ARE YOUR SALESPEOPLE OVER ANXIOUS?

- Bill Gorman -

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We all know that prospects don't want the salesperson to run out the front door as soon as they pull up in front of your dealership, and pull them out of car and try to sell them something. We also know the entire sales staff can’t be standing on the front stoop waiting for the prospects to pull in. All of these types of qualities offend and scare off prospects. By the same token, the prospect expects and respects a good-quality salesperson. A good-quality salesperson is one who has product knowledge and one who can help the prospect make a sound buying decision.

A sign I saw recently in a dealership said, “Pardon my enthusiasm, but I really want to sell you a unit today!” Maybe this sign should be in every dealership sales office. This stresses a sale today and lessens the impact of an overeager sales presentation. The sign also helps to make the customer feel comfortable, as well as giving the salesperson a crutch when they feel they may be coming across as pushy.

It takes 45 minutes to an hour and 15 minutes to go from greeting to the closing process. If the salesperson is going to give prospects their money’s worth in the selling process, then good-quality time needs to be spent with the prospect. To go through the steps of Greeting; Qualifying; Selling yourself, the Dealership and your Brand; Presentation, Demo, Appraisal, it will take this kind of time, on the average, with a prospect. So when management sees the salesperson back in their office within 10 to 15 minutes after greeting, they need to ask the question. “Has the prospect been thoroughly shown a product?”

Salespeople need to watch out for the quick buzzwords. Too often, salespeople learn the jargon of the slang words in the trade. Sometimes they put labels on customers and prospects. All of these traits can lead to loss of sales. Remember, we don’t have “Turkeys,” “Mullets,” or “Tire Kickers,” we have customers, and they are precious commodity. The right attitude towards prospects will show in the selling process. This right attitude needs to start with the salesperson. When sales managers hear salespeople putting labels on prospects or customers, they should be quick to correct the conversation.

Each one of us is different in style and personality. Each of us can say something to a prospect in a way or style that others of us can’t. I once overheard a salesperson, working for me, say some things to a prospect that I thought were very pushy. I thought to myself that I could never have said that to them that way. I was cringing at what I heard and thought, “These people will never put up with that from the salesperson, he is coming across too pushy.” A
few minutes later, the prospects walked up to me and I thought to myself, “Oh boy, here it comes.” To my surprise, they wanted to congratulate me for having such a nice salesperson, and that he was so helpful and never put any pressure on them. At first I thought they must have been talking about a different salesperson, but I realized that it is just the fact that each of us can say and do different things with different people. This says a lot about the advantages of the T.O. process when we don’t get along with someone.

Don’t turn off the customer by over qualifying their ability or desire to buy. Before a salesperson can find out the prospect’s ability to buy, they first have to find out what unit is right for them. The financial spending or borrowing ability or desire is only part of the qualifying process. The salesperson needs to carefully ask the questions of price range and payments after they ask the questions of needs, desire and how the customer will use the unit.

Don’t make it difficult for the prospect to get information. Don’t let the prospect’s questions seem like an imposition. Salespeople are providers of information before they are closures. When the prospect leaves home to go shopping, they are going out to seek information. They don’t leave home saying, “Do you have the checkbook? Do you have the title for the trade-in?” They leave home saying, “Let’s see what is available and what the price is.” The difference between a looker and a buyer is the salesperson.

The Match Maker system, designed by Gorman Planning Co. years ago, works very well. It allows the salesperson to take the time needed to earn the right, and to have the privilege, to make a sale. Today, for showroom selling, we recommend using a buyer’s guide. This same system that uses a buyer’s guide, which is for the customer as much as it is for the salesperson can paint the picture. Once a salesperson can paint the picture of how the prospect is going to use the unit, they can do the feature benefit selling. After all, look how much more each feature can be, if the prospect can clearly associate the feature with the way they want to use what you are trying to sell. For selling at shows, we recommend using a Match Maker card. Both of these tools are available from Law Printing in Oxnard, Calif.

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If the process of qualifying with a buyer’s guide can be accomplished, then salesperson will be on the right unit, with the right equipment and price, a lot quicker.

We suggest that salespeople should be anxious to sell after they are anxious to earn the right to make a sale. Most prospects expect salespeople to try to sell them, but they expect the salesperson to be knowledgeable about the product. It can be so disappointing for one to go shopping and only meet a clerk
instead of a salesperson. When the prospect leaves your dealership, they should be saying to themselves, “Now that is a good salesperson; that's the kind of salesperson I want to buy from.”

Listen to your CSI reports about how your prospects feel they were treated by your sales staff. When you have an indication that someone on your sales staff did not give a good impression to a prospect, be quick to discuss it and improve.

When working with a prospect, it is important that the salesperson show the prospect how they can buy today, and not why they can’t. This was the #1 quality of a very successful salesperson who once worked for me. He even went further; when he brought me a deal, he always showed me how they could buy, if I would approve it.

A good prospect will expect a good salesperson to stay in touch. This means when the salesperson follows up, they should have something meaningful to discuss over the phone. The focus on the phone should be to make an appointment.

We recommend dealers put the “pedal to the metal” with an all-out effort to be thorough in the sales basics. There is no substitute for good sales management. Salespeople, who put off follow-ups for more than a day, are often the salesperson who got out-hustled. Be the “hustler” and not the one being “out-hustled.”

Bill Gorman was President of Gorman Planning Co., LTD. in Virginia Beach. His many years of experience in the industry including positions as owner of a dealership, general manager, sales manager, salesman, mechanic, service manager, manufacturer's representative, consultant and trainer. Following his death, Bill's impact continues in the heart of people and within the many organizations with which he had contact over the many long and highly successful career.

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