

Can't close the sale? Whose fault is it?

Are you blaming the prospect when you can't close?
Are you telling the boss it's the prospect's fault that you can't set an appointment or they won't order now?

After 25 years of selling, training, and consulting, one truth remains – I have yet to hear one salesperson say, “The prospect wouldn't buy and it was my fault” or “The prospect wouldn't appoint me and it was my fault.”

You say, “But Jeffrey, you don't understand, my situation is different.” Bullshit. The only thing different about your situation is, you'd rather blame someone else than yourself.

If your prospect is constantly telling you ...

“Why don't you call back in two weeks?”

“We haven't had a chance to discuss it, call back in three days?”

“Yeah, we're still interested, but it's been real crazy here and ...”

“I have to get together with my partner.”

“I'm not ready to buy yet.”

It ain't their fault, Verne. It's yours.

The key is to accept responsibility for no sale yet and ask questions to get the prospect to tell you more about why he is not deciding. He has not said no, so obviously you have just not answered his questions.

People are worrying about, thinking about, or acting on their stuff. You're worrying about, thinking about, or acting on your stuff. Prospects could care less about your stuff unless they perceive the need or a benefit to themselves. (Selfish, but true.)

When a prospect says, "I'll know by Thursday at 1:00 p.m." it becomes a benchmark time and date for the salesperson – a deadline. When you come to understand that the date and time commitment mean virtually nothing to the prospect, you're on your way to accepting responsibility as a salesperson.

When you follow up the next time, take a proactive stance to hold them to what they said. If they're going to decide by Tuesday, ask "Could I drop by Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. to get the good news in person?"

At some point, after you have been through the close several times with the prospect, you have to realize that you have very little to lose. You may have to be real direct and ask them if they are going to buy or not. You can't keep wining and dining them for the next year. It's not worth the time or effort.

Well, what if they are just the kind of person that hates to say no? Be up front with them, but be understanding as well. You still need to ask the questions to find out why they are postponing the decision.

You must be willing to take a risk to get to the true objection. If you don't think the sale will be made anyway, take more risk. Use tough sales or no sales as learning experiences. See how far you can go to get the truth.

When the sale is over and you have lost, be willing to accept the responsibility for the process, hold your head high, and move on to help the next prospect.

The real truths hurt ... are you ready for all six of them?

1. You haven't created enough need.
2. You haven't uncovered the real objection.
3. You haven't created enough urgency.
4. You haven't convinced him of the benefits of ownership.
5. You haven't built enough trust.
6. You haven't built enough confidence ... have you?

What to do? (and not do)

- **Don't blame it on the prospect.**
- **Don't moan about what the prospect's excuse is.**
- **Figure out what the true objection is.**
- **Figure out a solution for that objection.**
- **Try your best to overcome that objection to make the sale this time.**
- **AND be sure you prevent that objection from recurring the next time.**

The burden is on you. If you want to sell professionally, get real about who is at fault when a sale isn't made. Get a mirror. Get responsible.

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Jeffrey Gitomer