLY

Along the lines of Great Contrarian Rules to Live By (such as the 80/20 Rule, Don't sell too hard, and negotiate from a position of disinterest), comes another, this time from Denis Boule, owner of deBoule in Dallas, TX: When it comes to serious money, be lighthearted. "Especially when it's a big, big sale, you need to keep the purchasing experience fun so that the customer is as comfortable as possible in the process," he says.



STAMP YOUR NAME

Recycling firm TerraCycle's determination to avoid creating waste extends to its business cards: Staff are given stamps to leave contact info. The stamps not only demonstrate commitment, they are a great conversation starter, company VP Tom Szaky, told the *New York Times*. "It's eco-friendly, it never runs out and it makes for a nice ice-breaker at every meeting."