

# Handle Difficult Questions and Objections Effectively and Close More Business

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Customers, especially in this down economy, want to be sure they are getting the best value for their money and aren't making a poor buying decision. So they will have questions, and they will have some objections. How you handle their questions and objections can either make or break you. The following tips will help you respond effectively.

1. Do your homework. Before going into any meeting or presentation, anticipate the customer's questions and know what their objections might be. A good way to do this is to brainstorm all the possible questions you might be asked or would hate to be asked. You might also consider practicing your presentation in front of some colleagues and see what questions they might pose. Then, write out the answers to these questions/objections on index cards. Practice them out loud several times. By saying the answers out loud, you will hear whether your response sounds credible. Your voice will also sound more confident.
2. Pause and think before you respond. It is okay to take your time before you respond. When you are face-to-face with a client, you can pause for 10-20 seconds. While it can seem like a life time to you, your customers won't notice. What it will demonstrate to them is that you are trying to be deliberate. An unfocused answer can cost you.
3. Be sure you understand the question. Listen all the way to the end of each sentence, not just to the first three or four words. If you are not sure what the customer is really asking, clarify it. Often, customers just begin talking without having any real question in mind.
4. When the customer raises an objection, be sure to acknowledge it. Be sure to refer to any objections as "concerns" rather than objections. Obviously, you do not want any negative connotations to come into play.
5. If the customer has many issues, ask the person to prioritize their concerns. Start with what is most important to the customer and then clarify each one. For example, a concern about pricing can mean many things. You will need to find out what your customer is comparing your price to. Your price may be higher because it offers added service or reliability, something your competitor isn't.
6. If the concern is about pricing, make the price seem smaller. For example, if you are selling an on-line subscription service to a school system, the price per copy of each magazine offered on-line is a fraction of what it would cost in a hard copy. Always show the value of the sale to the questioner personally. Make sure you know why your product is worth more.
7. Do not be thrown by the fact that your product costs more. In a recent survey, only 14% of the respondents put price first when making a buying decision. Confidence in the sales person or quality of the product came first.
8. Find out the reason for each objection. Sometimes, the customer is just window shopping and really isn't interested. Sometimes, your product really doesn't answer the customer's needs.
9. Use your response to a customer's question to bridge to a feature or benefit that you may have mentioned earlier. *"I appreciate your concerns about reliability. In case I didn't stress this, our company has allocated eight million dollars to R&D development in the past three years. This product has been tested and retested. Consistency is no longer an is-*

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*sue. I would be happy to leave a copy of the test results with you so that you can more fully digest them."*

10. Do not bluff or gloss over an answer. If you really aren't sure, don't guess.

Customers are okay with your getting back to them with the answer after the presentation.

11. Minimize questions by methodically summarizing what you have proposed. In a large sale, it can take an hour, even several hours, to cover all of the topics presented. Make sure the customer has a clear picture of everything, the key points and benefits before moving to the next point. Always ask if there are additional issues.
12. When the customer poses a question, be sure to demonstrate that you are listening intently by nodding and looking the person in the eye. When you respond, make sure to continue your strong eye contact. If there are others in the room, be sure to shift your gaze to include them as well. Make sure body language demonstrates you are open.

Customers will always have questions and objections. By doing your homework ahead of time, practicing out loud, and pausing, you can come up with clear and succinct answers. Q & A is an important part of any presentation. It is the last impression customers have of you and your company. It insures that the customer will feel comfortable doing business with you and your organization.

*Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.*